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The Normative Challenge of Interaction: Justice Conflicts in Democracy Promotion

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Abstract

In the global "North-West", liberal democracy is regarded as the universally valid model of political rule that is to be promoted globally via foreign and development policies. Democracy promotion, however, is frequently challenged by justice-related claims. Whereas external democracy promoters refer to democracy's universal value, those resisting democracy promotion point to the collective entitlement to a self-determined political evolution. "North-Western" governments see liberal democracy as the only embodiment of a just political order, but in those countries that are the targets of democracy promotion different understandings of appropriate norms and institutions may exist. And even if democracy is generally regarded as the best formula to construct a just polity, democratization at times is perceived as threatening intra-state peace, an equally valued goal. Contestation about democracy promotion has, therefore, a crucial normative dimension that can be conceptualized as a series of conflicts over justice. If we conceive of external democracy promotion as a process of interaction – instead of unidirectional export or socialization –, such justice conflicts constitute a major normative challenge to democracy promoters. The paper presents an alternative perspective on "democracy promotion as interaction" and develops a typology of justice conflicts that captures the normative challenges brought about by the interactive nature of democracy promotion. It concludes by outlining first sketches of a research agenda on justice conflicts in democracy promotion.

1. Introduction[1]

Democracy promotion is about interaction, and this interaction is at least partially about justice. These are the two major claims the present paper makes. In general terms, no one would deny that the international promotion of democracy – that is, the "array of measures [taken by external actors] aimed at establishing, strengthening, or defending democracy in a given country" (Azpuru et al. 2008: 151) – involves interaction between those promoting democracy (the "donors") and those at the receiving end (the "recipients"). Yet, instead of conceiving of interaction in democracy promotion as being limited to the (possibly contentious) implementation of a given "formula" (i.e., democracy), we argue that interaction – if taken seriously – has a crucial normative dimension to it: It involves – or should involve – substantial negotiation about the appropriate conception of the set of political norms that is to be implemented in a given country and promoted from the outside.[2] But why should external actors have a (legitimate) say in the shaping of an appropriate normative order for a given society? Here, the concept of justice enters the equation (Pangle 2009). In normative terms, the international practice of democracy promotion is based on the notion that there is a universal value of and, in fact, commitment to democracy (Sen 1999; Schraeder 2003: 25-26). Bringing democracy to people living under non- (or not sufficiently) democratic conditions aims, thus, at correcting "a perceived discrepancy between entitlements and benefits" (Welch 1993:

1 A previous version of this paper – co-written with Iris Wurm – was presented at the IPSA-ECPR Joint Conference, 16-19 February 2011, Sao Paulo. The authors would like to thank Evgeniya Bakalova, Harald Müller, Hans-Jürgen Puhle, Philippe C. Schmitter, Lisbeth Zimmermann and the members of the German Research Network "External Democratization Policy" for helpful comments.

2 As Julia Leininger (2010) has argued, democracy promotion cannot simply be conceived of as external measures that have an impact on political regimes "from without"; at least as far as democracy assistance through development aid is concerned, democracy promotion mainly takes place "within" the supported political system and democracy promoters, therefore, become players in domestic politics.

19) – it is a question of justice.[3] Yet, as soon as interaction in democracy promotion involves contestation about the proper set of political norms, it is no longer clear which specific entitlements are to be met by means of which precise rules and institutions. Even more basically, the very intent by external actors to help construct a just political order implies meddling in the internal affairs of other states and can therefore, itself, be viewed as violating the (collective) entitlement to sovereignty and self-determination.[4] In this sense, external democracy promotion is both based on and challenged by claims to perceived entitlements, i.e. justice claims (see below).

It is broadly acknowledged that the 1990s boom in both the practice of and the discourse on democracy promotion has given way to a period of increasing challenges or outright backlash.[5] In this context, a normative debate about the universal applicability and appropriateness of "western-derived analytical frameworks and models of democracy" (Burnell 2010: 5; cf. Hobson and Kurki 2012; T. Smith 2007) has resurfaced as has "attention to the question of norms concerning democracy assistance" (Carothers 2010: 67).[6] This normative debate obviously involves legal questions – e.g., "what right do democracy aid providers have to carry out their work in other countries?" (Carothers 2010: 67). In general terms, the tension between the alleged universality of democracy and the perceived illegitimacy of external interferences in internal affairs refers to competing rights (individual human rights vs. collective state rights) in a narrow, legal sense. Yet, what is at stake here is not "only" laws. Emphasizing the universal commitment to democracy or the illegitimacy of democracy promotion implies referring to more basic, morally based claims that are neither dependent on a specific legal order nor refer to just any type of norms.[7] They represent demands of justice, namely claims to legitimate entitlements (cf. Welch 1993). The focus on "justice" – i.e., on claims to entitlements (justice claims) and on conflicts shaped by contested, perceived entitlements (justice conflicts) – provides an analytical perspective on the above-mentioned normative debate that is broader than a narrow look at legal issues while, at the same time, it is more precise than the vague reference to norms. To put it differently: entitlements, not laws or norms, constitute the lowest common denominator in the normative debate on democracy promotion.

In this sense, it appears promising to look systematically at justice conflicts in democracy promotion. When external and domestic actors dispute the very legitimacy of international efforts at promoting democracy, or when they argue over each other's particular conceptions of how a "just political order" should look like, these constitute the most clear-cut cases of such conflicts over justice: conflicts which are characterized by clashing justice claims. In a broader sense, justice conflicts also include conflicts in which justice claims are present on, at least, one side of the equation and are pitted against other, not justice-related claims – these conflicts are henceforth referred to as "justice-related" conflicts (cf. Daase 2011: 1; Müller 2010: 4). E.g., even if democracy is not disputed as the best formula to construct a just polity, democratization can be perceived as threatening intra-state peace – leading to a conflict between the two normative aims "justice" and "peace".

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3 According to a definition proposed by David Welch (1993: 19) – who draws on Melvin Lerner – the justice motive consists in "the drive to correct a perceived discrepancy between entitlements and benefits". In the case of democracy promotion, we are faced with an "*other-referential*" perception of injustice ("an injustice suffered by someone else" (Welch 1993: 42), which an external actor then is trying to help correct. In this sense, for example, Philip Pettit (2010: 89-90) has argued that "representative states will have commitments that give them normative reason for a concern with rectifying the problems of those who live under ineffective and non-representative states", while the only "satisfactory solution" is to replace such regimes "by states that are representative in the requisite sense".

4 Cf. Hurrell (2007: 163); Ikenberry (2011: 287-290); Sørensen (2011: 42); Whitehead (2010).

5 Cf. Carothers (2006); NED (2006); Diamond (2008: 56-87); Burnell and Youngs (2010); McFaul (2010: 1-24).

6 In 2003, Peter Schraeder could still conclude that "[t]he advocates of democracy promotion clearly have the edge in the normative debate", i.e. in the debate "around the normative issues of whether the international community should be actively involved in democracy promotion efforts" (Schraeder 2003: 25). Still today, the advocates probably represent the larger (and more powerful) camp, but critical voices have clearly become louder – both in the political and the academic arena.

7 Norms understood here as "collective expectations about proper behavior for a given identity" (Jepperson et al. 1996: 54).

How democracy promoters deal with these normative challenges, and how such conflicts over justice are negotiated between donors and recipients is of crucial interest both in a theoretical and a practical sense: Analytically, the study of the processing and negotiation of justice conflicts in democracy promotion promises important insights into the normative premises and the political mechanisms behind the formulation and implementation of democracy promotion policies; from a policy-oriented perspective, how democracy promoters are able to deal with justice conflicts, and how donors and recipients are able to peacefully negotiate contentious justice claims, is relevant for the effectiveness, the legitimacy and the conflict-proneness of democracy promotion policies (see below, Section 6).

The present paper will, first, look at debates in normative theory where democracy promotion has been explicitly dealt with as a justice-related issue and will outline our own approach to justice in democracy promotion, which is decidedly non-normative. In a second step, we make a case for an alternative perspective that treats democracy promotion as interaction, arguing that the bulk of existing research, even when apparently looking at interaction, treats the "formula" that is to be promoted (i.e. democracy) as a non-negotiable given. Taking interaction seriously, by contrast, requires transcending a notion that views democracy promotion as a unidirectional process leading to either total/partial take-over or total/partial rejection. Third, this inherent normative challenge to democracy promotion will be conceptualized by the use of a typology of justice conflicts, i.e. conflicts that involve claims for perceived entitlements. In terms of future research, two interrelated questions are identified that seem to be worthwhile pursuing: To what extent and how do democracy promoters process such justice conflicts? To what extent and how are justice conflicts negotiated in the interaction between donors and recipients?

2. Why Justice? The debate about democracy promotion in normative theory

The academic literature that explicitly deals with democracy promotion rarely refers to justice as a relevant concept.[8] Yet, at the very basic level, the liberal perspective on international relations that is at the heart of the democracy promotion enterprise is based on the distinction between "[d]omestically just republics, which rest on consent" (i.e., liberal democracies), and "nonliberal states", which "do not rest on free consent" and are, therefore, "not just" (Doyle 1986: 1161). Democracy promotion, in this sense, is embedded in what Hurrell (2007: 296) calls the "particular justice agenda of liberal solidarism". Accordingly, it is not by chance that important normative debates crucial for democracy promotion do regularly address questions of justice. The philosophical debate about the universality of democracy and human rights is, to an important extent, a debate about the principles of global justice. Consequently, in contributions that deal with the legitimacy and legality of coerced democratization by military means (and the broader debate about the military enforcement of human rights), references to theories of justice and, in particular, the concept of "just war" abound.[9]

It is in international political theory and philosophy that questions of democracy promotion have been dealt with as explicitly justice-related issues:[10] Are states entitled – or perhaps even obligated – to promote democracy in other states? To what extent, and under which conditions, can democracy promotion be regarded a just or unjust intervention? While focusing mainly on the question of if and when military interventions can be regarded as just, this debate nevertheless offers important insights into the justice conflicts that confront also the kinds of democracy promotion that are limited to non-coercive means. The overall issue at stake in this debate is, indeed, "a conflict between competing demands of justice": The aim to intervene into the internal affairs of a given

8 For exceptions, see Hurrell (2007), Pangle (2009), Gädeke (2010) and – with a view to conditionality – Collingwood (2003) and Pogge (2001).

9 See Beitz (1999, 2009); Brock (2009); Doyle (2009); Finlay (2007); Frankel et al. (2006); Grimm and Merkel (2008); Hurrell (2007); Müller (2009); Nagel (2005); Pangle (2009); Reisman (2000); Walzer (2008, 2006).

10 For the related – and in many ways interrelated – debate in international law, cf. Altman/Wellman (2009); Charlesworth (2012); Fabry (2009); Farer (2004); Fox/Roth (2000); R. Merkel (2008).

country in order to correct intolerable injustice clashes with the problem that any intervention – "whether military or nonmilitary" – "violates the right to self-determination of the citizens of the state that is the target of the intervention" (McMahan 1996: 2). Or, as Michael Doyle (2009: 350) puts it, "the cosmopolitan, humanitarian commitment to assistance" collides with the "respect for the significance of communitarian, national self-determination". Dispute about precise criteria notwithstanding, most scholars agree that this justice conflict largely dissolves when a given state massively violates basic human rights in a way that renders any notion of collective self-determination "cynical and irrelevant" (Walzer 2006 [1977]: 90).[11] Yet, with a view to democracy promotion, this leaves two issues unresolved: What about non-coercive means? And what about political aims that go well beyond a (however narrowly defined) set of basic human rights?

On the question of means, most scholars agree that established democracies "can never rightly use force to create a democratic regime in someone else's country" (Walzer 2008: 351; cf. W. Merkel 2008: 498).[12] In this, they can refer to both Immanuel Kant's *Perpetual Peace* and John Stuart Mill's *A Few Words on Non-Intervention* (Doyle 2009: 352; Jahn 2005: 188-189).[13] Yet, the demands of justice, according to liberal philosophers and theoreticians, are less clear when it comes to non-military means, or intervention in a broader sense.[14] John Rawls' *Law of Peoples*, for example, restricts just interventions in a way that leaves almost no room for any kind of activities directly aiming at democracy promotion. Liberal democracies, according to Rawls, have to tolerate non-democratic regimes as long as these respect some basic human rights and international rules and thereby qualify as "nonliberal but decent" (Rawls 1999: 3).[15] Toleration means "to recognize these nonliberal societies as equal participating members" (Rawls 1999: 59), which requires refraining from any activities that would deny this status as equal partners, including "the granting of subsidies to other peoples as incentives to become more liberal" (Rawls 1999: 85). Liberal-democratic states, in the Rawlsian perspective, should even refrain from "official criticisms with respect to these societies" (Macedo 2004: 1732) This far-reaching toleration, by allowing a recognition "of these societies as *bona fide* members of the Society of Peoples", is seen as the best means to indirectly promote democracy, because "withholding respect from decent peoples" would stifle their ability "to reform themselves in their own way" (Rawls 1999: 61). Ingeborg Maus, in a radical interpretation of Kant's plea for nonintervention, considers any direct interference in the

11 Cf. Doyle (2009: 361, 1983: 330-331); Macedo (2004: 1723); Rawls (1999: 81); M. Smith (2009: 80). While Rawls and Walzer define fairly restrictive criteria that a just war has to meet, cosmopolitan liberals set a much lower threshold of violations of liberal (human rights) standards that justify military interventions (cf. Beitz 2009). For a radical position against humanitarian intervention, see the interpretation of Kant by Ingeborg Maus (1998).

12 A possible, but still very much contested exception concerns the case when a "democratizing" military intervention aims at reversing a coup against a democratically elected government (Reisman 1990: 871; cf. Grimm 2010: 48-52). In addition, Finlay (2007) has argued that, under specific circumstances, "reform interventions" that aim at promoting democracy by supporting revolutionary movements could in principle be justified.

13 A different question, however, concerns the right (or even duty) to establish democracy "once states have used force for some other legitimate purpose, to defeat the Nazis, for example, or (hypothetically, since we did not do it) to stop a massacre in Rwanda" (Walzer 2008: 351; cf. Pangle 2009: 31-32). Quite a few scholars argue for such an *ex post* obligation to "political reconstruction" (Walzer 2008: 351) or, indeed, comprehensive democratization as part of an extended *jus post bellum* (W. Merkel 2008; cf. Grimm 2010: 56-59; Recchia 2009).

14 In international law, intervention is traditionally defined narrowly as "dictatorial interference" (Lassa Oppenheim, quoted in Doyle 2009: 350). But coercive or military intervention is, of course, not the only way in which states may actively interfere in other countries' internal affairs. McMahan (1996: 3) therefore defines intervention as "the use of coercion, compulsion, or manipulation by some external agent or agents in an effort to effect or to prevent changes in the policies or practices of a state" but adds that it would also be "perfectly acceptable" to also include "external assistance to a state that is intended to help the state defeat its internal opponents". "At the most general level, intervention refers to actions or policies designed to influence the affairs of a sovereign state and carried out by an agent external to that state." (Beitz 1999 [1979]: 72).

15 For Rawls' definition of decent peoples, see Rawls (1999: Part II). There are, of course, three more types of states – *outlaw states*, *burdened societies* and *benevolent absolutisms* – for which different normative guidelines apply, including the right to military intervention (in the case of outlaw states) or protectorates (in the case of burdened societies) (Rawls 1999: Part III). Which kinds of external interventions would be justifiable in states characterized by benevolent absolutism, remains unclear.

political affairs of other countries as a violation of popular sovereignty and, thus, limits democracy promotion to "indirect" means such as support for economic development (Maus 1998: 118).
Michael Walzer goes a bit further in the direction of active democrac promotion by arguing that states can "encourage democratization without using military force – through diplomacy, say, or ideological argument" (Walzer 2008: 351). While this allows for the kind of official criticism Rawls rejects, Walzer still seems to limit democracy promotion to the defense of "human rights by advocacy and example" (Walzer 2008: 352).[16] This corresponds to the classical liberal perspective, according to which "example and persuasion" constitute "the sole path open to fostering liberal democracy abroad" (Fabry 2009: 727; cf. Nussbaum 2006: 80). Thomas Nagel, without being precise about appropriate means, adds that external assistance can be considered just once internal developments already point in the right direction:

> "People engaged in a legitimate collective enterprise deserve respect and noninterference, especially if it is an obligatory enterprise like the provision of security, law, and social peace." (Nagel 2005: 135)
>
> "But there seems nothing wrong with being particularly supportive of transformations in a liberal direction." (Nagel 2005: 135)

Briefly discussing the spectrum of "non-belligerent tactics" to spread liberal democracy, Thomas Pangle concludes that "ideological" measures – "including inter-governmental dialogue, exhortation, propaganda, cultural exchange, and educational efforts of all kinds" – can be considered "to be almost always legitimate, and indeed obligatory – as an expression of the highest defining goals of liberal republicanism and its self-expression and self-affirmation." (Pangle 2009: 33) When turning to "the pressure of peaceful, but costly, sanctions of all sorts", "greater moral caution" is required because of "the respect hat is due to nonliberal regimes that are relatively unwarlike and unoppressive" (Pangle 2009: 33). The most intrusive policies that are still non-violent concern "material and educational support for indigenous nongovernmental or semi-governmental democratic organizations and movements within nonliberal nations"; these, accordingly, demand "still greater moral circumspection" (Pangle 2009: 33). Cosmopolitan liberals – following up on John Stuart Mill's plea for "benign colonialism" (Doyle 2009: 363; cf. Jahn 2005) – consider much more intrusive forms of intervention as potentially just. Charles Beitz, for example, acknowledges that, when dealing with a target state that "is just, or is likely to become just if left free from external interference", the prohibition of nonintervention would hold and include "subversion, payoffs to government officials, conditional aid, and similar techniques of influence" (Beitz 1999 [1979]: 91-92). Yet, if these conditions are not met, promoting "justice" from the outside by a wide range of measures can be perfectly just (Beitz 1999 [1979]: 92) and can even include "some form of imposed trusteeship or protectorate or shadow government" (Beitz 2009: 345; cf. Jahn 2005: 185).[17]
On the question of aims, Rawls, again, represents the most restrictive end of the spectrum. According to Rawls, as seen, once "nonliberal states" meet "a minimal condition of decency", the foreign policy of liberal states should not aim to move these further "toward liberalism" (Nagel 2005: 134; cf. Rawls 1999: 118). Drawing on Rawls, Stephen Macedo (2004: 1738) adds that "[d]ue respect for the project of collective self-governance requires that just societies resist the impulse simply to universalize principles arrived at within the horizons of one people's institutions, history, and culture." Walzer, while arguing in favor of using diplomatic protest as a means to promote democ-

16 "The old biblical idea about being 'a light unto the nations,' which implies that you just have to sit still and shine, is not the whole story of democratization but it is a good beginning." (Walzer 2008: 352) Walzer, in his piece, does not mention at all the question of active democracy assistance so it remains unclear to what extent this could constitute a further legitimate step in the "story of democratization".

17 To be sure, also in the fairly restrictive Rawlsian framework, there are still non-decent peoples, especially "outlaw states" and "burdened societies", towards which much more active and intrusive kinds of intervention are justified (Rawls 1999: Part III; cf. Jahn 2005: 186).

racy, in terms of the aims advises the established democracies to be "minimalists abroad", which implicates a focus on (basic) human rights:

> "Steady pressure on behalf of political decency and a sustained critique of brutality and repression are what we should expect from democratic states, and, except in humanitarian emergencies, not much more." (Walzer 2008: 352)

Andrew Hurrell also argues "that a core list of human rights should form the basis for international action rather than the aim of promoting democracy":

> "If external involvement is extended beyond this into the detailed ways in which policies are chosen and implemented, the central liberal principals of representation, of accountability, of pluralism and the respect for diversity will be undermined." (Hurrell 2007: 163)

Indeed, if we take the basic assumption that Rawls and Walzer – following Kant and Mill – make seriously, any attempt to shape the path of political development of other societies is deeply problematic. Just as Kant "made a strong case for respecting the right of nonintervention because it afforded a polity the necessary territorial space and political independence in which free and equal citizens could work out what their own way of life would be" and Mill added that intervention, even if well-meant, would actually undermine "the authenticity of domestic struggles for liberty" (Doyle 2009: 352),[18] Rawls argues that "[d]ecent societies should have the opportunity to decide their future for themselves" (Rawls 1999: 85). Walzer adds that democracy "has to be reached through a political process that, in its nature, can also produce different results"; as long as these results do not "threaten life and liberty", "the different political formations that emerge must be given room to develop (and change)" (Walzer 2004: 184).[19]

Most liberal scholars certainly see much less problems in advocating the explicit (if non-violent) promotion of specific liberal-democratic principles and institutions. Early on, for example, Michael Doyle has argued in favor of "economic means – sanctions or restricted interaction with nonliberal states, and extended aid and trade with liberal or transitional states – to promote liberal principles abroad" (Jahn 2005: 182; cf. Doyle 1983: 344-347). In general, there is a wide range of scholars who do not seem to see any injustice in the attempt to promote the spread of liberal democracy, even if it cannot count on explicit consensus in the target countries (cf. Jahn 2005: 185-186). Yet, to date, international political theorists have not comprehensively dealt with the question of which kinds of non-coercive democracy promotion activities are justified (or not) under which circumstances (cf. Gädeke 2010).[20]

In order to facilitate systematic theoretical reasoning, most scholars in this debate assume a relatively simple differentiation between democratic and non-democratic countries.[21] They, therefore, can avoid more complex questions about to what extent external actors are entitled to promote a

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18 Of course, Mill's plea for nonintervention was restricted to "civilized nations" and did not extend to "barbarians", which "have no rights as a *nation*, except a right to such treatment as may, at the earliest possible period, fit them for becoming one" (Mill 1859: 119; cf. Doyle 2009: 363-364). Kant's position on nonintervention, in this sense, was certainly less imperialist that Mill's (Jahn 2005; Maus 1998), but his notion of an "unjust enemy" also opens the door for interventionist policies, including coercive regime change (Pangle 2009: 29: cf. Müller 2006).

19 In the same way, Robert Cox (2002: 63) has argued that democracy and human rights, in order to be "fully legitimate" or "authentic", "must come from within".

20 Without speaking about specific means, Philip Pettit, for example, has made the case that "representative states will have commitments that give them normative reason for a concern with rectifying the problems of those who live under ineffective and non-representative states" (Pettit 2010: 89), while the only "satisfactory solution" is to replace such regimes "by states that are representative in the requisite sense" (Pettit 2010: 90): "The ideal of nondomination […] identifies the goal that established, representative states should seek to achieve, even as they act out of mixed or impure motives." (Pettit 2010: 90) Drawing on Pettit's notion of justice as non-domination, Gädeke argues that the role (and duty) of external actors is limited to "ensure that […] everyone has access to institutions of *fundamental* justice. All further claims to justice are then to be justified and realized autonomously within these institutions." (Gädeke 2010: 21)

21 Of course, the latter are then usually further differentiated: into nonliberal, but decent and other "peoples" which are not well-ordered in the case of Rawls, or into states that are likely to become just and other which are not, as Beitz has it (see above).

rather specific set of (liberal-democratic) institutions conceived, by them, to be universally just. When we turn to democracy promotion in countries that are, in terms of its basic political structures, already democratic, a second justice conflict adds to the overall one between the claims to self-determination and human rights/ democracy: What if just (democratic) procedures lead to decisions – "actual enactments of the democratic people" – that violate a given "interpretation" of "universal human rights" (Benhabib 2009: 191)?[22]

What follows from this brief review of debates in normative theory is that the question of whether which kinds of democracy promotion are to be regarded as just or unjust is far from easy to answer, even when limiting the discussion to peaceful means. As Thomas Pangle (2009: 31) puts it:

> "A liberal-democratic policy of seeking to spread democracies can all too easily become incoherent in practice: it can quickly come into conflict with a liberal respect for the self-determination of other nations – and with a liberal tolerance for the diversity of civic cultures."

And yet, a liberal-democratic policy that refrains from actively promoting democracy would obviously be not much better in terms of complying with liberally defined principles of justice. Quite clearly, democracy promotion is confronted with contradictory justice claims, which refer to competing entitlements and result in justice conflicts that can, arguably, not be resolved on the abstract level of philosophical reasoning.[23]

In contrast to these normative debates, the analytical focus on justice claims and justice conflicts proposed in this paper follows the pioneering work done by David Welch (1993) by taking an empirical look at a normative *problematique*.[24] This said, we apply a formal definition of justice – instead of a substantial or procedural one – that regards any claim for an entitlement as a justice claim (Müller 2010: 9). In order to qualify as an issue of justice, what matters, then, is not a particular substantial or procedural standard, but the question of whether actors perceive and present the benefits they demand (for themselves or others) as legitimate entitlements (see Welch 1993):

> "Justice reigns if actors have got what rightfully belongs to them; of course, what this might be is highly controversial within and across cultures. But this does not matter: As long as a speech act in politics has the structure of a claim for an entitlement, it satisfies the formal structure of a justice claim, independently of how it is substantiated." (Müller 2010: 9)

Such claims to entitlements can refer to quite different dimensions of justice. Regarding the "'what' of justice", Nancy Fraser (2009: 6) has, for example, proposed a three-dimensional approach that distinguishes between demands for a *redistribution* of resources, for *recognition* or for political *representation*.

3. Democracy Promotion as Interaction: An alternative perspective

There is broad consensus that democracy is not just a "good" that can be exported from one country to another (Bermeo 2009: 242; Fukuyama and McFaul 2005: 5). Democracy is a deeply contested concept, and there exists a variety of very different models of democracy, both in theory and

22 Seyla Benhabib's answer to the problem "of how to reconcile cosmopolitanism with the unique legal, historical, and cultural traditions and memories of a people, is that we must respect, encourage, and initiate multiple processes of democratic iteration" (Benhabib 2009: 198): "Universalist norms are thereby mediated with the self-understanding of local communities." (Benhabib 2009: 199)

23 As Hurrell (2007: 308) argues with a general view to justice in world politics: "Global justice is not something that can be deduced from abstract rational principles, nor can it be reflective of a single world view, religious or secular; it is, rather, a negotiated product of dialogue and deliberation and therefore always subject to revision and re-evaluation."

24 This is in line with the general approach taken in PRIF's research program on "Just Peace Governance" (Daase 2011; vgl. Baumgart-Ochse et al. 2011; Müller 2010). In terms of "Just Peace Governance", democracy promoters conceive of liberal democracy as the universal model for establishing a just and peaceful political order at the nation-state level. Yet, as will be seen, both the claim to *just* peace governance and the expectation of just *peace* governance are far from self-evident.

in the real world.[25] At the same time, most practitioners and scholars of democracy promotion agree that external actors can, at best, support the emergence, stabilization and improvement of a democratic regime that has to grow from within, has to be endorsed by both domestic elites and the general population, and, therefore, has to correspond to local norms and values. For example, Larry Diamond (2008: 316), one of the leading scholars in the field, emphasizes "the need for *local* ownership" as the "first and foremost" key principle for democracy assistance:

> "Assistance efforts must be grounded in the interests and needs of societal stakeholders, most of all the general public. For democracy assistance to be legitimate, effective, and sustainable, it must respond to local priorities and initiatives rather than impose preconceived formulas from the outside." (Diamond 2008: 316)[26]

Even former US President George W. Bush paid lip service to this consensus view:

> "Freedom, by its nature, must be chosen, and defended by citizens, and sustained by the rule of law and the protection of minorities. And when the soul of a nation finally speaks, the institutions that arise may reflect customs and traditions very different from our own. America will not impose our own style of government on the unwilling. Our goal instead is to help others find their own voice, attain their own freedom, and make their own way." (Bush 2005)[27]

This acknowledgment, however, has crucial implications for democracy promotion – implications both scholars and politicians have yet to seriously engage with (see Kurki 2010). If every society has to develop its own set of norms, institutions and styles of democratic government, then countries that are trying to introduce or improve democracy have to appropriate the broad and heterogeneous set of norms that is generally associated with democracy. Such appropriation or "localization" involves a process of "active construction" in which ideas, norms and institutions are adapted to "local beliefs and practices" (Acharya 2004: 245; Zimmermann 2010).[28] As a consequence, democracy promoters cannot simply stick to their particular concept of democracy but have to reconsider what is to be promoted in a given situation: If a variety of models of democracy exists, and if the shape and content of democracy is processed by local actors based on local beliefs and practices, then it is not enough to design context-sensitive democracy promotion strategies and programs, but the normative premises and conceptual underpinnings of democracy promotion themselves have to be adapted in the light of local conditions. Of course, the processes of adaption (on the part of the donor) and appropriation (on the part of the recipient) have to be closely related. While local appropriation of norms can happen without any active external interference, adapting democracy promotion to local conditions can only result from interaction.

There is no need to emphasize that external democracy promotion, by definition, involves some kind of interaction between donor and recipient. Yet, interaction as it is meant here is different from the kind of interaction that is usually acknowledged in the literature on and the practice of democracy promotion. The latter can be described as a unidirectional interaction between collective actors in which one actor promotes a given set of norms vis-à-vis the other actor by applying a series of strategies (ranging from persuasion, material support and incentives to sanctions, threats

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25 Cf. Held (1995: Chapter 1); Hobson and Kurki (2012); Hurrell (2007: 157-158); Kurki (2010); Schmidt (1996); Schmitter and Karl (1991: 83-85).

26 See also Bermeo (2009: 242-245); Fukuyama and McFaul (2005: 5); Youngs (2012: 115).

27 Similarly, the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, in the official German document on democracy promotion, maintains that democracy promotion is not about supporting "a specific form of democracy" but about implementing the "principles" of democracy and the rule of law (BMZ 2005: 6).

28 With a view to the general question of "how to reconcile cosmopolitanism with the unique legal, historical, and cultural traditions and memories of a people", Seyla Benhabib (2009: 198) calls for processes of "legal and political contestation" where "the meaning of rights and other fundamental constitutional principles are reposited, resignified, and reappropriated by new and excluded groups, or by the citizenry in the face of unprecedented hermeneutic challenges and meaning constellations".

and military force). Interaction, as it is meant here, requires meaningful dialogue and substantial negotiation about the set of norms that is to be promoted.[29] This alternative perspective on democracy promotion as interaction, thus, differs from mainstream scholarship with regard to one important assumption: the "formula" that is to be promoted cannot be taken for granted but, itself, has to be reconsidered normatively (which democratic norms in which shape and combination are appropriate for the country at hand?) and analyzed empirically (which model of democracy is promoted in a given case and how does it relate to political beliefs and practices in the recipient country?).[30]

As noted, the mainstream work on democracy promotion either implicitly or explicitly takes a unidirectional perspective. Most empirical studies that are interested in analyzing the strategies, logics of influence and consequences of democracy promotion accept that such policies are based on a certain model of liberal democracy and do not regard the question of conceptual adaption or contextualization as a relevant issue. This is obviously the case for quantitative studies on the impact of democracy promotion (cf. Finkel et al. 2007; Scott and Steele 2011), but the qualitative literature that draws on the concept of international socialization (cf. Cowles et al. 2001; Schimmelfennig et al. 2006) likewise accepts the given set of (democratic) norms as the benchmark against which success and failure of norm take-over is to be measured. The same holds true for most qualitative studies that explicitly deal with democracy promotion (Kurki 2010: 365-370). E.g., an edited volume on *Democracy Assistance* (Burnell 2000a) explicitly starts out from the two-fold assumption that, empirically, "the notions of democracy that lie at the centre of much democracy assistance, while not all being identical, occupy a limited range" whereas, normatively, "to promote something other than elements of the standard western experience would be reprehensible if it meant exporting untried models of democracy that are judged too risky to entertain at home" (Burnell 2000b: 4). A recent volume that compares US and European democracy promotion policies (Magen et al. 2009), in the introductory chapter, notes the "triumph of democracy as an ideal and system of government"; observes a common "normative commitment to democracy and the objective of its promotion outside" by the US and Europe; and then focuses on the analysis of the differences and commonalities in terms of strategies of promoting democracy (Magen and McFaul 2009: 5, 11). Another comparative study (Schraeder 2002a) does look at differences in "the nature of the democracy promotion policies" in terms of more specific targets or dimensions (Schraeder 2002b: 228). Yet, the focus here is on general differences between donors (namely the US, Germany, Japan and the Nordic countries) and not on processes of adaption to local conditions; consequently, the variance is explained by divergent foreign policy interests with the recipients playing no role at all (Schraeder 2002b: 228-230).

Authors that are more concerned with normative or policy-oriented statements equally avoid the question of whether it could be useful to consider contestation about democracy as a relevant sub-

29 In this sense, Milja Kurki emphasizes the "conceptual contestability" of democracy (Kurki 2010) and calls for a "more equal and more dialogical approach to democracy promotion" (Kurki 2010: 383) that takes into account the need to pluralize and contextualize conceptions of democracy (see also Teivainen 2009; Hobson and Kurki 2012). With a view to liberal peace-building, Oliver Richmond argues for a "post-liberal peace" which requires "that democracy and the formation of state institutions is at least partially determined and expressed by local voices expressing the full range of everyday issues and processes. This then takes the form of a negotiation between the range of local actors and international actors over the processes, institutions and aims of political organization and mobilization for peace." (Richmond 2010: 690) Such negotiation would include both arguing and bargaining – two communication modes which, in general, can be distinguished analytically only (empirically, they usually appear simultaneously) (Deitelhoff and Müller 2005: 171).

30 We focus here on the mainstream body of democracy promotion scholarship. With a view to the literature on norm diffusion within International Relations (IR), Acharya (2004: 242-244) shows that existing approaches are largely characterized by a static view of (given) norms and a unidirectional perspective on norm transfer (see also Zimmermann 2010: 2-9). Regarding the related debate on liberal peace-building, see Richmond (2010), Roberts (2008), Tadjbakhsh (2011) and Chandler (2010), and on state-building Jahn (2007a, b) and Bliesemann de Guevara and Kühn (2010). On norm contestation in IR, see Wiener (2009).

ject for either scholars or practitioners.[31] Even scholars who look critically at one-size-fits-all approaches to democracy promotion[32] understand context-sensitivity or case-specificity largely in terms of a strategic adaptation to local capacities and framework conditions, not in terms of contested norms. If ideological challenges to liberal democracy are discussed, the focus is mostly on non-democratic alternatives and not on (perhaps non-liberal) challenges *within democracy*.[33] Likewise, among practitioners, the recent "backlash" against democracy has not led to "any substantial reconsideration or reformulation of their work" (Carothers 2010: 66).[34] As Milja Kurki (2010: 363) concludes with a view to both scholarship and practice, "a broad consensus continues to exist on the belief that democracy promotion entails *liberal democracy promotion*, that is, the promotion of certain key liberal democratic procedures" (emphasis in the original; cf. Ayers 2009: 7-10). In his introduction to a recent edited volume on *New Challenges to Democratization*, Peter Burnell states:

> "Democracy is of course a much-contested concept. But in most of the discourse on democratization and in the understandings held by democracy promoters also there are certain widely accepted notions of electoral democracy and liberal democracy […]." (Burnell 2010: 2; cf. Burnell 2000b: 4; Carothers 1999: 85-88)

To be sure, there are several authors who recognize the need to reconsider the normative premises und conceptual underpinnings of "North-Western" democracy promotion.[35] Yet, we intend to take this debate one step further: from highlighting and criticizing problematic assumptions to looking, empirically, at the role and the fate of these normative assumptions in the interaction between donors and recipients. In order to analytically approach this normative dimension of interaction,

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31 Larry Diamond, as seen, emphasizes "the need for *local* ownership" (Diamond 2008: 317). However, the current "democratic recession" (56-87) notwithstanding, there is no question that "democracy is really the only broadly legitimate form of government in the world" (13). In the end, it is "the policies and the collective will of the established democracies" that should make the difference (13), and there is no hint that Diamond conceives of local ownership as something that would possibly involve rethinking what democracy means in any substantial sense. More explicitly, Fukuyama and McFaul argue that democracy cannot be imposed on a society but that democracy promotion "is intended only to help reveal public preferences in the society itself"; yet, because liberal democracy "serves universal needs or performs functions that are universally necessary", such public preferences will always be in favor of the type of democracy we know (Fukuyama and McFaul 2005: 5). Grävingholt et al. (2009) emphasize the general need of context-sensitivity in democracy promotion but then refer to the selection of appropriate partners, the choice of appropriate timing and the sequencing of support measures only – not to the potential need to revise the set of norms or the model of democracy in the light of changing political contexts.

32 Cf. Carothers (2007a); Grävingholt et al. (2009); Hill (2010); Leininger (2010).

33 Cf. Burnell (2010: 9-10); McFaul (2010: 37-41); NED (2006: 8-9); Ottaway (2010).

34 "Although democracy assistance groups have in some cases pulled back in response to the backlash, they have not changed their basic methods or practices. Most of the US groups that tend to carry out the more politically assertive side of democracy aid have not engaged in any substantial reconsideration or reformulation of their work. They have not done so both because they feel they are fully justified in pushing when they can on authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes […] and that any pulling back would only be rewarding repression and resistance to democratic change. To the extent they see a need to change their methods in response to the backlash, they see it as arising with regards to communication about what they do – if concerned governments and public better understood what Western democracy assistance is in fact rather than in myth, their thinking goes, such governments would object less to it." (Carothers 2010: 66)

35 Cf. Barany and Moser (2009); Burnell and Youngs (2010); Carothers (2000: 194-195); Goldsmith (2008); Hobson and Kurki (2012); Hurrell (2007: Chapter 6); Jahn (2007a, b); Kurki (2010); Leininger (2010); Risse (2009: 266); T. Smith (2007); Sørensen (2011: 57-58). "… [T]here is a sense in which the failures of democratization must push scholars to think harder about the relevance of western-derived analytical frameworks and models of democracy and democratic change to societies whose political traditions, social structure and culture may be fundamentally different." (Burnell 2010: 5) "There is increased contestation as to the nature of democracy, increasing expectations as to what democratic systems should deliver, and increasing discontent with the gap between inflated expectations and delivered outcomes. Hence, there is renewed debate about the adequacy of minimalist and procedural conception of democracy and, indeed, about the meaning of democracy itself. 'Democracy' turns out to have an inherently contested and unstable meaning. As with 'self-determination', this inevitably raises serious problems as to the status of democracy as a core constitutive norm of contemporary international society. The very uneven and uncertain process of democratization also raises serious doubts as to whether democratization should be viewed as a forward process in which setbacks and problems are merely temporary aberrations." (Hurrell 2007: 157-158)

we propose a focus on justice conflicts as the underlying *problematique* democracy promoters are confronted with.

4. The Normative Dimension of Interaction: A conceptual proposal

The normative premises that underlie the rise of contemporary democracy promotion policies since the 1980s include three crucial assumptions: that liberal democracy constitutes *the* universally valid model of a just political order; that democratization, in addition, serves a range of other normative goals (peace in particular, but also, e.g., development-oriented aims); and that, in democracy promotion, the values and interests of democratic states become one. Of course, each of these assumptions is questionable, thus giving rise to potentially serious conflicts that can be conceptualized as different types of justice conflicts.

The end of the Cold War and the "third wave of democratization" (Huntington 1991) did not only create new opportunities and demands for democracy promotion, but, in 1990, "democracy enjoyed an unrivalled position as an ideology for humankind" (Burnell 2000c: 39). While, in the early 1990s, liberal democracy seemed to take hold in more and more countries around the globe, the related notions of a universal value of democracy (Sen 1999), an international right to democracy (Franck 1992; cf. Fox and Roth 2000) and an international norm of democracy promotion (McFaul 2004; Schraeder 2003: 40) became increasingly popular (cf. Hurrell 2007: Chapter 6). In the North-Western discourse, democracy was more and more seen as a global entitlement that binds all nation-states in both moral and legal terms.[36] Consequently, state sovereignty and the right to non-interference were seen as conditioned by "a growing array of standards pertaining first and foremost to human rights, but more recently also to democracy" (Brock 2009: 224; cf. McFaul 2004: 83-85; Reisman 2000). In this context, democracy promotion as an international practice became regarded as not only both legitimate and legal,[37] but even as an international norm that shifts "the normative burden […] to those not interested in advocating democracy promotion" (McFaul 2004: 158).

At the same time, crucial paradigm shifts in political science established democracy promotion as the ideal means to serve both a whole range of other normative aims and the classic "national interests" (cf. Spanger and Wolff 2007b). In reference to democratic peace theory, advancing democracy globally was supposed to extend a community of democracies characterized by peace, stability and prosperity (Cox et al 2000b; Ikenberry 1999). Regarding the link between democracy and development, the emphasis on the social prerequisites for democracy associated with traditional modernization theory was replaced by Amartya Sen's dictum that "a country does not have to be deemed fit *for* democracy; rather, it has to become fit *through* democracy" (Sen 1999: 4; emphasis in the original). Democratic peace theory, in fact, became a standard argument for democracy promotion in both scholarship and political rhetoric.[38] Especially in the US discourse, the notion of a democratic peace enabled scholars and politicians to elevate democracy promotion to a national "grand strategy" (Ikenberry 1999; cf. T. Smith 1994) in the framework of which "values and interests reinforce each other" (Talbott 1996: 49) to become, in the long term, "absolutely identical" (Rice 2008).[39]

As a result, by promoting democracy, democratic states were seen as contributing to the spread of justice (because of the inherent value of democracy as *the* just political order), as furthering the cause of peace, and as supporting their own "national interests" (cf. Spanger and Wolff 2007a: 263-

36 Cf. Fox (2000); Franck (1992); McFaul (2004).

37 As Carothers (2010: 70) has argued, the underlying logic that democracy promoters refer to when justifying their continuous work in the face of local resistance is "that governments which fall short on democracy are entitled to less political sovereignty than democratic governments".

38 Cf. Cox et al. (2000a); Hobson (2008); Ish-Shalom (2006); Poppe (2010); T. Smith (2007); Wolff and Wurm (2011).

39 This notion of mutual reinforcement of US (liberal) values and US (material) interests refers to both interests related to peace and security as well as to economic interests (see the contributions in Cox et al. 2000a and the US National Security Strategies from 1995, 2002 and 2006).

264). Although the liberal triumphalism that is reflected in these three assumptions has always been contested,[40] events and trends since the turn of the century have led scholars to critically assess the normative premises of democracy promotion. The evolving new context is characterized by the legacy of the George W. Bush administration and, in particular, the 2003 invasion of Iraq; by ambivalent and non-linear trends in the evolution of national political orders that have led to an increasingly plural picture of diverse types of (semi-)authoritarian and hybrid as well as a range of most differently democratic regimes; a changing international correlation of power characterized by the rise (and rising assertiveness) of non- or semi-democratic states like China, Russia or Venezuela; and, associated with the three former features, a backlash against democracy promotion, i.e. open resistance to external support for democratic reforms and civil-society groups.[41] At the moment, therefore, the optimism has largely vanished and the critics of democracy promotion have gained strength both in the political and the academic arena. This refers to all three normative assumptions outlined.

First, whether in China or Russia, the Middle East or South America, the claim to self-determined political development that may involve not only a different path and pace of democratization but also an alternative end point (i.e., a different conception of democracy) is pitted against the alleged universal entitlement to liberal democracy as conceived of in the global "North-West".[42] Hence the (re-)increasing questioning of "western-derived analytical frameworks and models of democracy" (Burnell 2010: 5) and the rising "attention to the question of norms concerning democracy assistance" (Carothers 2010: 67; cf. Mahbubani 2009). Second, given the experience with liberal peace-building and coerced regime change,[43] it is largely acknowledged that the aims of democratization and peace-building frequently clash.[44] Third, electoral results in the Middle East (like the 2006 victory of Hamas in Palestine, cf. Turner 2006) and South America (like the series of victories of Venezuelan Hugo Chávez or Bolivian Evo Morales, cf. Gratius and Legler 2009), and strong interests in the cooperation with autocratic leaders (in China or Saudi Arabia) on bilateral or global issues (cf. Carnegie Europe 2009; Hurrell 2007: 295) have, once again, demonstrated that the potential long-term confluence of values and interests does not help to decide conflicts of aims that emerge in real time. This is also true for the so-called "Arab Spring", even if the toppling of long-term autocrats in Egypt and Tunisia has generally revived optimism with regard to the global attraction of liberal democracy (cf. Burnell 2011b; Hollis 2012).

Hence, democracy promoters are confronted with a series of conflicts of aims that involve, inter alia, difficult normative questions.[45] As argued in the introduction to this piece, the common denominator of these normative challenges is that they render problematic basic claims to entitlements associated with democracy promotion. The result is a series of justice conflicts that shape both the devising and adapting of democracy promotion strategies on the part of the donor (the processing of justice conflicts) and the interaction between external actors and recipients (the negotiation of justice conflicts). At the heart of this *problematique* is what Nancy Fraser (2009: Chap-

40 Cf. the debate in Fox and Roth (2000) on the contested right to democracy, Mansfield and Snyder (2005, 2008) and Hegre et al. (2001) on democratization's uncertain promise of peace, and the contributions in Cox et al. (2000a) on the question whether democracy promotion serves US "national interests".

41 Cf. Burnell (2010, 2011a); Carothers (2010); Goldsmith (2008); Müller (2009); NED (2006); T. Smith (2007); Whitehead (2009).

42 "The entitlement of particular actors to support democratic progress abroad and the legitimacy of democracy promotion overall appear to be accepted less now than when McFaul (2004-5) said democracy promotion had achieved 'world value' status" (Burnell 2011b: 6-7). In a general sense, this relates to what Bundegaard (2010: 6) calls "the sovereignty-responsibility normative divide" that runs "between a state sovereignty defending South-East and a human rights responsibility proponing North-West".

43 Cf. Grimm and Merkel (2008); Jarstad and Sisk (2008); Paris (2004); Tadjbakhsh (2011).

44 Whereas democracy promoters in the 1990s tended to ignore this potential conflict in their official statements as they generally claimed that democracy promotion leads to stabilization and peace (Cox 2000: 226; Doyle 2000: 21), more recent documents explicitly refer to the specific challenges for democracy promotion in post-conflict situations (cf. BMZ 2005: 19-20; USAID 2005: 13).

45 Cf. Spanger and Wolff (2007a); Wolff and Wurm (2011). See also the forthcoming Democratization Special Issue on "Conflicting Objectives in Democracy Promotion" (Grimm et al. 2012).

ter 4) has called a context of "abnormal justice": a situation in which "the grammar of justice itself is up for grabs" (Fraser 2009: 50). Normative contestation about democracy promotion is not "only" about substantive questions concerning, e.g., the appropriate model of a just political order. It also includes basic disagreement about the kind(s) of actors which are entitled to make justice claims (individuals, states, external actors?) as well as about the proper arena or frame in which such claims should be dealt with (nation-state, inter- or transnational relations?) while established institutions for dealing with justice conflicts between donors and recipients are missing.[46]

Following the framework of PRIF's research program on "Just Peace Governance" and adopting a formal definition of justice (see Section 2), we distinguish between five types of justice conflicts (cf. Daase 2011: 8-9; Müller 2010: 4). In justice conflicts in a narrow sense, justice claims collide. Such a clash may either emerge when different justice-related demands are derived from the same principle of justice (*application conflict*) or when they refer to different principles of justice (*conflict of principles*). In a broader sense, justice conflicts include those types of conflict, in which justice claims are present on, at least, one side of the equation. These justice-related conflicts delineate those situations in which justice-related aims clash with other types of objectives. In a *conflict of values*, justice claims collide with other demands that are related to the common good but independent of questions of justice (e.g., peace). In a *conflict of preferences*, justice claims and narrowly defined "material" interests collide. Furthermore, there is a meta-level: In a *conflict of recognition* actors dispute each other's status as legitimate justice claimants, i.e. as having the legitimacy to make justice claims at all. This last type, again, represents a justice conflict in a narrow sense as both the denial of, and the demand for recognition, are clearly justice-related claims. Given our interest in the normative challenges to democracy promotion, narrowly defined justice conflicts are of particular interest for the research agenda to be outlined.

Justice conflicts in democracy promotion, at the same time, can play out at different levels. Justice conflicts may be something *internal to* the democracy promoter. Here, a particular context or specific events in the recipient country give rise to conflicting objectives, which involve justice-related aims, on the part of the external actor; such conflicts are *conflicts between competing aims and beliefs* a specific actor holds. Justice conflicts can also emerge *between* democracy promoters and recipients. Here, the conflict situation is constituted by competing claims of external and local actors; it is a conflict *between actors* that make competing claims. There is, of course, an additional level – *internal* justice conflicts *in recipient countries* – and, given the fact that democratization is first and foremost an internal process, it is arguably the most important one. Yet, to include domestic justice conflicts as an additional object of research would require an analysis of the diverse and complex political dynamics in recipient countries with a view to the shaping of political order and social conflict. While this is certainly an important research agenda situated at the level of domestic politics, in research focusing on international democracy promotion it is reasonable to look at this level only to the extent that it gives rise either to conflicting objectives on the part of the democracy promoters or to conflicting local claims directed against external actors. The focus of this paper is, therefore, on the processing of justice conflicts on the part of the democracy promoters and the negotiation of justice conflicts in the interaction between donors and recipients.

Table 1 maps the typology of justice conflicts we propose. In justice conflicts in a narrow sense, justice claims collide. With a view to democracy promotion, the situation that gives rise to such justice conflicts is contestation about the nature and shape of a just political order, taking either the form of a conflict of application or a conflict of principle (Conflict 1). *Between* external and local actors such contestation may either arise if shared democratic principles are interpreted, applied and/or prioritized in different ways, or when there is fundamental disagreement about basic principles of political rule. With a view to the former, these application conflicts may concern differ-

46 Fraser's notion of "abnormal justice" further emphasizes the need for interaction in democracy promotion: In "abnormal times", justice conflicts cannot be dealt with in a "monological" way but require "a dialogical process" (Fraser 2009: 68).

ences, e.g., between presidential and parliamentary systems, mechanisms of majority rule and power sharing, representative and direct democracy. With a view to the latter, the individualist conception of justice which is at the heart of liberal democracy may collide with conceptions of justice which give priority to collective and/or communitarian rights (conflict of principles). Clashing understandings of a just political order, at the *internal* level of the democracy promoter, render problematic the justice-related norms that guide democracy promotion: How is the principle of "country ownership" to be applied under circumstances of contestation (conflict of application)?[47] How is the conflict between the individual entitlement to democracy and the collective right to self-determination to be resolved (conflict of principle)?[48]

Table 1: Justice Conflicts in Democracy Promotion

Conflict	Type	Specification
Justice conflicts		
(1) Contested political models	Conflict of application or principle	Liberal democracy in conflict with alternative (non-liberal or non-democratic) conceptions of a just political order
(2) Contested interference	Conflict of application or principle	Interference based on individual rights versus non-interference based on right to collective self-determination
(3) Contested recognition	Conflict of recognition	Contestation about who and according to what criteria to recognize as legitimate justice claimant
Justice-related conflicts (justice conflicts in a broader sense)		
(4) Justice vs. peace	Conflict of values	Conflict between different values: promoting a just political order (democracy) or preserving intra-state peace
(5) Justice vs. interests	Conflict of preferences	Conflict between different preferences: promoting a just political order (democracy) or protecting/promoting ("material") self-interests

Internal processing of conflicts by donors (*level of processing*)

Negotiation of conflicts between donors and recipients (*level of interaction*)

This problem of ownership/self-determination already points to a second justice conflict, in which contestation is about whether or not external actors have the right to interfere in another country's internal affairs (Conflict 2). Whereas external military intervention may be the most extreme case of interference, it can be argued that any kind of involvement in another state's affairs constitutes an illegitimate act (see above, Section 2). When it comes to the interaction *between* external and local actors, democracy promoters invoke the universal right to democracy that applies to each individual and thus claim to intervene on behalf of those who have been denied their basic rights. External interference, however, runs into conflict with two other valued international principles, namely the right to self-determination of peoples and the national sovereignty of each state (Ikenberry 2011: 287-290). *Internally*, democracy promoters have to come to terms with this conflict as

47 Another application problem at the internal level concerns the question of how to translate the abstract entitlement to democracy into specific aims and indicators of democracy promotion programs.

48 This requires what Youngs (2012: 115) calls the need "to work towards squaring the circle": While promoting democracy, from the liberal perspective, is about promoting "a system that (simply) creates space for a variety of local choices", "core liberal freedoms are required to make such local choices". Yet, if external actors insist on such freedoms, this is then often regarded as "a corruption of local autonomy".

well, as promoting democracy, in principle, is based on individual political and civil rights *as well as* on the notion of collective self-determination. While these principles may be starkly pitted against each other (conflict of principles), the more likely case is that actors argue about the manner and degree to which they should be applied in a given situation (conflict of application). Local actors may welcome a certain degree of external support but may resent too much pressure or the imposition of sanctions. External actors may also debate internally how to balance their commitments against each other: How much "Liberalism of Imposition", how much "Liberalism of Restraint" is appropriate (Sørensen 2011)?[49]

At the most fundamental level – and in the most extreme cases – external and local actors can refuse to recognize each other as legitimate justice claimants (Conflict 3). Such conflicts of recognition emerge *between* external actors and recipients either when a local actor demands such recognition but is seen by democracy promoters as illegitimate in this respect – or when the external democracy promoter is regarded illegitimate by one or several local actors. E.g., in the contemporary "backlash" against democracy promotion, some "non-Western" governments reject external advice and pressure on domestic political issues by claiming that outsiders do not have any legitimate say in the internal affairs of sovereign states, whereas, conversely, some liberal analysts and politicians reject these demands by "autocratic leaders" as they deny them the status of legitimate justice claimants.[50] At the *internal* level of the democracy promoter, such conflicts of recognition raise crucial questions about the appropriate rules and criteria of recognition: In deciding with whom to cooperate and whose voices to hear, should such recognition be based on formal authority (government as official representative of a state and a people), empirical legitimacy (political forces that receive broad support in the population) or on the nature of behavior and claims (political forces whose behavior and claims are deemed just by the external actors)?[51]

In a broader sense, justice-related conflicts involve a clash between justice-related aims and other types of objectives. If democratization is perceived to threaten intra-state peace, a conflict of values pits justice (the perceived entitlement to democracy) against another normative, but not justice-related aim (peace) (Conflict 4). Regarding the level of interaction *between* external and local actors, recipient governments may reject democracy not on principle but because it is seen as threatening political stability and intra-state peace (which are potentially considered to be more fundamental aims because destabilization and civil war undermine any prospects for democracy). As regards the *internal* level, democracy promoters may themselves perceive democratization as a threat to peace – or, conversely, perceive the use of force as necessary to promote democracy. Both problems – democratization as a potential threat to peace and "democratic wars" as an alleged means to promote democracy – have been extensively addressed in critical analyses of democratic peace theory.[52] In addition, as is well-known in the research on democracy promotion, in the actual practice of foreign and developmental policies, the normative goal to promote democracy

49 As Sørensen (2011: 43) shows, both a pluralist "Liberalism of Restraint" that "emphasizes tolerance of diversity, moderation, holding back, empathy, nonintervention, and peaceful cooperation" and a universalist "Liberalism of Imposition" that "accentuates that liberal principles are morally superior to other principles and universally valid" and, hence, "supports activism, intervention, and, in the international realm, the change of nonliberal regimes to liberal regimes" refer to basic liberal principles of a just world order – and both are equally contradictory (Sørensen 2011: 58; see also Ikenberry 2011: 287-290).

50 Cf. Carothers (2006); Gershman and Allen (2006); NED (2006).

51 In a piece about the "awkward coupling" of state sovereignty and democracy, Whitehead (2010: 25) illustrates this basic conflict of recognition as seen from the perspective of the democracy promoter: "It is not enough to respect the sovereignty of those states that can be unambiguously assigned to the 'democratic' side of the global community. There are still far too many states (with supporting populations) whose democratic credentials are insecure, contested, or outright lacking. They will continue to exist, and to play an active part in the international community. They will often even provide services such as security and identity to their subject populations, who may therefore feel threatened when their sovereignty is contested from without. And, in most cases, these states will be the most plausible, if not the sole bearers of national hopes for eventual progress with democratization as well. So the suspension of their sovereignty is neither a practical nor a prudent method of advancing the course of democracy in the world, except under the most extremely restricted circumstances."

52 Cf. Geis et al. (2006); Goldsmith (2008); Mansfield and Snyder (2005); T. Smith (2007).

regularly collides with "national interests" on the part of the donors (Conflict 5).[53] Regarding the interaction *between* democracy promoters and recipients, the latter can justify challenges to external (donor) interests by referring to the entitlement to democratic self-determination and, thereby, make it difficult for democracy promoters to justify countermeasures to protect their "material" interests (cf. Wolff 2012). As for the *internal* level, democracy promoters have to decide on the relative importance of the justice motive (democracy promoter's drive to correct a perceived other-referential injustice, in David Welch's terms) vis-á-vis "traditional" (security, economic) self-interests.[54]

In principle, democracy promoters have vowed to do justice to these competing norms and interests: While the promotion of democracy is supposed to endow all human beings with their inalienable rights, local conceptions of justice are to be respected and accounted for, and everyone involved should benefit from democracy promotion's advancement of peace and prosperity. Yet, as seen, the harmonious idea that, in democracy promotion, all good things go together is regularly contradicted by the justice conflicts that characterize the political dynamics in a plural world.[55]

5. Analyzing Justice Conflicts in Democracy Promotion: First sketches of a research agenda

Contemporary challenges to democracy promotion demonstrate that the interaction between donors and recipients is about more than just the proper implementation of a given set of (liberal-democratic) norms. To the extent that democracy promotion as interaction involves negotiation about the set of norms that is to be implemented/promoted, a series of justice conflicts is to be expected. How such justice conflicts are tackled is arguably of crucial importance for both the effectiveness and the conflict-proneness of democracy promotion policies.[56] A research project that follows the path outlined in this paper would, thus, have to deal with the two main questions (1) to what extent and how democracy promoters process such justice conflicts, and (2) to what extent and how justice conflicts are negotiated in the interaction between donors and recipients. In order to analyze how justice conflicts are processed by democracy promoters and negotiated between donors and recipients, one first has to empirically assess the (different types of) justice claims articulated by recipients vis-à-vis external democracy promoters, the justice claims contained in the conception of democracy promotion policies on the part of the donors, and the (different types of) justice conflicts donors are confronted with in their democracy promotion policies.

Regarding both the processing of justice conflicts on the part of the donors and the negotiation (arguing and bargaining) between donors and recipients, it is of crucial interest to what extent and under which conditions democracy promoters call into question the universal claim to liberal democracy as the global model of a just and peaceful political order: Do the above-mentioned justice conflicts provoke a revisiting of the universal applicability of democracy or of the universal suitability of the (democratic) justice principles themselves, or do democracy promoters, at best, adjust their foreign and development policies in a pragmatic fashion? To what extent and under which conditions do democracy promoters accept diverging justice claims made by recipients as legitimate and/or put their justice claims up for discussion (conflicts of application, principle and recognition)? When the stabilization of a country is put at risk by justice claims, do democracy promoters tend to favor the keeping or establishing of the peace at the cost of injustice (to some) or

53 Cf. Schraeder (2002a); T. Smith (1994); Spanger and Wolff (2007a).

54 Among scholars there is a virtual consensus that, when the aim to promote democracy clashes with "hard" economic or security interests, the former is generally relegated to the place of secondary objective (cf. Schraeder 2003: 33; Spanger and Wolff 2007: 264). Yet, in terms of the normative premises that underpin democracy promotion, such a secondary status is difficult to grasp theoretically (Wolff and Wurm 2011). To study such conflicts of goals as justice conflicts promises, therefore, new insights into the complex relation and articulation between normative premises and "material" interests in the foreign policies of democratic states.

55 Cf. Cox (2002: Chapter 10); Hurrell (2007: 158-163); Müller (2010); Sørensen (2011: Chapter 2).

56 While not looking at the issue of democracy promotion, William Zartman (2008) has generally argued that communication about justice – and namely the search for an agreeable principle of justice – is a crucial dimension of negotiation and conflict management at the international level (cf. Albin 2001).

tend to push for a maximum degree of justice and risk further destabilization (conflict of values)? And, finally, when the goal of promoting democracy comes into conflict with specific material interests perceived as central, how is this conflict resolved (conflict of goals)? Obviously, the same kinds of questions are also relevant with a view to actors on the recipient side of the equation: Do they dogmatically stick to their particular justice claims or principles? Are they willing to genuinely argue about and, perhaps, revisit their normative premises?

Looking at the interaction between donors and recipients, the question is whether the negotiation of justice conflicts leads to the identification of a normative common ground, to an agreement about applicable principles of justice.[57] Alternatively, actors may not resolve their justice-related differences but find some kind of a pragmatic compromise. Either they agree on what Zartman (2008: 76) calls "compound justice" (e.g. by pairing different principles of justice or exchanging concessions), or they agree to not agree on substantial questions of justice but decide to focus on common interests or on specific, non-contentious issues instead. Activities in the area of democracy promotion will, in the latter case, probably be de-politicized, downgraded, or entirely abandoned. Finally, non-resolved justice conflicts may also escalate, turning democracy promotion into an issue that affects – and, in fact, contaminates – overall bilateral relations. In the most extreme cases, either recipient governments may force through their particular justice claims by expelling foreign democracy promotion agencies from the country and violently repressing local recipients, or democracy promoters may enforce their justice claims by military force – thus opting for coerced regime change.

Given the prominent analytical role of justice *claims* in this research agenda, rhetoric and communication constitute the initial focus of the research. It is only through the perceptions and assessments of actors that an issue becomes justice-related, and it is only through speech acts that we can observe that justice-related considerations are involved (cf. Müller 2011). Yet, the analysis of justice *conflicts* – and how they are processed and negotiated – has to go beyond assessing the corresponding discourses. With a view to implementation of democracy promotion policies, this would include finding answers to questions such as: To what extent does justice-related criticism of democracy promotion in recipient countries lead to open resistance against democracy promotion? To what extent (and by which means) do democracy promoters try to force through their contested justice claims? To what extent does a reconsideration of democracy promotion principles/aims (as described above) translate into adjustments of democracy promotion policies "on the ground"? And, generally, to what extent do justice conflicts observed in the discourses about democracy promotion internally show up in the interaction between donors and recipients when it comes to implementing democracy promotion?

6. Outlook: Why justice conflicts in democracy promotion matter, and what we can learn from studying them

If democracy is "also about contestation and co-operative argumentation over the meaning and substance of democratic self-governance" and if "consistent democracy promotion must itself comply with the principle of free, mutual agreement" (Patomäki 2012: 87),[58] then democracy promoters cannot but accept the need to put their own normative premises up for discussion with those that are at the receiving end (cf. Kurki 2010: 376-379; Teivainen 2009). This paper aimed at, theoretically, establishing this need and outlining a conceptual framework that enables us to analyze, empirically, how democracy promoters deal with, and how donors and recipients negotiate

57 Such an agreement is what Zartman (2008: 68-81) finds to be crucial for successful negotiation processes: "However, when parties come to negotiate (that is, to decide outcomes jointly), they need to reconcile their differing notions and arrive at a common sense of justice, one that is both favourable to each and applicable to both." (Zartman 2008: 75)

58 From a traditional perspective on international politics, such an agreement would concern the respective governments representing "donor" and "recipient" state only. Yet, in the area of democracy promotion the situation is more complicated than in, say, international trade or arms control, because the *raison d'être* of democracy promotion is that the "democratic credentials" of a given recipient government are seen as "insecure, contested, or outright lacking" (Whitehead 2010: 25).

about, the ensuing normative challenges or justice conflicts. The problem at hand is, however, not "only" an abstract normative issue as well as an object for empirical research that has so far received little academic attention. It is also relevant for the practice of democracy promotion itself. Research should, therefore, go beyond empirically analyzing the processing and negotiation of justice conflicts in democracy promotion and also aim at identifying constructive ways of handling contestation in this policy field. Procedurally, such ways can refer either to internal operating procedures on the part of the donor that enable a reflexive processing of justice conflicts,[59] or to ways of institutionalizing the interaction between donor(s) and recipient(s) that favor arguing over bargaining.[60] In terms of substance, the question is whether justice conflicts can be resolved (or, at least, mitigated) by way of an agreement about basic principles for both a just political order for the recipient side and just forms of external interference by the donor.[61] Answers to these questions are arguably of crucial importance for the future of democracy promotion in the 21st century. As will be argued in these concluding remarks, finding constructive ways of handling justice conflicts is immediately relevant for making democracy promotion more effective, more legitimate and less conflict-prone.

On a general level, there is a broad consensus that democracy can only work in a given country if it is "locally owned" and correspondingly adapted to the particular socio-politico-cultural context.[62] If taken seriously, this requires democracy promoters to be reflexive in the sense of adjusting their (universalist) conceptions of the good political order to local demands and circumstances. In the terminology adopted in this paper, this would require that democracy promoters take up justice claims and deal with justice conflicts arising from within the recipient countries in a serious manner. This is not only a question of effectiveness, but also impacts directly on the legitimacy of external interventions (which, on its part, is generally assumed to contribute to effectiveness). The criticism as to the quasi-imperialist nature of democracy promotion[63] may often be overdrawn, given that most really-existing democracy promotion policies are much less coercive, dogmatic and coherent than these critics would have it.[64] Still, even relatively sympathetic observers note that democracy promoters are regularly not very sensitive to local contexts and demands.[65] There can, thus, be no doubt that the empirical legitimacy of democracy promotion in the eyes of the recipients would increase – and, hence, also its potential effectiveness – if external actors demonstrated that they were not engaged in exporting a certain model but in supporting the search for locally adjusted paths to locally adjusted democracy.

Furthermore, dealing constructively with justice conflicts in democracy promotion is also of immediate relevance for preventing conflict, both inside recipient countries and between donors and recipients. With a view to the intra-recipient dimension, the research on the specific risk of political violence associated with democratization does not generally discard the possibility that democracy and democratization may contribute to establishing and/or securing intra-state peace. Scholars rather point to the need to adjust processes of political change to the particular situation in a

59 A first attempt in this direction – which at least touches upon some of the problems identified here as justice conflicts in democracy promotion – is Carothers' proposal to reform the institutional structures and operational methods within USAID (Carothers 2009b).

60 Following Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action as applied to International Relations, arguing is understood here as "truth-seeking or deliberative action […] based on communicative rationality as opposed to bargaining based on a strategic rationality" (Deitelhoff and Müller 2005: 170). Our focus on the ways in which interactions between donors and recipients are institutionalized generally follows the attempt by Deitelhoff and Müller (2005: 172-175) to identify "contextual factors" that favor arguing.

61 Resolving a justice conflict would require that parties were able "to reconcile their differing notions and arrive at a common sense of justice" (Zartman 2008: 75). A less demanding task would be "to identify overlaps and areas of compromise" (Daase 2011: 7).

62 Cf. Bermeo (2009: 244); Burnell (2011b: 8); Diamond (2008: 316); Fukuyama and McFaul (2005: 5); Grävingholt et al. (2009); Youngs (2012: 115).

63 Cf. Ayers (2009); Chomsky (1997); Gills et al. (1993); Robinson (1996); Slater (2006).

64 Cf. Bridoux (2011); Burnell (2011: Chapter 4); Carothers (2009a: 12-18); Wolff (2012); Youngs (2012).

65 Cf. Burnell (2011b: 9-10); Carothers (2009b); Grävingholt et al. (2009); Hill (2010).

given country (Bermeo 2009: 244-245).[66] Such adjustments would arguably have to take into account the – potentially diverging – local claims as to how a just political order in the country should look like. With a view to the international dimension, democracy promotion can become an important source of conflict between donor and recipient governments if justice conflicts between the two are not dealt with in a cooperative way (see above, Section 5). That democracy promoters, for example, listen to the "plurality of views on democracy" existing in a given country is, therefore, not only "normatively desirable bur also practically desirable in allowing productive engagement to emerge between critical (or even hostile) target publics and democracy promoters" (Kurki 2010: 378).

During the 1990s, democracy promoters took it largely for granted that liberal (market) democracy was *the* hegemonic model that was – at least, on the explicit ideological level – largely uncontested. This has changed. "Competing ideologies" of various kinds have, again, to be treated as a significant challenge for the endeavor to globally spread democracy as understood in the global North-West (Burnell 2010: 9-10). Even if it is contested to what extent a "full-fledged" ideological challenge to liberal democracy exists (cf. Ottaway 2010), there is not much doubt that the ideological uncontestedness – or taken-for-grantedness – of liberal democracy is gone. Gone as well is the short period of time when the US-led North-Western dominance of world affairs was not seriously contested (Carothers 2009b: 5-6). These trends are captured by catchwords like the "backlash against democracy promotion" (Carothers 2010) and the "democratic recession" (Diamond 2008: 56-87), "autocracy promotion" (Burnell 2011a: Chapter 11) and "authoritarian capitalism" (Bermeo 2009: 251), the "changing global distribution of power" (cf. Young et al. 2010) and the "normative divide in international society" (Bundegaard 2010).[67] All these supposed trends are, of course, debatable. Still, there is ample evidence suggesting that democracy promotion in the 21st century will be confronted with systematic contestation that cannot simply be dismissed as a neglectable expression of the narrow interests of some outdated dictators.

> "The mood now is that democracy promoters must expect to have to argue their case and tread carefully – a moral that is somewhat at odds with the hubris of the 1990s […]." (Burnell 2011b: 7)

> "It seems highly unlikely that any single ideology or world view will provide an overarching framework or meta-narrative for values and ethics in the twenty-first century. […] To the extent that such convergence around a single world view does emerge, it will only be viable in so far as it comes from persuasion and un-coerced acceptance rather than imposition and imperialism – both for moral reasons, but also because imperial or hegemonic ordering, including liberal imperialism, is unlikely to prove stable, effective, or legitimate." (Hurrell 2007: 314-315; cf. Cox 2002: Chapter 10; Sørensen 2011)

Can the "Arab Spring" be read as signaling a revival of the universal attraction of liberal democracy which would expose our focus on contestation as exaggerated or already outdated? A recent study on the lessons of experience in democracy promotion "for Supporting Democratic Change in North Africa", suggests quite the contrary. As the author argues, the "legitimate questions to ask about whose understanding of democracy should prevail and whether one single idea can be appropriate to all societies […] could be especially relevant to the Arab world" (Burnell 2011b: 3-4). At the same time, "because of the past history of foreign imperialist intervention [in the region] there is acute sensitivity to external involvement in the internal political affairs of today's sovereign countries" (Burnell 2011b: 4). Besides potential conflicts over the appropriate model of a just polit-

66 Cf. Carothers (2007a, b); Fukuyama (2007); Hegre et al. (2001); Jarstad and Sisk (2008); Manfield and Snyder (2007, 2008); Spanger (2012).

67 This divide refers to the observation of "a division between a North-West side acting upon a universalist, rights-based norm, and a South-East side defending sovereignty and pluralism" (Bundegaard 2010: 4). See also Müller (2009). This divide is not simply a divide between the "liberal" West and a supposedly "non-liberal" rest as it reflects a basic tension within liberalism (cf. Müller and Wolff 2006: 58-67; Sørensen 2011: Chapter 2; Wolff and Wurm 2011: 83-85).

ical order and contestation about appropriate ways and means of external intervention, a particularly manifest justice conflict for democracy promotion in the Arab world concerns a question of recognition: Should – and can – North-Western governments continue "to discriminate against political Islam and to exclude Islamists from full participation" or should these actors become part of "an inclusive approach to building democracy", as Burnell (2011b: 14) argues.[68] Overall, there is thus no reason to expect that the partial breakdown of autocratic rule in the Arab world will mitigate any of the normative challenges to democracy promotion this paper has identified. The *problematique* of justice conflicts in democracy promotion is real and will, if anything, rise in importance in the foreseeable future.

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68 See also Sørensen (2011: 168) and Youngs (2011: 5-6).

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