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WANDERING IN TWILIGHT? DEMOCRACY PROMOTION BY THE EU AND THE USA AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN ARMENIA

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by Nelli Babayan

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DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

Internal Members:

Prof. Sergio Fabbrini, LUISS Guido Carli
(Chair/Supervisor)

Prof. Roberto Belloni, University of Trento
(Adviser)

External Examiners:

Prof. Peter Burnell, University of Warwick

Prof. Filippo Andreatta, University of Bologna

External Reviewer:

Prof. Frank Schimmelfennig, ETH Zurich

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AA	Association Agreements
ACP	Armenian Communist Party
AEN	Armenian Electricity Network
ANC	Armenian National Congress
ANCA	Armenian National Committee of America
ANM	Armenian National Movement
APP	Armenian People's Party
ARF	Armenian Revolutionary Federation
ARG	ArmRosGazprom
BMSP	Broadcast Media Support Program
CEC	Central Elections Commission
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe(an)
CEPPS	Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening
CFSP	Common Foreign Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CJSC	Closed Joint Stock Company
CMSPA	Core Media Support Program for Armenia
CoE	Council of Europe
CoEC	Community Electoral Commissions
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements
DG	Democracy and Governance
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service

EIDHR	European Instrument (Initiative) for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
EP	European Parliament
ETA	Euskadi ta Askatasuna
EU	European Union
EUSR	European Union Special Representative
FREEDOM	Freedom for Russia and the Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets
FSA	FREEDOM Support Act
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HR	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IFES	International Foundation for Elections Systems
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IREX	International Research and Exchanges Board
IRI	International Republican Institute
IYC	It's Your Choice NGO
MCA	Millennium Challenge Account
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MSI	Media Sustainability Index
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCTR	National Commission on Television and Radio
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NDU	National Democratic Union
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIS	Newly Independent States

NPP	Nuclear Power Plant
OIDHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PEC	Precinct Electoral Commission
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
RFE/RL	Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty
RPA	Republican Party of Armenia
RSF	Reporters sans Frontiers/Reporters without Borders
SDU	Self-Determination Union
SEPA	Strengthening Electoral Processes and Administration in Armenia
SIDA	Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency
TACIS	Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States
UfM	Union for Mediterranean
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YPC	Yerevan Press Club
YSU	Yerevan State University

Abstract

Although democracy promotion initiatives have spread around the world and supported transition, many countries have fallen back into autocracy or stalled on their way to democracy. However, the events in the Middle East and Northern Africa have revitalised the issue of democratization. On the other hand, this cry for democracy seems to be homegrown, casting doubts about the efficacy of external democracy promotion. Nevertheless, stalled and setback democracies cannot be blamed solely on the flawed strategies of democracy promoters or autocratic stubbornness of democracy targets. Similarly, labelling democracy promotion as “the grand failure” of the West is an argumentative overstretch, which lacks any practical application.

This dissertation argues that democracy can be achieved from outside, but the obstacles associated with it are more serious than anticipated by promoters. More specifically, the chances of liberal democracy being exported from outside will increase provided the utility of domestic adaptation to democracy is at least moderate, promoters are actively involved in resolution of pressing national issues, and there is no regional actor that blocks democracy and receives support for its policies from the target country.

By structurally and conceptually expanding Schimmelfennig’s international socialization framework, this study develops an analytical framework to decipher mechanisms, strategies, and subsequent outcomes of democracy promotion and democratization. While applied to Armenia, the proposed framework is a useful reference for both academics and practitioners as it provides tools for researching the outcome of democracy and democratization and provides policy recommendations. This dissertation introduces the concept of democracy blocker—a powerful authoritarian regional actor capable and willing to influence domestic policy choices of a democracy promotion target in order to block democratization. This study also makes an empirical contribution by comparing democracy promotion policies in a country that has long been neglected by the academic literature. Using process-tracing, within-case, and before-after analyses, this study compares democracy promotion policies of the EU and the USA within three different target-sectors in Armenia. The analysis of three different target-sectors of democracy promotion—elections, parties, and the media—shows democratic transformation on the macro level of a country and micro level of specific sectors.

This study argues that increased political and economic interdependence and interconnectedness of different realms within a democratizing country has led to merging of international democracy promotion and domestic democratization. In addition, the mere adoption of a law or a code of conduct does not guarantee the establishment of democracy and democratic behaviour by domestic stakeholders. Consequently, a likely upgrade of a formal democratic transformation into a behavioural one, would require democracy promoters to guarantee consistency in their efforts and follow-up on their activities, without assuming that a formally adopted rule or a completed project will necessarily assure rule-based behaviour. Thus, democracy promotion needs to be simultaneously cross-sectoral, offering material incentives for democratic transformation. Democracy promotion has the potential to not only produce numerous academic and policy analyses but also to result in a genuine democratic transformation, if promoters rationally choose their strategies and base them on existing domestic conditions.

*Democracy is not a free ride.
It demands more of each of us
than any other arrangement.*
Eric Sevareid

Introduction

Over the last two decades democratization has proved to be a distance event with hurdles rather than a sprint. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, democracy promotion has become the buzzterm for policy makers and scholars. The former US president George H. W. Bush (1989) expressed his excitement about the establishment of a “whole and free” Europe, and the Czech president Vaclav Havel (1990) announced “the return to Europe” of countries long struggling under communist regimes. With the European Union’s (EU) assistance the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries have achieved considerable success in their transformation from communist regimes to democracies. However, while nearly 100 countries have been labelled as transitional, only a handful has steadily progressed towards a “well-functioning democracy or... still enjoy[s] a positive dynamic of democratization” (Carothers 2002: 9). The Western Balkan and post-Soviet states have been stuck in a limbo in between democracy and autocracy creating the puzzle of this dissertation: *boundless democracy promotion but limited democratic transformation.*

On the other hand, China’s blistering economic growth and Russia’s bullying authoritarianism with plans of building a Eurasian Union (Putin 2011) have undermined the previous position of democracy as a “universal value” (Sen 1999). Similarly, US intervention in Iraq under the banner of democracy promotion and double-standards Western approach to friendly but “oily” autocrats, have seriously damaged the reputation of democracy promotion. Nevertheless, the 2011 events in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have refocused attention to the issue of democratization and re-inspired supporters of democracy. Yet, the cry

for democracy in MENA seems to be home-grown, casting doubts about the value of external democracy promotion and raising questions on its impact. Nevertheless, the democratic rhetoric of both democracy promoters and democracy targets continue and billions are spent on democracy promotion projects, while pompous words are not spared when pledging loyalty to the cause of domestic democratization.

The limited progress of democracy in the post-Soviet space and the rest of the world is even more surprising, given that not only “domestic” but also the “international” democratization have increased over the last 20 years, with democracy promotion having gained its stable position within foreign policies of powerful liberal democracies. Since the early 1990s, states and organisations have targeted virtually every corner of the world with democracy promotion activities of various kinds. However, after the “third wave of democratization” (Huntington 1993), liberal democracy has made little progress or has even broken down (Diamond 2008a). Diamond (2008b) even argues that the democratic stagnation of the mid 2000s has been a sign of the third reverse wave of democratization. At the same time “never in human history had international forces—political, economic, and cultural—been so supportive of democratic ideas and institutions” (Dahl 1998: 148). However, policies of democracy promotion have lacked consistency and well-defined strategies, leaving practitioners and academics wondering how democracy promotion would proceed (Cox et al 2000; Youngs 2002; Smith 2008).

Numerous and predominately non-academic studies have emerged giving their evaluation (ex post) but not appraisal (ex ante) (Carothers 2004; Burnell 2007, 2008) of democracy promotion by individual countries and organisations. The analyses available on democracy promotion strategies of the most influential international actors (Carothers 1999; Youngs 2002; Burnell and Youngs 2009) and the praiseworthy effort of finally comparing two most prominent democracy promoters in a full volume (Magen et al 2009) without doubt

shed light on the causes, and even strategies of democracy promotion. However, there are still open questions among democracy promotion scholars on the specific types of transformations that democracy promotion can lead to. As Magen et al (2009: 20, 268) mention they do “not venture to evaluate their [strategies’] impact”, and “this task has to wait for another book”.

Given the 2011 events in MENA and regular interference of international actors into domestic affairs, it has become obsolete to speak of democratization or democracy promotion as separate processes. Thus, while these two processes should be viewed as partially simultaneous and complementary, it is also more effective to speak of democratic transformations as the outcome of these two processes. Consequently, this dissertation analyses the outcome of specific democracy promotion policies and strategies facing specific domestic conditions of democratization. Without a clear understanding of the mechanisms of democracy promotion strategies and their possible outcome, democracy promotion studies will continue to lack clarity, predictive value, and applicability to in-field democracy promotion. Democracy promotion runs the risk of wasting billions and due to its notorious underperformance may as well diminish the credibility and the leverage of democracy promoters in other policy areas. The objective of this dissertation has required an analytical framework that would provide an advantage of a predictive value for academic studies and policy recommendations for practitioners. However, democracy promotion studies have so far suffered from a lack of such a framework.

Although useful in identifying the causes of democracy promotion, due to their negligence of domestic realities of target countries international relations theories are of little assistance in identifying strategies of democracy promotion that may result in positive outcome or democratic transformation. Theoretical frameworks of democratization from comparative politics, on the other hand, do not take into consideration international actors and

factors, focusing exclusively on elite behaviour, economic development, or political culture. However, due to the increased interconnectedness of international and domestic political and economic realities, highly hybrid phenomena such as democracy promotion and democratization require an analytical framework that equally takes into account international and domestic actors and factors.

The theoretical goal of this dissertation is to develop an analytical framework that may contribute to ex-ante democracy promotion studies by increasing their predictive value and applicability to policy development and implementation. The empirical goal is to identify the mechanisms and conditions of democracy promotion policies that result in certain types of outcomes or democratic transformations by studying the interaction of international and domestic conditions. This study assesses policies of influential democracy promoters and subsequently uses a set of specific domestic and international factors to reframe policies and strategies of democracy promotion. Research on democracy promotion strategies and their effects may facilitate the development of effective democracy promotion programs and efficient distribution of resources. It should be underlined, that unlike many studies, this dissertation does not blame international actors in the failures of democracy promotion. This dissertation rather stresses that democracy promotion cannot be viewed in isolation from domestic actors and factors and endeavours to understand what has been done and how to make democracy promotion more effective and democratization more efficient. In addition, this dissertation poses an overarching aim to understand whether democracy can be achieved from outside and which would be the advantages and the obstacles of such an endeavour.

The quest for an analytical framework does not begin from scratch. Instead of re-inventing of bicycle, this dissertation employs a tested theoretical framework of international socialization (Schimmelfennig et al 2006). Particularly this account of international

socialization is useful for the objective of this dissertation since it allows capturing and analyzing the interaction between international and domestic factors leading to democratic transformations. This framework is also adapted to democracy promotion by expanding its structural and geographical scopes and the range of variables it analyzes. The original international socialization framework focused on EU promotion of democratic norms in the CEE, by analyzing three domestic and three international independent variables. This dissertation broadens the initial geographic scope by adding a new promoter (the United States of America) and a country (Armenia) that does not have EU membership perspective. It broadens the analytical scope by adding more independent variables and operationalising differently the original variables to provide a better account of the interaction between the promoter and the target. It also broadens the original explanatory logic by analyzing different types of democratic transformations (formal, behavioural, and unintended), thus providing more nuanced understanding of the outcome of democracy promotion and democratization.

In addition, this dissertation aims to fill a gap of insufficient comparative research in democracy promotion.¹ It undertakes a comparative study of democracy promotion strategies of the EU and the United States (USA),² which despite structural divergence, have moved to “a process of institutional convergence” (Fabbrini 2007: 2) and both represent “a union of states and their citizens” (Fabbrini 2007: 3). Among potential democracy promoters, these two seem optimal choices of comparison not only in terms of their strategies but also in terms of their possible impact on domestic politics due to their usual economic and political attractiveness for target countries and their leverage on the international arena. However, this dissertation does not start the comparison with an assumption that these two actors are

¹ However, the volume by Magen et al (2009), presents a comparative study of EU and US strategies of democracy promotion in different regions, though without analyzing their impact.

² The abbreviation is chosen per European Commission English Style Guide (p.76) available at http://ec.europa.eu/translation/english/guidelines/documents/styleguide_english_dgt_en.pdf

inherently different or similar. It rather confronts their strategies looking for both similarities and differences and possibilities for cooperation and complementation for enhanced results. To accomplish its objectives, this dissertation views democracy promotion policy in its developmental and implementation stages as the institutional and decision-making structures of a promoter may influence policy formation and implementation. Over the course of research it is demonstrated that the mechanisms of foreign policy decision-making are likely to influence the implementation of democracy promotion. Thus, an incoherent foreign policy decision-making burdened by institutional competition hinders smooth implementation of democracy promotion and substantially curtails promoter's options.

As a target-country of democracy promotion, this dissertation focuses on the South Caucasus country of Armenia. However, it should be emphasised that the Armenian case does not account for democratization of Armenia only, but rather serves as a democracy promotion environment, where specific variables deemed crucial are particularly pronounced. Thus in the presence of several crucial variables, Armenia is the least conducive target for effective democracy promotion, allowing for research findings to be straightforwardly applicable to other more positive cases. However, Armenia's pronounced support for democratic principles fits it into the original puzzle of the research. Armenia is a long time target of democracy promotion, which lacks EU membership perspective³ and prior democratic legacies and due to its geopolitical situation is dependent on Russia for its security and energy. In addition, though the smallest, it is also the largest per capita foreign aid recipient among the former Soviet Union countries. In spite of some important domestic requisites for democracy, Armenia does not yet qualify as a liberal democracy. However, even if Armenia is not currently a successful case of behavioural democratic transformation, it points to specific

³ The importance of EU membership for an effective democracy promotion strategy is elaborated in [Chapter 2](#).

strategies of democracy promotion that have resulted in other types of transformation and are likely to be more effective in more favourable conditions.

One main democracy promotion case⁴ does not damage the comparative nature of this research, as the case of Armenia provides a framework for a comprehensive analysis of EU and US democracy promotion strategies and their possible outcomes, as both actors have roughly the same leverage and presence in the country. In addition, the analyses of three different sectors of democracy promotion allows for cross-sectoral comparison of democracy promotion strategies and domestic factors. Inclusion of other detailed target cases may have been advantageous for broader generalizations but not feasible given time, human resources, and financial constraints of this project. Nevertheless, this dissertation contributes to democracy promotion studies by developing a framework for further research with the inclusion of other country-cases and identifies findings that can be applied further.

Based on the adopted definition of democracy as a system that ensures participation and contestation (Dahl 1972; Diamond 1989 et al; Munck and Verkuilen 2002), democracy promotion activities are classified according to the levels of state, political society, civil society, and individual citizens (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999; Carothers 1999). This dissertation studies democracy promotion projects targeting three different sectors. The outcome of democracy promotion is studied by the analyses of elections projects, which encompass all four levels of targets; party development projects, which encompass the political society level; and media development projects, which encompass the civil society level. These types of projects not only reflect the theoretical requirements of democracy—participation and contestation—but also represent the conventional democracy promotion

⁴ Case selection method is further elaborated in [Chapter 3](#).

package of many promoters. By analyzing these projects, this dissertation aims to understand whether:

1. the domestic requisites of successful democracy promotion vary depending upon the target level;
2. the implementation strategy varies depending upon the target level;
3. the outcome or the level of democratic transformation varies on different target levels given the implementation strategy is the same.

Besides, attention is paid to the interaction between the projects and target levels, namely whether the promoter attempts to incorporate all its target levels to avoid resistance (from the state and political society levels) or reluctance (of the civil society and individual citizens) towards its projects. This is important to account for since these projects are usually criticised of being implemented within the vacuum of their own targets.

Since the theoretical aim of this dissertation is to contribute to the development of an analytical framework for democracy promotion, qualitative comparative case study analysis fits the best (George and Bennett 2005). Comparison is made between promoters policies and strategies, possible outcomes of democracy promotion and democratization on different levels of promotion within one country-case by looking at the state of democracy before promotion programs and after (before-after comparison), and possible outcome of democracy promotion on the same level by two promoters (cross-case comparison). Process-tracing helps to identify “the causal chain and causal mechanisms” (George and Bennett 2005: 206) between the independent and dependent variables and contributes to further development of an analytical framework. The first step is the identification of the state of the dependent variable in the given country and sector to explain possible variations caused by democracy promotion or other domestic conditions. With the help of process-tracing, as discussed by George and

Bennett (2005), the next step is tracking the design and implementation strategies of democracy promotion projects and their influence on domestic change by observing the reaction of domestic actors to the conditions of promoters. As this research aims to contribute to policy-making, process-tracing also helps to understand whether “similarity or variance of the independent variable [democracy promotion strategy and domestic conditions] leads to different outcomes [in the dependent variable]” (George and Bennett 2005: 219). So far little has been done on micro level of democracy promotion, where the units of analysis are individual democracy promotion projects. In addition, there is a gap to fill in when thinking of the correlation between the development and implementation of democracy promotion policies. This dissertation contributes to both. The innovative character of this research also lies in its simultaneous analyses of several levels of democracy promotion in one target country.

This research builds on my previous academic and practitioner work. In 2005-2008 I worked as a Training Department Manager of the Core Media Support Program for Armenia (CMSPA), a USAID Democracy and Governance project. My professional career not only helped me to establish contacts with USAID missions and field offices of implementing organisations, but also gave me insider knowledge on the challenges democracy promoters face in the field. The analysis is based on primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the official documentation of democracy promotion of the EU and the USA, such as Country and Progress Reports, Strategy Papers, communiqués, project proposal descriptions, evaluations, and project highlights by the promoters available online or by request. To assess the domestic conditions of the target country, this research analyses official statements by the domestic political and social actors, and official documentation of the target country. To crosscheck the information gathered from other sources, two rounds of semi-structured

interviews are conducted with the managing staff of democracy promoters and implementing organisations in Yerevan, Armenia. Interviews help to understand the decisions behind specific actions and events and compensate for missing or unclear data. In the course of the research, I also spent February-April 2010 as a visiting researcher at the Centre for Comparative and International Studies, ETH Zurich, working with Prof. Frank Schimmelfennig and his team. Another three months (September-November 2010) were spent at the Madrid-based think-tank FRIDE with special focus on democracy promotion, working with Prof. Richard Youngs and his team.

This dissertation demonstrates the complex relationship between international and domestic conditions of democracy promotion, which if positive may lead to successful democratization. While variables remain the same for any country, target to democracy promotion, their values and importance may change from case to case. Nevertheless, it is argued that despite legitimate and sometimes credible actions of democracy promoters, the incentives that they offer to authoritarian countries are too low. Thus, low incentives, which are not supported by cooperative actions of the promoters, are further weakened by their detachment from the domestic issues of the target country. It is apparent that resonance of democratic rules and local identification with a democracy promoter do not positively contribute to local democratization either and are merely intervening variables. The presence of Russia and the persistence of the Nagorno Karabakh⁵ issue are argued to be among the main, if not the main, obstacles on Armenia's road to democracy. The absence of credible incentives, lack of cooperation between promoters, and the presence of a democracy blocker with local support make behavioural democratic transformation unlikely in a country like Armenia. The likelihood of a behavioural democratic transformation may increase and the

⁵ Although the Latinised name of the region is sometimes hyphenated, here it is used as on the official website of the Nagorno Karabakh government and as in EU resolutions.

negative influence of a democracy blocker may decrease, should democracy promoters cooperate, actively offer credible incentives to different sectors of democracy promotion, and actively contribute to pressing national issues.

The two-fold theoretical and empirical aims of this dissertation structured along the analyses of the chosen variables and chronological discussion guide the chapter outline. The [first chapter](#) discusses the initial theoretical foundations of this dissertation elaborating on the concepts of democracy, democratization, and democracy promotion adopting definitions based on extensive literature review and applicability to democracy promotion studies. It also discusses the origins and rationale for democracy promotion activities showing the evolution of the academic debates on democratization. The discussion stems from the early debates on the importance of international factors and actors for domestic democratization and continues with stressing the importance of looking at the interaction of international and domestic factors for a comprehensive understanding of democracy promotion as a process. The chapter proceeds to the discussion and analysis of democracy promotion levels and targets further elaborating on democracy promotion programs of party development, free and fair elections, and media development as the main focus of this dissertation within democracy promotion programs. Showing that democracy promotion activities should be viewed within different sectors, in Carothers's parlance levels, this chapter argues that growing interdependence and globalisation have made once distinguishable processes of democracy promotion and democratization inalienable.

[Chapter 2](#) continues the theoretical quest of this dissertation bringing in analytical models of foreign policy analysis for the developmental stage and international socialization for the implementation stage of democracy promotion policies. It elaborates on possible developmental stages of democracy promotion policies to further link it with the

implementation stage and see whether there are any implications of the developmental process on the policy implementation strategy. The chapter continues with the presentation of the original theoretical framework of international socialization developed by Schimmelfennig et al (2006) and demonstrates its applicability to democracy promotion studies. However, as the theoretical framework needs several adaptations, the dissertation proceeds with the discussion of new independent variables (cooperation, consistency, involvement, party constellation, ownership, and democracy blocker) introduced in the methodological [Chapter 3](#) and a new dependent variable of democratic transformation that better serves not only the aim of this dissertation but is also applicable to other studies. The chapter concludes with the detailed discussion of the research question, hypotheses and methods of research, thus laying ground for the empirical inquiry.

[Chapter 4](#) inaugurates the empirical part of this dissertation by researching the state of democracy in the country-case of Armenia. Its first section discusses the road to democracy taken by Armenia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and where it currently stands. It shows how the regional politics combined with foreign policy, economy, and security choices have influenced the state of democracy in Armenia. The chapter demonstrates that visible economic development has had little influence on democratic development and economy is largely under the influence of oligarchs. On the other hand, financial assistance provided by the often-mentioned Armenian Diaspora does not translate into political influence due to the reluctance of the Armenian government to join Diaspora's territorial claims. However, the importance of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict for Armenian politics and its negative influence on Armenia's democratization is undeniable. The chapter argues that increased involvement of democracy promoters in conflict resolution is essential for positive democratic transformation. In addition, the chapter analyses Russia's democracy blocker nature in

Armenia, showing that ignoring Russia's interests in the South Caucasus or conceding to its bullying tactics may harm not only democracy promotion perspectives but also other interests of promoters.

The following [Chapter 5](#) proceeds with the analyses of EU and US democracy promotion activities as part of their foreign policies, analysing their strategies and approaches to democracy promotion. Inherently different mechanisms of foreign policy decision-making influence the capacities of the EU and the USA to adequately and timely react to the domestic developments of target countries. However, while the EU usually opts for a reactive approach due to confusing competencies of its own foreign policy actors, the USA is better equipped for a proactive and overarching approach. Seemingly advantageous separation of sectors by comparative advantage would yield positive results in democratic progress, should the EU and the USA initiate cross-sectoral cooperation in their democracy promotion activities. Nevertheless, in their democracy promotion efforts they target civil society and keep distance from the state (the USA) or vice versa (the EU). In addition, the chapter examines their involvement in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict resolution showing how rhetorical commitment to resolution has hardly transformed to any tangible results and even the rhetorical commitment has waned after 2008, providing Russia with a greater opportunity for manoeuvre.

Chapters [6](#), [7](#), and [8](#) link theoretical and empirical parts of the dissertation even closer through the analyses of domestic developments and conditions for free and fair elections, functioning parties, and watchdog media and corresponding democracy promotion projects and strategies. These chapters of the dissertation present the results of research on specific democracy promotion activities of the EU and the USA in Armenia providing a comprehensive analysis of the projects and their outcome as a result of the interaction with the

domestic conditions. The analyses reveal not only a lack of cooperation (cross-sectoral or within the same sector) between the EU and the USA but also identify cases of contradicting strategies within US strategies (media sector). In addition, positive domestic identification with democracy promoters and positive consistency of promoters in projects are undermined by low domestic utility of adaptation to democracy and low incentives offered by democracy promoters, resulting in limited democratic transformation in all sectors. The dissertation [concludes](#) by the discussion of its theoretical and empirical implications, policy recommendations and by raising new issues for further research.

**PART I. DEMOCRACY PROMOTION FROM THE
ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE THROUGH THE
PRACTITIONER PRISM**

Chapter 1. Democracy Promotion and Democratization: Exploring and Complementing

Different conceptualisations of democracy, democratization, and democracy promotion have long been at the core of academic and practitioner discrepancies. By reviewing the literature this chapter discusses the academic understandings of democracy adopting a definition applicable to democracy promotion studies. This chapter adopts the academic understanding of democracy utilised over the course of research and briefly discusses the practitioner approach to democracy. The following chapters closely examine the practitioner understanding of democracy based on the policies of chosen promoters to show convergence between the academic and practitioner concepts. Given the multitude of “democracies with adjectives”, this chapter adopts the definition of liberal democracy as it includes the most repeated features of democracy—contestation and participation—and it is the concept championed by democracy promoters. However, while democracy promoters often promote liberal democracy, they do not always achieve its establishment. Thus, the recommendation for democracy promoters is to set realistic goals, without neither falling into the minimalist trap, not to hinder the democratization process, nor setting unrealistically high objectives of ensuring provision of social and economic welfare.

The chapter further analyses different paths to democratization paying attention to the origins of and reasons for democracy promotion. Considering actions of international actors as democracy promotion only if branded as such, this chapter proceeds to classification of democracy promotion according to possible strategies and sectors of promotion. By identifying the main sectors of democracy promotion, this chapter assumes that the outcome of democracy promotion may be different depending upon the sector of promotion—elections,

political parties, and the media. Each sector is discussed in detail in a separate section. Through the analysis of literature, this chapter argues that there is a pressing need for an applicable analytical framework; otherwise, democracy promotion studies will continue to lack any predictive value or general applicability. In addition, the chapter demonstrates the need to analyse democracy promotion and democratization as interconnected processes. The overarching argument of the chapter, paving the way for the dependent variable of this research, claims that mere establishment of democratic institutions does not guarantee their democratic functioning.

1.1 Democracy as an Academic Phenomenon through the Practitioner Prism

To study the phenomenon of democracy promotion and its outcomes it is important to start from a set definition of democracy to understand what is promoted to target countries as one of the virtues of modern society. The understanding of the outcome and impact of democracy promotion has often been limited due to the scholars' confusion over the conceptualisations of democracy (Burnell 2010; Burnell and Schumberger 2010; Grävingholt et al 2010). Thus, conceptualizing one of the most empirically and theoretically debated concepts can be a daunting task. The elusiveness of the definition of democracy mainly derives from its changing nature based on international and domestic processes along with cultural and historical specificities of different societies. Thus, regardless of the currently prevailing definition of democracy, its conceptualisation is closely interconnected with the context in which it is conceptualised and should be addressed by a “constructivist approach” (Whitehead 2002: 7). Thus, when undertaking a research connected with the concept of democracy, the researcher should cautiously choose an appropriate definition with careful consideration of alternatives and justified reasoning behind the choice of a given definition. Definition of democracy adopted for a study of democracy promotion—a highly practitioner concept—

should be not only theoretically but also empirically grounded, carefully encompassing the existent literature but at the same time not being overly ambitious empirically. The scholarly definition adopted here is the classic one of liberal democracy, which is also the one type of government most praised and actually promoted by the practitioners:

“a meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organised groups for all effective positions of government power; a highly inclusive level of political participation in selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular free and fair elections, and a level of civil and political liberties—freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom to form and join organisations” (Diamond et al 1989: xvi).

The classic definition which is almost entirely adopted by the practitioners, as discussed in Chapter 5, may not be empirically applicable in all cases of democracy promotion, consequently hindering democratic transformation. Thus, one of the arguments here is that the definition of democracy in actual policies may need a revision, however, this task is beyond the scope of this dissertation. This section provides an overview of the state of art on democracy, its conceptualisation, types, and specifics in modern political science, explaining the rationale behind the conceptualisation most appropriate for this type of research.

Despite critical views, there is an extensive volume of literature that follows a normative understanding that democracy is the best type of government with virtually no alternatives deserving consideration. Though these views are briefly presented below, this research does not require adhering to an exact view on the general desirability or feasibility of democracy worldwide because it aims to understand the conditions of its feasibility in given international and domestic contexts. The favouring view of democracy mainly derives from convictions that democracy promotes “freedom as no feasible alternative can” (Dahl 1989:

89) and that it “provides by definition comparatively good protection for human rights” (Diamond 1999: 4). At the same time, following modernisation theorists, proponents of democracy claim that it fosters economic development. Similar understandings of democracy are also promoted by numerous actors who engage in democratization of authoritarian states. Proponents of democracy argue that it is desirable because it is “the best and therefore unbeatable means of political organisation” and undeniably possible because “it is the one form of government which evolves constantly to ensure that it is possible” (Gilley 2009: 124, 125).

Regardless of the virtues of democracy presented above, the critiques of democracy traditionally question its desirability and feasibility (Gilley 2009; Spitz 1981). In both cases these critiques are derived from dissatisfaction with the outcomes of democracy. The so-called left critiques of democracy argue that democracy is not desirable because it causes repression, inequality and promotes westernisation also decreasing its potential possibility due to power differences, social exclusion, and agenda control. The rightist critique of democracy denies its desirability arguing that democracy causes instability and inefficiency with some elements of a mob rule, also making it impossible due to citizen stupidity and ignorance (Gilley 2009). Democracy is envisaged as meaningless because the largely celebrated rule of majority as a rule does not result in “popular” rule (Riker 1982). The critiques under the “public-choice” theory question the feasibility of transforming individual preferences into a policy. Nevertheless, other “public-choice theorists” defend democracy by arguing that those are not problems of the decision-making process but are rather dilemmas of competing preferences (Mackie 2003). While “public ignorance” advocates the claim that citizenry is too ignorant for democracy to function as it is supposed to, their opponents claim that the former simply cannot bear the complex moral disagreement. However, regardless of democracy’s

desirability and feasibility, it is currently the most celebrated form of governance which many governments try to promote and even more try, sometimes genuinely, to emulate.

“Democracy has some indispensable components without which the concept would be vacuous” (Whitehead 2002: 20), however those components are not stagnate and can be differently arranged. One of such components is elections. Following Schumpeter (1947), many scholars have regarded democracy as a system where the “most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest and periodic elections” (Huntington 199: 7). The minimalist conception of democracy has helped to avoid conceptual overstretching by “moving up the ladder of generality” and might have been appropriate decades ago encompassing larger number of cases. However, this narrow approach equating democracy to elections is not compatible with the current situation on the democratic scene. Since the third wave of democratization a record number of countries have adopted elections as authority-choosing procedure. Nevertheless, in just a small portion of these countries, elections are truly competitive, without massive fraud and voter intimidation and hardly correspond to the understanding of “good democracy” (Croissant and Merkel 2002). This is particularly true about the majority of post-Soviet countries that quickly established parliamentary and presidential elections, though restricting their competitiveness and participation.

Gradually, the scholars of democracy have started including other requirements for a regime to be democratic, thus creating the “expanded procedural minimum” of democracy. Among the new features were the requirement for the elected officials to effectively govern without being overly constrained from non-elected entities and the requirement for the civil powers to exercise control over the military. These features have been especially compatible with Latin American reality (Karl 1990; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Huntington 1991; Mainwaring et al 1992). Other conceptions of democracy involved features corresponding to the established industrial democracy, which entails certain political, economic, and social

features ([Table 1](#)). The maximalist conceptions—hardly applicable to a handful of real cases—“include equality of social and economic relations and/or broad popular participation in decision-making at all levels of politics” (Collier and Levitsky 1996: 8). However, no regime should be considered democratic until the offices are contested (Cheibub et al 1996).

With the spread of democracy around the globe and subsequent development of democratization studies, simple distinction between democracies and non-democracies has become insufficient. Many formerly authoritarian countries took the road of democratization and while some achieved democracy and even consolidated it, others have stagnated in between. The research has shown that transfer from an authoritarian rule could be a democracy but it also could result in a liberalised authoritarianism (dictablanca) or illiberal democracy (democradura) (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986) or hybrid regimes of competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2010). These developments that “the trend toward democracy has been accompanied by an even more dramatic trend toward pseudosemocracy” (Diamond 2002: 27). Most of the literature on transitology and consolidology assumed that new democracies can equally move either forward towards consolidation of democracy or back towards authoritarianism (Carothers 2002). Thus, new classifications of regimes, which initiated democratic reforms, have emerged in the literature. Close examination of democratization literature have discovered more than 550 examples of “democracies with adjectives” (Collier and Levitsky 1996). These new types of democracies evolved because on the one hand scholars sought to increase conceptual differentiation in capturing new forms of democracy and, on the other hand, because they sought to avoid conceptual stretching, while working on their cases of democracy, which did not correspond to the previously discovered conceptualisations (Collier and Levitsky 1996).

Table 1. Definitional and Conceptual Benchmarks in Research on Recent Democratization.

Associated meanings	Electoralist Definition	Procedural Minimum Definition	Expanded Procedural Minimum Definition	Prototypical Conception of Established Industrial Democracy	Maximalist Definition/Conception
	These are the principal definitions employed in this literature; often presented and applied with considerable care			Not defined; plays important role in forming subtypes	Often not explicitly defined
Reasonably competitive elections, devoid of massive fraud, with broad suffrage.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Often not included
Basic civil liberties: Freedom of speech, assembly, and association.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Often not included
Elected governments have effective power to govern.			Yes	Yes	Often not included
Additional political, economic, and social features associated with industrial democracy.				Yes	Often not included
Socioeconomic equality; and/ or high levels of popular participation in economic, social, and political institutions.					Yes

Source: Collier and Levitsky (1996: 9)

The works of many scholars on varying forms of regimes, traditionally dichotomised only as authoritarian or democratic, have shown that there has been a need to better understand the mixed features of post-authoritarian regimes (Malloy and Seligson 1987; Karl 1995; Levitsky and Way 2010). The differentiated conception of democracy is also important as often it serves as a causal variable in research (Collier and Levitsky 1996). However, the boundaries between these differentiated conceptions are very often “blurred and controversial” (Diamond 2002: 27). The “diminished subtypes” (Collier and Levitsky 1996: 4) of democracy have been generated based on the root concept of democracy, which was the procedural minimum, expanded procedural minimum, or the established industrial democracy. Referring to a particular type of a defective democracy, the diminished subtypes of democracy are characterised by a specific missing or “weakened” component of the root concept of democracy (Collier and Levitsky 1996; [Table 2](#)). Thus, while an authoritarian regime can become a democracy, different types of democracies can become more democratic (Diamond 2002: 34). Consequently, in a research on democracy promotion, democracy should be regarded as an ongoing process within a country and as the ultimate goal for promoters and a target country until the set objectives are achieved.

Table 2. Diminished subtypes of democracy.

<p>(a) Weakened Element: Regime Consolidation Fragile democracy (Whitehead 1989) Immature democracy (Kelley et al. 1993) Uncertain democracy (O'Donnell/Schmitter 1986) Unconsolidated democracy (Higley/Gunther 1992)</p> <p>(b) Weakened Element: Horizontal Accountability Caudillistic democracy (Hillman 1992) Delegative democracy (O'Donnell 1994) Plebiscitarian democracy (Tamás 1992) Populist democracy (Schmitter/Karl 1992)</p> <p>(c) Weakened Element: Effective Citizen Participation Depoliticized democracy (Whitehead 1992) Dual democracy (Smith/Acuña 1994) Elitist democracy (Hagopian/Mainwaring 1987) Low-intensity democracy (Stahler-Sholk 1994)</p> <p>(d) Weakened Element: Effectiveness and Responsiveness of Government and Regime Blocked democracy (Lanzaro 1993) Impotent democracy (Whitehead 1992) Overinstitutionalized democracy (Schedler 1995) Weak democracy (Weffort 1992)</p> <p>(e) Weakened Element: Commitment to Sustaining Social Welfare Policies Conservative democracy (Karl 1991) Input democracy (Black 1993)</p>	<p>'Moderated' democracy (Hillman 1992) Neoliberal democracy (Whitehead 1992)</p> <p>(f) Weakened Element: National Sovereignty Controlled democracy (Hinkelammert 1994) Internationally dependent democracy (Whitehead 1992) Neocolonial democracy (Whitehead 1992) US-imposed democracy (Berntzen 1993)</p> <p>(g) Weakened Element: Favorable Socioeconomic Conditions Bankrupt democracy (Whitehead 1992) Democracy without prosperity (Torres Rivas 1994) Low-income democracy (Diamond 1992) Poor democracy (Weffort 1992)</p> <p>(h) Weakened Element: Social and Political Stability Besieged democracy (Archer 1995) Conflictive democracy (Weffort 1992) Socially explosive democracy (Whitehead 1992) Unruly democracy (Leftwich 1993)</p> <p>(i) Weakened Element: Generic Incomplete democracy (Hillman 1992) Problematic democracy (Hartlyn 1994) Sick democracy (Stempel Paris 1980) Tarnished democracy (Hellinger 1991) noted</p>
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Source Collier and Levitsky 1996: 26.

The presented divergent opinions on the notion of democracy and its value demonstrate that a comprehensive conceptualisation of democracy that would satisfy academics and practitioners is practically impossible. In addition, because conceptualisation is an evolving activity that is closely correlated with the explanatory power of a theory (Kaplan 1964), the argument over the “correct definition” is redundant (Guttman 1994: 12). Thus, the suggestion is to “avoid the extremes of including too much or too little in a definition relative

to their theoretical goals” (Munck and Verkuilen 2002: 9). While maximalist definitions of democracy are of little analytical use because they are too overburdened, the minimalist definitions bear the danger of including all actually divergent cases under one subtype (Munck and Verkuilen 2002). From a practitioner, democracy promoter, point of view adoption of a maximalist definition, which includes *inter alia* such attributes as freedom from war, provision of social rights, and transition to welfare state, might be unrealistic, especially when democracy promotion is implemented in a relatively poor country. On the other hand, there is hardly a rationale for the adoption of a minimalist, electoral definition, for a study on democracy promotion because it does not illustrate the democratic reality of the target country, as elections might be in place though still largely violated and even restrictive.

While the concept of liberal democracy or polyarchy (Dahl 1989) might be the most well-known and ideal-typical, democratization studies show that there are various types of “democracies with adjectives” (Collier and Levitsky 1996) in the real world. However, democracy promotion activities do not aim to develop hybrid regimes (Karl 1995), electoralist democracies (Vanhanen 1997), procedural minimum of democracy (Mainwaring et al 1992; O’Donnell et al 1986), and certainly not competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2010). Though efforts of democracy promoters may be inconsistent and sometimes contradictory, they aim to promote liberal democracy, which includes effective participation, voting equality, inclusion of adults (Dahl 1998), and the provision of civil and political liberties. Thus, in Dahl’s terms they should aim to ensure competition and contestation. While electoralist regime can be the starting goal for a democratizing country, neither domestic nor international actors should be satisfied with short-term results. Excessive praise from a promoter for mere organisation of elections or absence of any social and especially material shaming for rigged elections have the potential of endangering future democratic

transformation as domestic actors may regard the current situation as the ultimate goal of democratization and their donors.

Therefore, democracy promoters should set feasible goals to achieve in a democratizing country, without neither falling into the minimalist trap not to hinder the democratization process and nor setting unrealistically high objectives of ensuring provision of social and economic welfare. Bearing that in mind, this dissertation understands democracy as [liberal democracy](#). However, it is not assumed that promotion of liberal democracy necessarily results in its inevitable establishment. Instead, it may result in the establishment in one of democracies with adjectives. Nevertheless, the definition of liberal democracy addresses the requirements of contestation and participation and avoids the minimalist exclusion of attributes or maximalist overstretch of the concept. While contestation includes right to form political parties and participate in elections avoiding intimidation mainly from the incumbents, participation ensures fairness of the voting process, access of candidates to public financing and media, freedom of expression, freedom of media, and equal provision of these civil and political rights ([Table 3](#)). This understanding of democracy is based on the close consideration of the literature on democracy and democratization. The empirical definition of democracy within democracy promotion, which is the main reference point for the empirical research and is explored in relevance to the chosen promoters later in the text, may slightly differ. Thus, though based on the classic understanding of liberal democracy, the outcome of democracy promotion should be the type of democracy promoted by a specific promoter; however, which usually includes the components specified above.

Table 3. Elements of Liberal Democracy.

Potential Goal of Promotion	Liberal Democracy						
Components	Contestation		Participation				
Subcomponents	Right to form political parties and civil organisations	Right to freely participate in elections	Right to vote	Fairness of the voting process	Access to public financing and media	Freedom of media and expression	Equal provision of civil and political rights

Source: Partly based on Munck and Verkuilen 2002: 13

1.2 Democracy Promotion as Part of Democratization and Why Promote It?

As democracy, democratization has also been an issue of heated debate among scholars, who have not come to an agreement either on the nature of democratization, its preconditions, or the whole process of initiation and completion. Consequently, if it is conceptually and practically appropriate to accept a contextually variable definition of democracy, then the definition of democratization cannot be rigidly fixed either and may depend upon the contextual variations of certain processes. However, there are several methods of understanding democratization process and more importantly when it is complete. The “two-turnover test” suggests that the process of democratization can be considered on the way when the authoritarian regime collapses and it is over, thus democracy is on the way to consolidation, after there has been two successful and peaceful transfers of government between competing parties (Huntington 1991). However, by this test Italy and Japan have reached the end of democratization only forty years after the adoption of democratic constitution, while Venezuela, Colombia and Sri Lanka dubiously qualified as democracies (Whitehead 2002). Others argued that democratization is over when all actors consider the electoral process of democracy to be the “only game in town” (Di Palma 1990) and in this case actions of actors are not as important as their beliefs and perceptions. This definition too

is rather dubious when thinking of the cases of Spain and Italy (Whitehead 2002). However, it is possible to agree on the conceptualisation of democratization and its whole process for a specific research if there is a set definition of democracy.

If a research adopts a context-specific definition of democracy, then the definition of democratization should be closely related to the adopted understanding of democracy. In the case of research on democracy promotion, the understanding of the beginning and completion of democratization should closely correlate with the understanding of the promoted type of democracy. Thus, the practitioner understanding of democracy and democracy promotion should play even greater role than the academic one, when evaluating the process of democratization from democracy promotion point of view. The practitioner understanding of democracy plays an important role because “democratization is best understood as a complex, long-term, dynamic and open-ended process [and] consists of a progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics” (Whitehead 2002: 27) and the former can provide the necessary closure to the process. Thus, democratization is not determined by its outcome, which can be either successful and result in democracy or failed and result in some kind of autocracy or flawed democracy. It is rather determined by a process, which is supposed to lead to a specific democratic outcome, clearly outlined in a democracy promotion policy and democratization initiatives of local actors or in a research design. While the process of democratization may also vary, since actors may play important roles to varying degrees, democratization process within democracy promotion can be predetermined by the adopted democracy promotion policy. As for the theoretical understanding of democratization, it can be regarded as under way when certain actions are taken on the way to reach the outcome mentioned in the adopted definition of democracy. Thus, while there are certain approaches to democratization, which are discussed below, those

should be adapted to specific examples of democratization to provide a comprehensive understanding of the process.

Until recently, scholars of comparative politics believed that international factors and processes are of marginal, if any, importance to democratization. Advocates of the internal dimension of democratization have claimed that the process of regime change is encouraged and initiated exclusively by domestic actors, where such endogenous factors such as the strength of national economy, the institutional design (Linz 1990), the openness of political culture (Diamond et al 1989), and the elite behaviour (Higley and Burton 1989) are the main catalysts of democratic change. These studies have either overlooked the significance of international factors or have simply denied any possibility of their influence on domestic change (Schraeder 2002). This narrow and exclusive approach of comparative politics has resulted in a disagreement from various scholars who considered international factors to play a significant role in the process of regime change and subsequent democratization (Pridham et al 1994). In the beginning of the 1990s scholars of democratization supposed that external governments and institutions may have a determinative impact on democratization of a given country (Huntington 1991). Others argued that in the coming decades the significance of international institutions might prove pivotal for domestic political change (Vachudova 2005). In a revisit of his well-known “requisites of democracy” article, Lipset (1994: 17, 16) concludes that domestic conditions “do shape the probabilities for democracy, but they do not determine their outcomes.” Democracy is an “international cause”. Democracy promotion has become the link between the international and domestic dimensions of democratization, and further research on democracy promotion will provide explanations on how these two dimensions interact.

Some scholars argue that there are four international dimensions of democratization: coercion, seen as military intervention; contagion, seen as intended or unintended emulation

of the democratic regime of a neighbouring country; conditionality, seen as imposition of sanctions or rewards; and consent seen as activities by an external actor in a target country requiring the consent of the domestic government (Whitehead 1996). Within these international dimensions of democratization, there are three methods of democracy promotion (Whitehead 1996: 88)—incorporation, invasion, and intimidation. However, because these three methods entail imposition of democracy and inequality between the promoter and the target country, where the latter's consent is not required, these types of democracy promotion are excluded from this research. While contagion does not involve specific actions of external actors, coercion does not require the consent of the domestic actors. As shown below, conditionality is not a separate dimension but is a strategy used in the dimension of consent (democracy promotion). While international factors have received thorough examination in the literature on democracy promotion (Whitehead 1996; Schraeder 2002; Carothers 1999; 2004), domestic factors have usually been neglected. This research focuses on the phenomenon called consent by Whitehead (1996) and widely known as democracy promotion.

Democracy promotion due to various reasons has become one of the main foreign policy objectives of many already consolidated democracies, paving its way not only to foreign policies of newly democratized states but also “rising democracies” (Carothers and Youngs 2011). Reasons behind the rise of democracy promotion activities may range from materialistic pursuit of stretching economic and territorial power and altruistic care for well-being of other societies. One of the most influential theories of explaining rationale for democracy promotion is the democratic peace theory arguing that democracies do not wage wars against other democracies (Kegley and Hermann 2002). Thus, in pursuit of a peaceful international system democratic states opt for turning autocracies into democracies to avoid military conflicts and achieve peaceful resolution of disputes. Democracy promotion is

considered to be “the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability; reducing regional conflicts; countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism; and extending peace and prosperity” (Bush 2006). Another rationale, though not in contradiction with the previous one, is the pursuit of a prosperous international system. Thus, democratic states promote democracy because of conviction that democracies are more effective and efficient in producing development and economic growth than autocracies and dictatorships (Johnson 2002). However, the focus of this study is on democracy promotion itself rather than its rationales, which largely play secondary role in choice of implementation strategy and do not closely correlate with the chosen variables to be specified in the following chapters.

1.3 Definitions and Classifications of Democracy Promotion

Scholars of democracy promotion have repeatedly expressed concerns over the lack of an adequate theoretical framework offering predictive value for democracy promotion studies (Burnell 2007, 2008). The literature mainly relates to the practitioner (Carothers 1999, 2004) and ex post (Burnell 2008) view of democracy promotion, which is overwhelmingly a narrative of democracy promotion efforts of the USA (Carothers 1999) and the EU (Gillespie and Youngs 2002; Youngs 2002), and the role of democracy promotion in their foreign policies. The lack of theoretical framework for studying democracy promotion ex ante as a process and indicating its potential effectiveness is obvious. So far, only some practitioner tools for ex post evaluation of democracy promotion have been available. They have been developed by different foundations and development agencies: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) etc.; and

criticised by the academics (Crawford 2003a, 2003b). Carothers even claims that “democracy promoters treat political change in a pseudoscientific manner” (2004: 102), thus their democracy promotion does not have a theoretical background. At the same time scholars criticise democracy promoters arguing that they “rarely have much sense of history about what they do, either with regard to the countries in which they are working on or to the enterprise of using aid to promote democracy” (Carothers 1999: 19). Though this is potentially true, besides criticizing, academics should work on the development of an analytical framework, which can help in formulation of democracy promotion policies. This section of the chapter presents analysis of different types and levels of democracy promotion, which are further used for developing an analytical framework.

Despite large volumes of academic work on democracy promotion there are less than a handful of works suggesting definitions which can be used when researching the phenomenon. Although, there may be divergence between academic and practitioner understandings of democracy promotion, initial adoption of an academic concept is essential. Thus, democracy promotion⁶ is “overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the political liberalisation of autocratic regimes and the subsequent democratization of autocratic regimes in specific recipient countries” (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 12). As mentioned in the definition, only activities officially labelled as democracy promotion are included in this study because other activities regardless of their democratizing nature may fall under covert intelligence efforts of international actors and not provide full understanding of variables under consideration. The given definition does not include implicit actions of external actors, such as diplomatic and intelligence activities, health campaigns and

⁶ Partly to distance from the Bush agenda of democracy promotion, an academic discourse has recently emerged to rename the promotion of democracy to democracy assistance (Burnell 2010: 17). However, the two concepts remain very similar without wielding substantial differences to the strategies or targets. Thus, also taking the time period under research in this dissertation, different branding of the same concept is not relevant.

alike, as well as it omits international factors, which do not require presence of a promoter. Thus, it also excludes cases of contagion, while militarised democracy promotion is not taken into consideration by this study since the consent of a target is not required, reducing the chances for success from the beginning. This definition provides a general understanding of what democracy promotion is and leads to further classifications of democracy promotion.

While some distinguish four levels of democracy promotion targets: individual citizens, civil society, political society, and state institutions (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999); others distinguish three sectors of democracy promotion: electoral process, state institutions, and civil society (Carothers 1999). Democracy promotion on the level of state institutions “supports institutions of public authorities not to improve their repressive capacity, but to reform those institutions” (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 21), by strengthening legislation, aiding rule of law, and developing local government (Carothers 1999). Democracy promotion at the level of political society is understood as “assistance to the specialised organisations and movements of political society”, usually involved in a competition for office (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 21) by political party building and electoral aid (Carothers 1999). At the civil society level, democracy promotion supposes assistance to “organisations that are at least partially voluntary and are relatively independent from the state” (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 19-20) by NGO building, civic education, media strengthening, and union building (Carothers 1999). At the level of individual citizens the objective of democracy promotion programs is “to transfer knowledge about democratic institutions and practices, socializing individuals to democratic values, and changing their behavior” (Schmitter and Brouwer, 1999: 19). Carothers includes individual citizens into the civil society sector. Though these categories were developed based on examining US democracy promotion, they can be applied to other promoters too and can be modified if necessary. These groups largely overlap, thus

they are combined into one group which entails goals and types of promotion from both groups ([Table 4](#)).

Table 4. Sectors and Levels of Democracy Promotion

Level/Sector	Goal	Type of Democracy Promotion
State Institutions	Democratic constitution ⁷	Constitutional assistance
	Independent judiciary and other law-oriented institutions	Rule-of-law aid
	Representative legislature	Legislative strengthening
	Responsive local government	Local government development
	Prodemocratic military	Civil-military relations
	Free and fair elections	Electoral aid
Political Society	Strong national political parties	Political party building
	Free and fair elections	Electoral aid
Civil Society	Active advocacy NGOs	NGO building
	Strong independent media	Media strengthening
	Free and fair elections	Elections observation
Individual citizens	Political educated citizenry	Voter education
		Professional and educational exchange

Source: Based on Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 44 and Carothers 1999: 88

This template ([Table 4](#)) makes clear the adherence of some democracy promoters to the idea that democracy should be promoted through bottom-up and top-down approaches.

⁷ Assisting to the establishment of a democratic constitution would mean that the promoters work from a scratch and the transition to democracy has just began. However, in most of the cases of a democracy promotion by consent, a democratic constitution has already been adopted based on the experience of other established democracies. Thus, in such cases the promoter moves to ensure further democratic features enshrined in the constitution do not stay on paper only: free and fair elections, independent judiciary, representative legislature, etc.

However, though these approaches should be used simultaneously, strategies usually differ from promoter to promoter. Encouragement of multiparty system with increasing both supply (state institutions) and demand (civil society) are equally important for successful democracy promotion (Carothers 1999). Thus, state institutions should be established through a democratic process, be stable, and have the capacity to perform their functions without being pressured by the executive or the military. At the same time, vibrant and independent civil society should be able to represent the interests of the citizens and provide checks over the government. According to some promoters the democratization process proceeds along a “relatively set path” (Carothers 1999: 87): a non-democratic regime faces popular demand for liberalisation, opposition and civic actors consolidate their power, multiparty elections are held, elected government is in power and democracy is further consolidated. Although the sequence may be in place in many democratizing countries, the democratic quality of these events might be far from the imagined ideal. While civic actors may multiply and elections may be held, the quantity of civil society actors does not guarantee the fulfilment of their functions and elections are not necessarily free and fair. Thus, though this sequence can be taken into consideration by promoters, instead of congratulating themselves and their domestic counterparts on groundbreaking performance, they also need to pay attention whether these events carry a democratic character.

Schmitter and Brouwer (1999) also emphasise the importance of differentiation between democracy promotion and democracy protection. In contrast to democracy promotion, democracy protection is “overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the *consolidation of democracy in specific recipient countries*” (Schmitter and Brouwer, 1999: 14, italics added). Democracy protection does not intend to change the current political regime, especially if it is democratic, but acts to make it more effective and efficient.

Likewise, organisation of police training for enforcement of human rights and support for privatisation of trade unions are activities directed at consolidation of democracy. While democracy promotion activities are likely to be more effective on the state and political society sectors, democracy protection activities can be influential when targeting civil society and individuals . However, some of the target sectors in democracy promotion and democracy protection overlap, achieving more results in one case than in the other ([Table 5](#)). In addition, the boundary between democracy promotion and protection is often blurred in the actual activities of promoters who do not strictly differentiate between the two.

Table 5. Targets of Democracy Promotion.

		GOAL	
		Democracy Promotion	Democracy Protection
		Democratization	Consolidation of Democracy
Target Level	Individual	Civic education (esp. electoral)	Civic Education
	Civic Society	PVOs / NGOs / Interest Groups* / Media	PVOs / NGOs / Interest Groups* / Media
	Political Society	Political Parties / Interest Groups Acting as Political Organisations / Political Movements	Political Parties
	State	Constitution (Writing / Reform)	Judiciary / Legislature / Police / Military/ Decentralisation

Source Schmitter and Brouwer 1999: 44

The introduced analytical frameworks help in grasping the concept of democracy promotion and in differentiating between its types and sectors/levels. However, they do not elaborate on the mechanisms of development and implementation of democracy promotion

policies. Moreover, they do not specify the conditions under which specific democracy promotion policy may have a certain outcome. This gap in the literature on democracy promotion is possible to bridge only by analyzing the interaction between the international and domestic variables. Further in the text an analytical framework is suggested that can be helpful in democracy promotion studies. The next chapter introduces analytical models of foreign policy analysis for studying the developmental stage of democracy promotion policies and an analytical framework of international socialization for the implementation stage of democracy promotion policies. However, before proceeding to the next chapter, the following section analyses the importance and features of elections, party development, and media development projects. These projects are selected as operationalisation of political society projects (party development), civil society projects (media development), and projects implemented on all levels (elections).

1.4 Looking within Democracy Promotion Projects

Democracy promotion varies not only in its possible implementation strategies but also in its targets and sectors. Classification of democracy promotion according to state, political society, civil society, and individual citizens helps to understand what the most important features of democracy are according to democracy promoters. It also helps in establishing a link between the academic approaches to democracy and democratization and the practitioner ones. Selection of elections, party development, and media development projects not only reflects the academic definition of democracy as constituting of contestation and participation but also reflects the conventional democracy promotion package of promoters. Although democracy promotion has been launched more than two decades ago and covered more than one hundred countries, the academic world has not paid sufficient attention to its constituting elements and the practitioner world is still in search for effective policies. In addition, not all

sectors are equally targeted by all promoters. The following subsections give an account of the mentioned components of democracy promotion from both academic and practitioner perspectives. Another aim is to see whether there is an ongoing dialogue between the two perspectives with more comprehensive analysis of individual EU and US projects provided in the following chapters. This overview shows that some of the projects overlap and a project targeting one component of democracy may also indirectly affect the other two. Another conclusion is that despite at least two decades of democracy promotion, these projects still wander in twilight and need improvement and most importantly applicability to domestic contexts.

1.4.1 Elections Projects

Elections, the main component of the minimalist conception of democracy have risen to prominence as the ultimate indicator of democratization after the post-communist countries started holding general elections. The main difference of the post-Soviet elections from the façade elections held previously was the endeavour to make them genuinely competitive, free and fair. This general favouritism towards elections was also picked up by democracy promoters who initiated numerous elections aid projects, election observation being one of the largest. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, election assistance was an exceptional activity exercised only in the cases of UN trusteeships and US interventions in Central America and the Caribbean in the early 20th century (Carothers 1999). Acknowledging the potential of elections to build democracy, many states and organisations, among them the UN and the OSCE, dispatched election observation missions to the general elections of democratizing countries. Regular post-elections OSCE reports give an overview and assessment of general elections. This interest in election assistance is understandable as elections provide the most tangible measurement of the current state of

democracy: the conduct and the process of elections clearly indicate whether political parties have the chances to be fairly and competitively represented and the civil society in general and individual citizens in particular have the chance of expressing their political preferences. Besides, the long-lasting effect of free and fair elections is the formation of a responsive and accountable government that equally addresses the needs of its citizens and parliamentarians or political parties that effectively communicate those needs to the broader political society. However, as the practice shows, mere conduct of elections does not immediately or even a decade or two later lead to democracy, because not all elections provide competitiveness and equal participation, as can be clearly seen on the example of many post-Soviet states.

Nevertheless, the election assistance remains the most popular democracy promotion activity. This is also due to the relative simplicity of transferring the tools of election assistance from one democratizing country to another because “elections pose a relatively consistent set of technical challenges across very different contexts” (Carothers 1999: 125). With this in mind, democracy promoters can transfer, whether successfully or not, not only their own electoral systems but also already tested election assistance tools to a new democratizing country. Election assistance implies a variety of activities that include but are not limited to the design of the electoral system, good administration of elections, voter education, election observation, and election mediation (Carothers 1999; [Table 6](#)). The assistance in the form of design of the electoral system entails the choice between majoritarian, proportional representation, and mixed systems in regard to parliamentary elections, and one or two rounds in regard to presidential elections. Besides, there is a need to decide on the size of the legislature, the threshold of entry into parliaments, voter registration process, the length of the campaign etc. On the way to a democratic transition and willing to fully break with the past, the electoral systems already existing in a country had to be revised

and changed. The assistance from the US and European countries with long-lasting elections experience has been, thus, very handy. However, despite the initial benign intentions of promoters, it can often happen that the promoted electoral system is the one promoters know and use, and it may not be fully compatible with local realities. Moreover, the promoted electoral system is seldom modified for a targeted country.

While assisting with the administration of elections, the decisions are made on the technical issues and procedures that involve the collection and distribution of ballots, number of polling stations, admission of voters to the polling stations, checking the voters' lists etc. This category also involves "politically sensitive issues" like access of campaigners to media and spending for individual and party campaigns (Carothers 1999: 126). Afterwards, the election process itself needs to be administered. The assistance within this category includes training of elections administrators and sometimes provision of necessary equipment such as ballot boxes, computers etc. However, even if the first two categories of election assistance proceed perfectly, democratic elections are not possible without knowledgeable and responsible participation of the citizenry. Voter education projects aim to raise the awareness of the citizens on the electoral processes, the voting procedure, and the consequence their decisions can have. Citizens of democratizing countries might have participated in elections before, however those were façade elections and a general attitude of indifference and acknowledgement of uselessness of one's vote in a corrupt and autocratic system prevailed. These projects are important to overcome the common apathy of the population toward democratic processes. However, these projects should be implemented along with the ones targeted at the political society and the state not only to overcome the reluctance of citizens but also the resistance and harassment by the government.

The election observation missions have become a widespread form of election assistance playing a role of an impartial watchdog that after the elections meticulously reports the conduct. However, many observation delegations not only oversee the voting process and prepare reports but also start their missions long before the elections, observing also the electoral campaign. While professionals involved in the first three categories usually come from outside, the election observers can also be the representatives of local civil society. The observation of voting and ballot counting procedures is very important and due to its potential of revealing misconduct can constitute a major driving force for fair conduct of election. Similarly, impartial and detailed report on the conduct of elections can be a powerful tool of shaming in case the elections did not proceed according to democratic standards. However the effectiveness of an accusative report would depend upon further actions of democracy promoters who may or may not take it into consideration. The same election observation delegation may carry on its mission to elections mediation in fragile states, to ensure that all the parties obey to the elections result. This kind of assistance is also important and can potentially reduce the risks of protests from the parties that loss elections, provided that the first four categories of election assistance were successful and the elections were truly free and fair. Carothers (1999) mentions former US president Carter as an influential mediator in many elections, among which are Panamian elections of 1989 and Nicaraguan elections of 1989.

Table 6. Types of Electoral Assistance.

Electoral Assistance	Type of activities
Design of the electoral system	Assistance in choosing between electoral systems (majoritarian or proportional representation)
Good administration of elections	Collection and distribution of ballots, number of polling station, training of election administrators
Voter education	Training for citizens on elections, awareness projects
Election observation	Observation of the campaign and elections process
Election mediation	Organisation of negotiations between the opposing sides in elections especially after the voting day

Source: author's own compilation based on Carothers (1999).

The caveat of electoral assistance can be “overdoing elections” (Carothers 1999: 136) not paying enough attention to the other components of democracy and eventually having elections that are corrupt and lack meaningful competition. According to critics of electoral assistance transitional countries may be better off without instant elections that are not adapted to local realities and do not have the essential element of the Western liberalism, namely the rule of law (Zakaria 1997). Echoing Kaplan's (1997) argument that in poor countries without any democratic development, elections might lead to chaos, Zakaria (1997) calls for more rule-of-law development projects before establishing the elections. Due to different reasons they, however, agree that before establishment of a full-fledged democracy the country has to undergo a period of soft authoritarianism, something that currently happens to post-Soviet countries, though they were immediately exposed to elections. However, the approach of soft authoritarianism can be dubious because without targeted and meaningful democracy promotion with all of its components, the country may maintain soft authoritarianism and the final transformation to democracy may be further delayed.

Nevertheless, elections should not be put off for more than three to five years and should always follow the establishment and stabilisation of authority and main institutions (Carothers 1999). Similarly, democracy promoters should not consider the mission accomplished as soon as the first elections are held even if it fairly passed the “free and fair” standard. The examples of many post-Soviet countries show that after fairly successful inaugural elections, the following ones failed to meet democratic standards.

1.4.2 Party Development Projects

The literature on democratization gives a prominent role to party politics in the democratization process. “Parties remain dominant in structuring the electoral process, governing, and perhaps even in ‘symbolic integration’ of citizens into the democratic process” (Diamond and Gunther 2001: xviii), especially in newly established democracies. Strong parties are essential for successful and efficient performance of democracy enabling and ensuring the capability of the government to address national issues (Burnell 2006). However, even after the establishment of elections and seemingly a pluralist party system, the “problems of performance and legitimacy” (Diamond and Gunther 2001: xxxi) still hinder democratic processes, making these parties either pale in their performance compared to their counterparts from consolidated democracies or even worse, making them puppets in power games of a handful of powerful elites. The understanding of this danger have induced practitioners and academics to realise the importance of stable party systems for democratizing countries and led to the acknowledgement that party development assistance should be given more attention within democracy promotion policies (Burnell 2004). This understanding has mainly stemmed from the failure of “Washington-consensus” type assistance to address the issues of the political society, neglecting “the ability of party politics to channel underlying social and economic conflicts in a peaceful way” (Burnell 2006: 5).

The expansion of party development projects has happened in two phases (Carothers 2006b). The first phase began in the early 1990s. Yet again the fall of the Berlin Wall encouraged US and European parties to rush into development of new pro-democratic parties in the CEE to prevent them falling back into pro-communist system. US party organisations such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) were the first to enter the volatile arena of Central and Eastern European political parties. European party organisations, especially the German *Stiftungen* followed, guided “by the sense of rediscovered political solidarity” (Carothers 2006b: 69) with the countries that were cut off from Europe by the communist regime. However, European and US efforts were not limited to the CEE, and they also started working in many African countries. The second phase started after the 1990s, when party development projects expanded in Latin America and in Africa. Besides the mentioned organisations, new party development actors appeared on the scene, namely United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and others. The main stimulus for this expansion was the opinion that newly democratizing countries stumble over their democratic transitions mainly due to flawed party systems and weak parties (Carothers 2006a).

While the interest in party development within democracy promotion policies has grown, it has not yet been visible within the academic circles as “there is barely visible sub-literature on party assistance specifically” (Burnell 2006: 8) with “only a handful of articles or reports...on the subject” (Carothers 2006a: 14). The same concern has been voiced by the practitioners lamenting that the “academic literature on the subject is almost non-existent; there are no scholarly articles, graduate theses or books”, urging to fill this lacuna to “promote sensible policies and effective programming” (Kumar 2005: 526). Academic accounts of party

development assistance have been provided by Burnell (2006) and Carothers (2006a: 16) aiming “to at least arrive at stocktaking of where the field is and where it is likely going”.

The importance of viable parties for democracy and the process of democratization is not in the mere existence of parties. The importance is in their function as a channel for the population’s participation in politics as they need “to develop consistent policies and government programs”, “to pick up demands from society and bundle them” “to recruit, select and train people for positions in government and the legislature” (Catón 2007: 7) and “to make the elected government accountable” (Burnell 2006: 17). To perform these functions, parties require certain capabilities such as policy research, and attributes such as financial resources, organisational, and communication skills. Parties and party systems—number of parties and the extent of their differences—can have long-term consequences on the quality of democracy and its further consolidation (Mainwaring 1998). Problematic party development can result in flawed interest articulation and aggregation (Carothers 2006a: 9), hindering the representation of the voters. In addition, weak leader-centred parties without clear programming do not allocate sufficient time on voter-education, establishing contact with the latter only during the electoral campaign. Damage from non-democratic parties could be in the fulfilment of their government function, when party elites used to personalistic and corrupt politics come to power selling places on the candidate lists (Carothers 2006a). These factors make parties of utmost importance for a well-functioning democracy, especially increasing their importance for new and volatile democracies.

Given the variety of problems with parties, some scholars raised the possibility of skipping party development and finding other means of institutionalizing democratic politics. The favourite to replace parties in the process of democratization has always been the civil society. Indeed, many democracy promoters have launched various projects targeting civil

society, which is often understood as a vibrant group of independent NGOs that can provide the function of checks and balances ensuring “pluralistic interactions between highly empowered citizens and state” (Carothers 2006a: 9). No matter how appealing, this option is not feasible in the case of democratizing countries. The idea of civil society is still embryonic in newly democratizing countries. Even if there is a handful of active NGOs in a democratizing country, they usually do not yet possess the leverage to influence the government’s decisions. Moreover, being financially unsustainable, they often receive funds from governmental sources or are dependent upon donor grants, which may seem as a more independent source of financing but at the same time it endangers the vitality of those NGOs once the grant flow stops. Thus, it is unclear what other institutions may have the capacity of replacing parties in performing their main functions (Doherty 2001) making “necessary for now to live with them” (Carothers 2006a: 11). In addition, democratization of political parties has been viewed as a priority in the “efforts to restore public confidence in the democratic process as a whole” (Albright 2003: 1).

Some scholars acknowledge that the sequence of democratization process may influence the sequence of party development (van Biezen 2003), thus the timing and sequence of a party’s activities may influence the nature of its impact upon democratization. Thus, when designing a party development project, promoters and parties should keep “the optimum balance of roles and functions” (Burnell 2006: 20), and timing. However, though both practitioners and academics know the functions of parties, their role in and effect on democratization process, the strategic part still needs to be improved (Burnell 2006; Carothers 2006a). Following this logic, party development assistance should take into consideration current developmental stage of a party and of democracy in a target country. Apparently, this would require prior extensive research and would not allow simple transition of a democracy

promotion project from one country to another. Burnell (2006) mentions an option for more democratic strategy shaping could be allowing local people to decide the type and timing of a party development project. Although, this may satisfy the criticism on the lack of local ownership in democracy promotion projects, it also contains a caveat: in authoritarian or even semi-authoritarian states people would be seldom allowed to speak up (Burnell 2006). However, to keep a promoter in charge of its project and involve domestic actors, the project development can be carried out with the participation of local stakeholders and independent experts.

Though party development may seem a more straightforward initiative with seemingly tangible borders, unlike the civil society development, categorizing democracy promotion directed to party development is a rather difficult task. The main hardship is yet again fuzzy borders of the projects, since also the projects not directly targeting parties may have influence on their functioning. Thus, Carothers (2006a) distinguishes between direct and indirect party development projects ([Table 7](#)). Election assistance is a major area of democracy promotion that can indirectly influence parties. For example, working with electoral commissions democracy promoters endeavour to promote free and fair elections, enabling parties to freely compete and subsequently perform their main functions. In addition, under the umbrella of elections projects, promoters train parties in monitoring elections and voting processes. Similarly, civil society development can be beneficial to parties: the establishment of stable cooperation links between NGOs and parties can help the latter to improve their connections with their constituencies, and improve their functioning. Legislature strengthening projects may positively influence parties because most of the trained or consulted parliamentarians are representatives of parties. However, though attention will

also be paid to the overlapping elements of democracy promotion projects, the main focus of this dissertation is on the projects directly focusing on the target sector.

Direct party development projects have the objective of party reform and strengthening. The most common party development projects are first, assistance before or during the electoral period helping the parties to develop an effective electoral campaign and second, assistance to parties in improving their overall organisational capacity (Carothers 2006 a; [Table 7](#)). Carothers (2006a) also mentions other direct party development projects that primarily aim to improve their roles as legislators and instead of having trainings for individual parties, some of new promoters opt for advancing the regulations governing the party system or initiating a multi-party dialogues over national issues. However, though the improvement of organisational capacities of parties, start receiving more attention, among these activities elections-related party development is the primary focus of most of the promoters', receiving the largest funds (Kumar 2005). This "electoral" bias shows that promoters still regard elections as the cornerstone of democratic processes, which is reasonable but entails the danger of neglecting the developments, sometimes negative, that happen in between elections. Democracy promoters tend to work on short-terms, without much needed follow-ups to their projects and sustained projects (de Zeeuw and Kumar 2006), necessary to avoid the usual lip service of the domestic actors.

Table 7. Overall Objectives of Party Aid

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A strong central party organisation with competent, rational, and transparent management structures, well-trained cadres, and meritocratic systems of personnel selection, training, and promotion;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Processes of internal democracy for choosing the party leader and other senior party management, as well as candidates;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A well-elaborated party platform and the capacity to engage in serious policy analysis;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A clear ideological self-definition that also avoids any ideological extremes;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transparent, broad-based, and adequate funding;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity to campaign effectively, including a strong grassroots outreach;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Capacity to govern effectively in the executive and legislative branches;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A substantial presence around the country via a network of local branches that enjoy significant responsibility and autonomy;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A well-defined membership base and regular contacts between the party and the membership;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cooperative, productive relations with civil society organisations;
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A stronger role for women in the party as candidates, party leaders and managers, and members; and
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A good youth program that brings youth into the party, trains, them, and makes use of their energy and talents.

Source: Carothers 2006a: 98.

Especially in newly democratizing states electoral period is of crucial importance not only for new parties but also for the whole democratic process of a country. This period also enables promoters to reach their targets better as the willingness of parties to get elected lowers their resistance to external influence. Electoral period projects mainly concentrate on helping parties plan their campaigns starting some eight to twelve months before the voting day (Carothers 2006a). These include assisting target parties on selection and training of candidates, preparation of party lists, coalition building especially among the opposition parties that have related programs, message development and delivery, fundraising, and polling. Unlike the hired consultants, democracy promoters usually do not only aim to achieve

short-term results, i.e. election, but attempt to diffuse democratic norms and values to show target parties how the electoral process may influence democracy (Carothers 2006a). This type of projects is the most “popular” and extensive within party development because it requires well-defined knowledge on effective campaigning and that is something democracy promoters can easily transfer to target countries from their own experiences. However, the effectiveness of these projects and the level of applicability is yet to be understood.

There is no sharp distinction between electoral campaign assistance and organisational development of parties because parts of the former—message development and fundraising—are important elements of party sustenance in between elections. This type of party development aims to build or strengthen the organisational capacity of the party and to improve its outreach activities. These type of development aims not only *inter alia* to establish explicit lines of authority, improve internal communication and strategic planning, establish connections with social organisation, and incorporate women and youth, but also aims to make parties “more internally democratic” (Carothers 2006a: 95). The least developed type of party development is the party strengthening within legislatures. These projects aim to assist party members that are in the legislature to better perform their functions of a parliamentarian. Many party members in democratizing countries lack the experience and skills of working in legislature. This kind of party development can foster more opportunities for reforms as it concentrates on skills for drafting legislation, coalition-building, and party caucus positively influencing not only the target party but also the legislature. These projects are usually implemented through the standard approach of trainings, workshops, and study tours (Carothers 2006a; Carothers 2006b).

1.4.3 Media Development Projects

Choosing the governing authority through elections has always been the cornerstone of academic perceptions on democracy and a favourite of democracy promoters. However, before the boom of democracy promotion the idea of civil society development has not enjoyed similar popularity either with comparative politics and international relations scholars or with practitioners. The 1980s events in the CEE changed this perception, inducing scholars and promoters to think that democratization can also stem from bottom-up desire of transition. The acknowledged triumph of civil society over communism in the CEE and possible spill-over effect gave a special appeal to non-partisan transition to democracy. Though civil society was not included in the initial projects on democracy promotion, since the mid-1990s it has started to acquire a stable position within democracy promotion policies of many promoters (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). The increasing popularity among democracy promoters has also occurred due to the initial institutional incapacity of many target countries, more liberal Clinton administration, and trivial budget cuts (Carothers 1999), since funding civil society organisations has proven less expensive than reforming state institutions. However, a major incentive for democracy promoters to concentrate on civil society development is its usual enthusiasm to participate in new projects and general lack of devastating resistance characteristic to state institutions and local power holders. “Funding virtue” (Ottaway and Carothers 2000) of grassroots democracy through civil society development has become a major tool of democracy promotion in some cases directed at breaking the resistance of reluctant political elites.

That said, it is necessary to define civil society, which has proven a rather elusive concept and its definitions were inspired more by the actions of donors rather by academic debates (Ottaway and Carothers 2000). The definition of civil society covers various groups

and associations that include trade unions, organisations based on culture or ethnicity, informal social networks, organisations with specific political roles like advocacy groups, and those that are active mainly outside of the political realm, and those that accept current regime or want to change it (White 1994). There is also a broad agreement that civil society does not incorporate the formal political society and private business or the market and can be defined as a

realm between state and family populated by organisations which are separate from the state, enjoy autonomy in relation to the state and are formed voluntarily by members of society to protect or extend their interests or values (White 1994: 379).

Despite the breadth of this definition civil society development has largely been associated with NGOs, making the latter the representatives of the whole civil society (Carothers 1999). This definition and usual targets of democracy promoters include advocacy NGOs, civic education NGOs, labour unions, and media. Large part of entities that can be regarded civil society is excluded from democracy promotion. However, the task of this study is to understand the potential outcome of democracy promotion through civil society and not to investigate the motivations or justifications of promoters in targeting a certain type of organisation or group.

In most of democratizing states, civil society development resembles more civil society building because the favourite of academics and practitioners the “vibrant” civil society is practically non-existent largely due to the dependence of its organisations on state financing. Although, civil society organisations are the one that welcome external democracy promotion most, they are also the most vulnerable to pressures from political forces. Starting from scratch allows democracy promoters to shape local civil society to their image and

likeness but at the same time threatens to leave it without its own voice. In many democratizing states the growing amount of NGO assistance has led to mushrooming of NGOs: for example in Armenia with population of three million there are more than 3000 registered local NGOs that are largely dependent upon donor funding and are not self-sustainable. Financial dependence and vulnerability to state pressure is endangering the performance of civil society's main functions, which vary among economic and democratic. Scholars acknowledging economic functions of civil society are divided in two camps: those viewing the influence of civil society on economy as negative and those viewing it as positive. The first camp argues that interest groups have no incentive to facilitate common wellbeing of the whole society (Olson 1971). Others argue that civil society can boost economic growth (Putnam 1993).

Closely related to democracy are the arguments on the role of civil society in strengthening the state. Yet again the scholars do not completely agree on positive functions of civil society towards democracy. Some suppose that civil society can have negative influence on consolidation of democracy if there are several civil societies on the same territory but differing in their interests, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural belonging (Whitehead 1997). Others also mention that the strength of a state and democracy depend upon civil society, which in its turn depends upon a strong state and democracy (Foley and Edwards 1996). However, this dissertation is interested in the democratic functions of civil society and how democracy promotion efforts can foster those. The ability of civil society to organise and channel scattered interests of its members is believed to have positive influence on political participation (Nie et al 1969). Civil society is also often viewed as the watchdog for the government with an objective to prevent it from dominating tendencies and to ensure political pluralism (Almond and Verba 1963). In the case of a democratizing country, this function is

of utmost importance (Wiegler and Butterfield 1992) because it has the potential of ensuring a smooth transition to democracy without falling back into authoritarian habits.

Media has long been regarded as the best watchdog for the government and in ideal satisfies the non-partisanship requirement of civil society. It also represents the freedom of expression requirement of democracy and can act as a forum of contestation during elections at the same time ensuring the transparency of government actions through investigative reporting and exposure of any non-democratic behaviour. Democratic consolidation is problematic “if citizens and government officials do not have regular, reliable, affordable access to accurate information about public affairs. The concept of accountability is severely lacking in a context where government officials can intimidate independent media companies into self-censorship.” (ARD 2002: 30).

However, media outlets require a number of components to perform these functions. Democracy promoters involved in media development have so far mostly concentrated on developing reporting skills of targeted media outlets (Carothers 1999; Trail 2003). They work equally with print and broadcast media outlets, recently paying more attention to so-called alternative media—online news sources, blogging, and sometimes even twittering (Trail 2009). Assuming that media outlets do not perform their functions well because they lack necessary professional skills, democracy promoters organise trainings, workshops, and study tours, to transfer their own knowledge. Consultations are often backed with donation of equipment or the usual supply of grant funding. Besides the mentioned, democracy promoters also concentrate on development of basic media law that would protect private media outlets from governmental pressures.

Although, lack of professional skills and necessary equipment, especially in the cases of regional media, negatively influences the watchdog function, and may also endanger freedom of speech, these are not the only obstacles. In most of the cases the journalists do not pursue investigative reporting not because they do not possess the required knowledge and skills but because the pressure coming from the state and the political society often threatens not only their jobs but also their lives. A relatively small amount of money can improve the situation of a media outlet, especially in the initial phase of political and economic transformation (Carothers 1999). Nevertheless, it does not guarantee the advancement of democracy when the other sectors of democracy promotion are not equally socialized into these democratic principles. This dissertation, considers media assistance to be an important component of democracy promotion within civil society development section. While NGOs have the potential of channelling population's interests and bring them to the attention of the government, their narrowly specialized character reduces their areas of population coverage. On the other hand, media has the potential not only to voice the concerns of the population but also expose the actions of the government at the same time ensuring participation in the democratic process and contestation. So far, media development as part of democracy promotion has received little attention from academics in terms of understanding what the outcome of media development is and how it should proceed. This dissertation contributes to filling this gap.

1.5 Conclusion

With burgeoning democracy promotion and democratization attempts in every corner of the planet, the 2000s have resulted in a fresher academic view of democratization. Discussing different views on democracy, democratization, and democracy promotion, this chapter argued that viewing democratization and democracy promotion as solely domestic or

international phenomena has become archaic in modern globalised and interdependent political environment. On the other hand, the multitude of conceptualisations of regimes as democracies with adjectives is not conducive to studying the outcomes of democracy promotion. “Democracies with adjectives” along with minimalist and maximalist conceptions of democracy are rather transitory outcomes of democracy promotion and democratization, whether successful or not. However, a study looking into the outcomes of democracy promotion needs to adopt a definition that is both academically sound and practically realistic for the sake of promotion. Consequently, the definition adopted in this dissertation entails the requirements of contestation and participation including the fundamental freedoms. This understanding of liberal democracy is also largely adopted by democracy promoters who endeavour to establish free and fair elections and create a vibrant civil society.

This chapter also elaborated on the concept of democracy promotion and identified the main three sectors under analysis: projects directed at elections, parties, and the media. It thoroughly discussed these sectors, identifying the gaps to be filled both in terms of academic research and in terms of practitioner work. Due to the vulnerability of new democratic institutions and shaky separation between them, democracy promoters need to pay equal attention to all three sectors. Negligence of a particular sector risks resulting in a resistance to democratic principles from the state and political parties and mere indifference from civil society and individuals. On the other hand, while criticism is voiced on overdoing elections, there is also the danger of underdoing elections or democracy promotion in particular. As the examples of countries with regimes classified as competitive authoritarianism (Levitsky and Way 2010) demonstrate, mere establishment of democratic institutions or holding of elections do not guarantee successful democratic transformation.

This chapter also argued that democracy promotion studies require an adequate analytical framework. Current theories of comparative politics and international relations cannot fully account for the complex process of democracy promotion, which involves both domestic and international actors and the outcomes of their interaction. To fill this gap, this dissertation argues that democracy promotion needs to be considered as a process within two stages—developmental and implemental—and proceeds with the: 1) identification of the steps for democracy promotion policy development; 2) adoption and adaptation of the theoretical framework of international socialization (Schimmelenig et al 2006); and 3) introduction of new independent and dependent variables to be tested within hypotheses that can account for the whole process of democracy promotion.

Chapter 2. Searching for Democracy Promotion Framework: the Hybridism of Democratic Transformation

Following the argument of the first chapter for the need of an analytical framework for democracy promotion, this chapter first discusses foreign policy perspective on democracy promotion and proceeds to the framework of international socialization, which when adapted can be applied to democracy promotion. Democracy promotion as any policy undergoes developmental and implementation stages and understanding both of those can shed light on the possible outcome and impact of the policy. Thus, this chapter theoretically examines democracy promotion on the developmental stage using the analytical frameworks of foreign policy decision-making showing how and why certain policies can be shaped. Although, the main analytical focus of this dissertation is on the implementation stage of democracy promotion, it is argued that the process of foreign policy decision-making is likely to influence the implementation of democracy promotion and the causal link between two stages requires further analysis. However, while this influence may not be outstanding in terms of choosing a specific strategy, it affects the consistency and even the credibility of a promoter.

The chapter further elaborates on an analytical framework that can be applied to the implementation stage of democracy promotion, identifying the latter's outcome. To account for both international democracy promotion and domestic democratization, this chapter argues that democracy promotion can be studied through the application of the international socialization framework developed by Schimmelfennig et al (2006). This understanding of international socialization provides an opportunity to equally consider the developments within the international and domestic realm, differentiating different types of strategies. Such close consideration of international and domestic conditions and strategies of democracy promotion allows expecting specific outcomes of democracy promotion depending upon

varied values of international and domestic conditions. Although, the framework has been applied to the case of EU norm promotion in the CEE, to fully grasp the developments within and outside of the policy, the framework has to be modified with the addition of new variables and new cases.

2.1 Democracy Promotion as Foreign Policy Decision-Making

Democracy promotion is currently regarded as one of the main components of foreign policies or external relations of many states and international organisations. Thus, democracy promotion policies are supposed to be developed as all other foreign policy components and can be approached from the perspective of foreign policy decision-making. While there is neither academic nor practitioner prescriptions of what a democracy promotion policy should involve and how it should proceed, analyzing it from the perspective of foreign policy decision-making and assumed behaviour can show rationale behind policy choice and can lead to deeper understanding of their implementation. As shown above there is sufficient research on the usual and sometimes preferred sequence of democratization, on the types, goals, and levels of democracy promotion, and on the subsequent democratic consolidation. Based on this research it is possible to develop a general framework of democracy promotion policy, which can encourage certain behaviour by a democracy promoter pursuing the goal of establishing democracy in target countries. Such framework would not merely reflect the current practice of democracy promoters but would rather aspire to give theoretical grounds to the practical world paying attention to the feasibility of some activities on the ground.

The framework is supposed to ascribe the basic dos and don'ts of democracy promotion behaviour. Thus, its main purpose is to outline what actions should be taken if the goal of foreign policy is the establishment of democracy in a target country rather than discuss why a specific policy action was taken. While it initially provides insights into the

development process of a policy, further detailed implementation has to be on a case by case basis. In this section the basic assumptions of such a framework are presented and it is further developed in the course of research based on empirical findings. The democracy promotion behaviour of chosen promoters is analyzed vis-à-vis the suggested model and variables introduced later taking into consideration the respective organisational constraints. A general model of democracy promotion should serve as a template for a democracy promoter while developing and implementing the policy. While it should provide guidelines as how to act under specific conditions or in general situations to achieve the goal of democracy it neither needs to explain the reasons for opting for a democracy promotion policy nor specify criteria for choosing a target country.

Rationality and its application to foreign policy decision-making is one of the most influential approaches to understanding modern international politics. Rational choice has been actively used to analyze and assess foreign policy decision-making and at the same time to translate “what we have learned into practical guidance in the making of foreign policy” (Bueno de Mesquita 2009: 20). Rationality assumes that actors are logical and, having perfect information about the consequences of a certain choice, maximise their benefits at the same time trying to minimise the costs. Rational choice theory distinguishes three elements in the choice situation:

The first element is the feasible set, i.e. the set of all courses of action, which (are rationally believed to) satisfy various logical, physical and economic constraints. The second is a (a set of rational beliefs about) the causal structure of the situation, which determines what course of action will lead to what outcomes. The third is a subjective ranking of the feasible alternatives, usually derived from a ranking of the outcomes to which they (are

expected to) lead. To act rationally, then, simply means to choose the highest-ranked element in the feasible set (Elster 1986: 4).

Thus, in rational foreign policy decision-making process, an actor identifies the goal, searches for alternatives, predicts the consequences of each alternative, evaluates each alternative in terms of the goals, and selects the alternative that maximises the values. Though, the most popular approach to foreign policy analysis, rational choice have received criticism from psychological approach (Tetlock and McGuire 1986), prospect theory (Quattrone and Tversky 1988; Levy 1992), social constructivism (Wendt 1999) and others. However, some of these alternative approaches implicitly or explicitly set a rational benchmark (Verba 1961) and criticise the handling of preferences and beliefs and can contribute to the post-factum analysis but do not substantially influence the development of models of action.

In the case of this research the concept of rationality is merely a starting point for framework construction. The condition of rationality shapes the understanding of the theorist of how and what actions are likely to be chosen given actor's motivation and preferences, while the content or the formation of those preferences need not be specified (Zagare 1990, Jackman 1993). Thus, an analytical model built based on the assumption of rationality does not exclude the power of constructivist approaches in explaining preference formation. Without supplementary assumptions, rational choice models are not likely to give full account of foreign policy actions or make predictions (Simon 1995). Nevertheless, at the same time, rationalist models are better choices when building a model/framework of action (Bueno de Mesquita 2009) because none of the other approaches currently provides parsimonious guidance for action en route to foreign policy objective. Thus, based on the studies of democratization and democracy promotion and assuming that promoters are rational actors

who want to achieve their objective of successfully promoting democracy to target countries, the following actions should be taken when determining policy options:

- Set a clear understanding of the promoted type of democracy;
- Analyse domestic conditions, i.e. closely study the geopolitical, cultural and economic situation of the target country;
- Establish cooperation with other promoters in the same target country working on the same issues;
- Based on the research rank the components of democracy to be promoted;
- Target both governmental and transnational channels when promoting the same component of democracy;
- Further ensure policy implementation to consolidate positive results.

However, it would be naïve and far-fetched to adopt a rationality-based theory and at the same time assume that democracy promoters simply do not understand how they should reach their goals. The sketch of a democracy promotion framework presented above is based on the assumption that action is a choice of a unified actor, who understanding the problem and objectives, weighs the options and their consequences according to their payoffs and makes a rational choice (Alison and Zelikow 1999). Though democracy promoters can and should act rationally they are often constrained due to various factors and either act within bounded rationality (Jones 1999) or they satisfice (Simon 1956). Despite numerous and extensive democracy promotion policies, democracy has not made much progress on the global level, which correlates with the assumption that democracy promoters do not always act based on rational calculations with their ultimate goal in mind. At the same time, critics of democracy promotion may argue that democracy promoters may not follow the rational path

simply because their final goal is not the establishment of democracy but rather certain interests and preferences that are promoted under the guise of democracy. These can be trade interests, pursuit of regional influence, certain security issues etc. However, in the case of this research, the focus is set not on the motives of democracy promotion but on the tools and strategies that produce the planned outcome. Even if democracy is only a medium for promotion of other interests, its establishment helps to achieve the initial goals, making the promoter yet again committed to democracy promotion. However, it should be noted that if other more pressing national issues come across democracy promotion they may well prevail in importance.

To counter-balance the rationalist model of decision-making, this study also takes into consideration the organisational behaviour and the governmental politics models (Allison and Zelikow 1999). Especially suitable for explaining foreign policy decision-making (Jones 2008), the organisational behaviour model considers action as an organisational output and assumes that instead of evaluating all possible courses of action, actors settle on the first possible solution and follow pre-established routine, often due to shortage of resources (Allison and Zelikow 1999). The governmental politics model analyses the governmental action as a political resultant, which appears to be “not a solution to a problem but rather results from compromise, conflict, and confusion” (Allison and Zelikow 1999: 294) emerging in the course of bargaining. Though not undermining rationalist assumptions, the organisational behaviour and governmental politics models have the potential to explain the actions of democracy promoters should the findings show that they do not act within the framework of the rationalist model.

The current assumption of this research is that policy-making of promoters would not fully fit the rationalist model but would rather incorporate elements from the other two models. In addition, the extent of applicability of the other two models would vary in the

course of time, i.e. the launch and further broadening of democracy promotion policy. Foreign policy analysis approach is applied to investigate the developmental stage of a democracy promotion policy and close attention is paid whether there is a correlation between the extent the actual policy-making corresponds to the suggested framework and the implementation mechanism chosen by the promoter. While foreign policy-making analysis is useful for understanding how democracy promotion policies are developed, the implementation stage requires another approach to incorporate domestic actors within target countries.

2.2 Implementing Democracy Promotion through International Socialization

Despite two decades of attention, democracy promotion studies still lack predictive theoretical or analytical frameworks (Burnell 2007, 2008). Schimmelfennig et al (2006) aimed to fill this lacuna by developing a robust and empirically testable theoretical framework based on the notion of international socialization that can be applied to the implementation stage of democracy promotion and can also incorporate domestic democratization. However, this framework still needs development and application to other cases of democracy promoters and targets of their activities to identify and provide full explanation of the concept of democracy promotion and identify the effective strategies. [Here](#) it is updated in terms of its structural and geographical scopes, as well as its independent and dependant variables. This section presents the original framework providing definitions of important concepts, presenting the rationalist-constructivist debate, identifying the types of socialization and strategies, and specifying necessary international and domestic conditions for successful socialization. Since here the analytical framework of international socialization is applied to democracy promotion, any mentioning of international socialization components, approaches, and strategies should be equally regarded as those of democracy promotion.

International socialization is “a process in which states [or other targets] are induced to adopt the constitutive rules of an international community” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 2). The state or another target of socialization is considered successfully socialized when it adopts a rule creating domestic mechanisms and powerful institutional and political processes that guarantee compliance and discourage opposition to this rule. From the point of view of democracy promotion studies, this definition of international socialization is somewhat rigid and one-dimensional because it does not take into consideration possible varying degrees of democratic transformations. It is one-dimensional because it supposes the creation of institutions and processes guaranteeing compliance to democratic principles, however does not elaborate whether those principles are guaranteed to be complied with. Thus, this definition is used as a starting point for the development of a more comprehensive understanding that would encompass various possibilities of policy outcome. This theoretical framework is built on a synthetic approach of amalgamating current international relations approaches—rationalism and constructivism—and of analyzing international socialization from a forward-looking perspective, “as a process directed at or potentially leading to rule adoption by the target states” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 2). Another concern of scholars about democracy promotion studies has been the insufficient focus on domestic political actors and processes (Schmitter and Brouwer 1999; Schmitz 2004). This theoretical framework not only examines the international conditions, but also takes into account the domestic ones.

The literature on international socialization defines two general approaches through which international organisations promote their rules and norms. These methods are strategic actions of incentives and coercion on the one hand, and appropriate actions of persuasion and example on the other. The first one is the logic of appropriateness advocated by constructivists

and the second one is the logic of consequentiality advocated by rationalists (March and Olsen 2004), and these represent “opposing ideal-types” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 16). From the rationalist perspective, states act in the technical environment of the international system, and international socialization is not a relevant concept per se. Socialization is only possible as a strategic action via incentives or coercion and aims to change the behaviour of the target but not its identity or interest (Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990; Jupille et al 2003; Schimmelfennig 2002). From the constructivist perspective, international socialization argues that states act in a social environment and international socialization is based on the concept of appropriate action. Thus, an agency socializes target states by social persuasion and benign example, acting as a role model and changing the identity and interests of the socialized (Checkel 2001; Risse et al 1999). However, none of the ideal-types alone can provide plausible and empirically grounded explanation for the success or failure of international socialization. Though international socializers or democracy promoters publicise the image of a socially constructed role model pursuing benign purposes, it is unlikely that these purposes do not derive from their material interests. Likewise, domestic actors, nurtured in their domestic yet non-socialized environments, are unlikely to regard foreign rules and norms as appropriate because of their mere internationality.

Schimmelfennig and his collaborators design an analytical framework that regards socialization as a “strategic action in a community environment” (Schimmelfennig 2003b) and views it as “a bargaining process with normative constraints” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 25). Thus, they adopt perspectives from both rational institutionalism and social constructivism, seeing domestic actors as rational and risk-averse, trying to maximise their utilities, while promoters are seen as “realist actor[s] in normative clothes” (Seeberg 2009: 95). While the framework adopts the constructivist vision of cultural international

environment and strong international organisations as socialization agents, it does not agree with the logic of appropriateness and disregards the possibility that domestic actors will change their self-defined interests based on interaction. Consequently, a theoretical framework of international socialization analyzing the actions of international actors and relevant reactions of domestic actors need to consider that not always actions are based on rational calculations and not always are driven by social and appropriate motives. To understand whether and how strategic action is formed under the influence of the international environment, Schimmelfennig and his collaborators proceed with theorizing based on a pure rationalist bargaining approach that can capture the concept of a strategic action in international community.

From the rationalist perspective the socializing agency and the target of socialization are motivated by their own self-interested political preferences, which according to Schimmelfennig et al (2006: 18) are "material and power-oriented". These can include security issues, welfare, or maintaining political power. Thus, a socialization agency and a target consider the socialization process as a pathway to achieve their own interests. None of them take the norms of the community for granted but rather as undeniable facts that can either constrain or promote certain behaviour. Following the same logic and echoing the critique of democracy promotion mentioned earlier, the socialization agency do not necessarily possess a genuine belief in democracy or other issues that they promote. They rather use the former to achieve other security or power-related goals. However, regardless of the motivation, the socializing agency has an interest in the socializing process otherwise it would not venture it. In addition, spread of its own community rules would help create new alliances and prove the viability of its own system. Similarly, the targets when adopting the promoted norms or rules take into consideration potential benefits of adoption. However, the utility for the target in

socialization, at least from its own perspective, is not taken for granted, otherwise the whole socialization process would be redundant because the norms would be adopted without the socialization agency. Thus, in case of any socialization process there is a certain degree of domestic resistance (Schimmelfennig et al 2006).

To overcome this resistance, a socialization agency has to be willing to employ certain strategies and tools that can also be costly for the international community. The extent to which a socializing agency is willing to pay to socialize a specific target depends upon the importance of the target to the interests and preferences of the agency. From this strategic perspective, the socialization agency reinforces its community rules or democracy and the capability of reinforcement through punishments or rewards depends upon the bargaining power of the agency. The bargaining power of the agency at the same time is constrained by the credibility and the size of its rewards and the credibility and severity of its punishment. Thus, to induce the target to internalise the socialized or promoted rules, the agency needs to be able to match its "offer" with domestic adaptation costs. If the adaptation costs of a target are higher than the promised rewards then there is little chance for successful socialization. In a nutshell, the main proposition of the framework states that successful socialization depends upon the agency's bargaining power, credible constraints and incentives, well-developed monitoring system, and the size of domestic adaptation costs. However, given the fact that socializers act within a social environment, the pure form of material bargaining is not possible and is constrained by structural features of the international community and the target. This confirms the importance of understanding how democracy promotion policies are developed, as the development mechanism might later correlate or even cause the implementation mechanism.

International organisations that endeavour to socialize their target countries to their community norms and principles by employing different strategies and offering membership in the organisation. When offering membership, a socializing organisation has the choice to condition its membership upon compliance to the promoted rules or admit the applicant that does not comply with the community norms yet. A socialization agency pursuing an *inclusive* strategy first grants states with membership and then tries to socialize them from within—the Council of Europe, the OSCE—because new members along with membership take on the obligation to adhere to the norms and principles of the socializer. A socialization agency pursuing an *exclusive* strategy socializes states before granting them membership—the EU and NATO—making membership conditional on compliance with the promoted rules and norms (Schimmelfennig 2002; [Table 8](#)). Apparently, a socializer employing an inclusive strategy relies on the logic of appropriateness, expecting that the general acceptance of the promoted norms by the community would be an incentive enough for the new entrant to adapt and comply. On the contrary, the socializers opting for the exclusive approach prefer to “train” their targets before granting membership, also making the membership more exclusive. A mixed, intermediary, strategy can also be used by a socializer that sets minimal membership conditions but is not always consistent with their application.

Schimmelfennig et al (2006) further distinguish between strategies of reinforcement and persuasion. Reinforcement entails specification depending upon the employment of incentives: reinforcement by reward, by support, or by punishment. The framework also categorises incentives as tangible and or intangible. A socializing agency can also opt for different channels of socialization: intergovernmental targeting the governments directly and transnational, targeting non-governmental actors such as social movements, interest groups, or business actors (Schimmelfennig et al 2006). The last categorisation correlates with the

categorisation of levels in democracy promotion, namely state level with the intergovernmental channel and civil society level with the transnational channel. The political society level of democracy promotion can be considered as intermediary because it also serves as the channel of expression for the public will to the government and the state. The targets of socialization face the reinforcement strategies that control incentives and disincentives and persuasion strategies that imply arguing for the justification of the promoted norm. As research shows socializing organisations employ both strategies, though not to equal extent (Schimmelfennig et al. 2006).

The reinforcement strategies in their own turn are categorised depending upon the tangibility of incentives they offer or withdraw. *Social reinforcement* employs “socio-psychological” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 33) instruments of reward (international recognition or public praise), punishment (shaming or shunning), and support (additional meetings with the agency or arrival of expert groups). This strategy is generally used by the Council of Europe and the OSCE, which are socializing agencies without considerable economic or military leverage. The *material reinforcement* strategy is usually used by socializing agencies that have the capability to enforce the promoted norm by means of their material leverage, e.g. NATO and the EU. The most widely used strategy of material reinforcement is the reinforcement by reward, better known as political conditionality (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Schimmelfennig et al 2006). This strategy supposes tangible rewards when the target state complies with the conditions set by the socialization agency. While the reinforcement by support supposes additional support in case of compliance, the reinforcement by punishment supposes not only withdrawal of current support but also introduction of specific sanctions (as in the case of NATO’s 1995 Operation Deliberate Force in Bosnia-Herzegovina). However, due to their costly nature the last two

strategies are used only if political conditionality fails and if due to high interdependence the socialization of a target state is more important than the actual costs of support or punishment (Schimmelfennig et al 2006).

Table 8. Socialization strategies.

	OSCE	Council of Europe	EU	NATO
Inclusiveness	Inclusive	Intermediate	Exclusive	Exclusive
Instrument	Persuasion and social reinforcement		Material reinforcement by reward	
			Additional support	Additional punishment
Channel	Primarily intergovernmental, secondarily transnational			

Source: Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 40

In choosing a socialization strategy, a rational socialization agency pursuing successful socialization should take into consideration not only its own preferences and capabilities but also the domestic conditions of a target state. As noted above, the usual strategy of socialization is the reinforcement by reward, which leaves the decision of compliance strictly to the target state. Assuming that domestic political actors are rational and try to maximise their utilities, and taking into consideration “state-centric domestic structure and the electoral volatility [of post-communist states]” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 53), it is unlikely that the target state complies with liberal norms threatening its current state of affairs if the domestic costs of adaptation are higher than the tangible rewards. Therefore, it is doubtful that social reinforcement alone would be a successful strategy of democracy promotion, especially in countries where adaptation costs are rather high.

2.3 Variables and Arguments of International Socialization Framework

The dependent variable of Schimmelfennig and his collaborators' study is compliance, which analyses how a state reacts to international conditions and under which conditions it complies or does not comply with promoted norms. Besides the set of already presented variables, they also add a set of constructivist variables to reflect the choice of understanding international socialization as a strategic action in an international community. Being interested primarily in the "thresholds of effectiveness", Schimmelfennig et al (2006: 57) prefer dichotomous categorisation of their variables. The dependent variable is distinguished as compliance and non-compliance; whereas the independent variables are distinguished as having negative and positive values. The positive value implies the likelihood of compliance, while the negative value would most probably hinder compliance. The compliance is conceptualised as law passed or a treaty signed by a target state in accordance to the promoted rule or norm. However, Schimmelfennig and his collaborators do not proceed with a more in-depth analysis to see whether the target of the socialization actually adheres to the promoted rule after the initial compliance. Omission of the behavioural compliance as a dependent variable is explained by the difficulties in obtaining cross-national data and customary satisfaction by the socializing or promoting agent with the formal compliance of passing a law. However, in case of democracy promotion policies the behavioural compliance is the actual goal of promoters and omitting it in research would lead to practically inapplicable results. This dissertation intends to fill this lacuna and introduces its own dependent variable in the next chapter.

To test the hypotheses, the framework of international socialization uses a set of rationalist and constructivist variables that can also be distinguished on the basis of international-domestic divide (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 57-60; [Table 9](#)). The rationalist independent variables are incentives (kind and size of tangible rewards), credibility (of

promise to pay the reward), and costs (which are low in the cases where rule conformity does not threaten the current distribution of power). The constructivist independent variables are legitimacy (measuring whether the socializing agency itself complies with the promoted norm and promotes it on constant basis), identification (measuring the extent to which a target state identifies with the international community and promoted norms), and resonance (measuring the extent to which domestic institutional design matches with the promoted norms). Closer consideration of these variables is given in Chapter 3, which reveals the research design and main theoretical and methodological contributions of the dissertation. The hypotheses containing the test and control variables are tested on nine European country-cases— Belarus, Yugoslavia (Serbia), Turkey, Slovakia, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, Northern Cyprus, and Montenegro— as targets of socialization by the European community organisations—EU, NATO, OSCE, and CoE—using the Qualitative Comparative Analysis (Ragin 1987).

Table 9. Variables of International Socialization.

	Positive	Negative
Incentives (international)	EU and/or NATO membership	Smaller tangible and all social incentives
Credibility (international)	Credible promise	Non-credible threats or promises
Costs (domestic)	Power preservation	Collapse of government Threat to regime or state survival
Legitimacy (international)	Democracy and human rights	Minority rights
Identification (domestic)	With Western or European community	With non-Western or non-European community
Resonance (domestic)	Corresponding beliefs No opposing beliefs	Contradictory beliefs
Compliance (DV)	Legal adoption of community rule	No legal adoption of community rule

Source: Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 61

Based on their research, Schimmelfennig et al (2006: 55) argue that “credible membership perspective and low domestic political costs of rule adoption are both individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of successful socialization”. Thus,

their research findings support the rationalist perspective of understanding the mechanisms of international socialization. Schimmelfennig et al also argue that social constructivist factors of identity, legitimacy, and resonance, though can to some extent constrain the decisions of socializers in choosing goals and targets, they do not account for the mechanisms of successful socialization. The rationalist variables tend to explain better the successful mechanisms because the main targets of the socialization process studies by Schimmelfennig and his collaborators are states that are not members of the community yet. Being outside of the community and not facing conditional incentives, makes them exempt from social obligations to the community norms. This comparative-static analysis also demonstrates that “the gap between liberal countries with or without major minority rights problems first narrowed and then disappeared” (Schimmelfennig et al. 2006: 253), proving socialization to be a continuous rather than a short-term process.

The international socialization framework focuses on the promoters’ strategies and domestic conditions of the target countries, thus enabling the researcher to identify effective democracy promotion strategies in the presence of specific domestic conditions. Schimmelfennig et al (2006) study completed cases of international socialization in Europe by Western international organisations. They conclude that successful socialization requires a specific set of domestic conditions supported by a membership incentive. Thus far, the framework has been applied exclusively to international organisations and has examined exclusively European cases limiting the scope of its applicability. However, individual states, ignored by the framework, such as the USA also have an important role in democracy promotion, even though they cannot offer membership per se. In addition, the EU, the primary promoter in the research of Schimmelfennig et al (2006), also promotes democracy without offering membership. Thus, the geographic and structural dimensions of the framework should be widened by applying it to other types of cases: those outside of Europe and those

not offering membership. Only by doing so it would be possible to provide plausible arguments and reasonable recommendations on democracy promotion avoiding the limitations to generalise poised by exclusively European and “membership-offer”-based research.

Consequently, this study adopts the international socialization framework and adapts it to democracy promotion by widening its applicability scope, changing its **dependent variable** to *democratic transformation*, and introducing new independent variables. On the international level the **independent variables** are *cooperation* (among the promoters in the target country); *consistency* (follow-up to the completed project with further deepening of the initiative); and *involvement* (of the promoter in other country-specific and regional issues). The domestic ones are *party constellation*; *ownership* (involvement of local stakeholders in the development and implementation of the project); and presence of a *democracy blocker*.

2.4 Conclusion

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union democracy promotion activities have become more frequent and more publicly known. In addition, a number of established democracies pledged their support to the promotion of democracy, with some states and international organisations prioritising it within their foreign policies. Thus, this chapter argues that democracy promotion should be viewed within its developmental and implementation stages. As stipulated by foreign policy analysis, actors are constrained by their organisational structures, bounded rationality, or their strategic interests when developing a democracy promotion policy. Thus, while presumably democracy promoters are rational actors their actions may not always be rational and may not follow a rational model of democracy promotion introduced in the chapter. Decisions they make may fall under the category of organisational behaviour—settling for pre-established routine—or governmental politics—settling as a result of conflict or compromise. Should democracy promoter follow the established routine of a policy

previously used in another target country, it is unlikely to adapt the policy to new domestic conditions, thus, endangering policy's effectiveness. On the other hand a policy, based on conflict or compromise is likely to experience delays in its implementation. Thus, it is argued that for an effective and undelayed implementation, promoters should follow well-defined rules of democracy promotion development, adapting their policies to specific domestic conditions. Nevertheless, this dissertation does not aim to analyse possible causality between the stages of development and implementation but rather discussing the likely correlation, concentrates on the implementation stage to understand the actual outcome of democracy promotion.

While developmental and implementation stages are closely linked, the actual outcome of a democracy promotion policy is revealed when analysing the implementation stage with its strategies and international and domestic conditions. To study the implementation stage of a democracy promotion policy, this chapter suggested turning to the analytical framework of international socialization. International socialization is an applicable framework for democracy promotion studies; however it cannot be effectively applied to empirical studies in its current form. Consequently, to enhance the explanatory leverage of the framework, the next chapter introduces new variables, new hypotheses, and new structural and geographic scopes by adapting the framework to democracy promotion studies.

Chapter 3. Bridging the Gap between Theory and Practice: Research Design, Variables, Cases, and Methods

This chapter brings together the theoretical and empirical parts of the dissertation. Based on the theoretical chapters, it further specifies the research questions, the variables, and the hypotheses. Afterwards, it presents the case selection and the methods of analysis. This chapter fills the theoretical gaps and fosters further empirical research. Besides elaborating on the methodology, this chapter also communicates the steps to the accomplishment of the theoretical and empirical goals of this study. The outcome of democracy promotion and democratization, operationalised as formal, behavioural, or unintended democratic transformation, provides improved understanding of the results of democracy promotion on the contrary to the concept of compliance, which does not go beyond legal adoption of democratic rules. On the other hand, the concept of democratic transformation does not lure the researcher into the normative traps of popular, yet highly subjective, concepts of effectiveness and success of democracy promotion. In addition, the introduction of six new independent variables ([cooperation](#), [consistency](#), [involvement](#), [party constellation](#), [ownership](#), and [democracy blocker](#)) helps to map the international and domestic environments where the processes of democracy promotion and democratization happen. Thus, this chapter argues, that a specific outcome of democracy promotion is produced as a result of a complex interaction of certain international and domestic conditions, which need to be taken into account by democracy promoters when launching their initiatives.

3.1 Research Questions

This study derives from an empirical observation. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous democracy promotion activities have been launched with various targets and strategies. However, while some post-communist or authoritarian countries quickly democratized and even launched their own democracy promotion programs (e.g. the Baltic States, Poland, and the Czech Republic), others are still democratic laggards despite almost two decades of democracy promotion activities (e.g. Armenia, Georgia, and other post-Soviet states). Though on a law-making level, some countries have at least embraced democratic principles, others have not even bothered with democratic pretence, creating the paradox of long-lasting and widespread democracy promotion activities, and domestic championing of democracy but scarce spread of liberal democracy on the global level. This discrepancy has triggered the main puzzle of this study: *why despite numerous and extensive democracy promotion initiatives, has democracy not become “the only game in town” even in countries where these initiatives are welcome?*

Effective democracy promotion entails not only intermediate success or completion of a democracy promotion project but also an overall improvement in the state of democracy in the target country. Depending upon the country-specific situation, overall improvement in democracy can involve a move to free and fair elections, reduction of political violence during campaigns, increased independence of judiciary, or reduction of political corruption. Thus, for example, elections related projects should not only raise awareness by the voters about their rights or increase the understanding by political parties about the value of free and fair elections but also ultimately contribute to the conduct of such elections and the peaceful transition of power. On the level of specific sectors targeted by democracy promoters, it can increase their own compliance with their primary functions based on democratic principles. In

addition, domestic political actors should not only speak but also behave democratically (Linden 2002). There is a need to understand the combination of international and domestic conditions used in promoting democracy in countries without membership incentive. The focus on democracy promotion without the membership incentive is one of the main differences of this study from the international socialization framework. The policies of different promoters targeting the same area in the same country may vary due to different decision-making procedures of policy adoption and they may bring to different results. Based on these considerations and in an endeavour to develop an analytical framework while understanding the outcome of democracy promotion policies, this study posits the following question:

RQ: Under what conditions is democracy promotion more likely to result in democratic transformation?

However, as mentioned above, to fully comprehend the process and outcome of democracy promotion, it is necessary to conceptualise it within its developmental and implementation stages. Thus, in the course of research questions covering the types of democracy promotion policy development and implementation mechanisms are addressed. To confirm or negate the possibility that the developmental stage—the decision-making process as seen within the foreign policy framework—influences the choice of the implementation mechanisms and strategies, a correlation would be drawn between the developmental and implementation stages of different promoters. Echoing the lament of the scholarly community that democracy promoters simply transfer their policies and success indicators from country to county, it is important to observe possible changes in policies in the target country in the

course of democracy promotion and depending upon specific socio-political and economic developments in the target country. The specific questions to be answered are:

- What is the mechanism/process for developing democracy promotion policies?
- What are the implementation mechanisms of the democracy promotion policies/programs?
- Do they change in the course of time and depending upon the progress/regress of domestic democracy?
- Is there a correlation between developmental model and the implementation mechanism?
- Has democracy progressed overall in the target country?

There is a need to understand the combination of international and domestic conditions used in promoting democracy in countries without EU membership incentive. To assess the effectiveness of a democracy promotion policy, this research will analyze different outcomes the policy may have and whether outcomes of the same type of democracy promotion are different or the same depending upon the target sector of democracy promotion. Understanding this will contribute to determining the effectiveness and to identifying the advantages and the shortcomings of specific policies on specific levels of implementation. Answers to these questions will help to resolve the initial puzzle of the research. To address the puzzle and to answer the research questions, this study adopts the international socialization framework (introduced in the previous chapter) but substantially changes its variables to make those more applicable to democracy promotion studies.

3.2 Variables

3.2.1 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable of this study is *democratic transformation* as the outcome of democracy promotion and democratization. Taking “compliance” as their dependent variable, Schimmelfennig et al (2006) are only interested in whether the country complies with the rule of the international organisation or not, having as an indicator “legal rule adoption” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 58). They do not investigate further to see whether the new rule or law is actually enforced because “the Western organisations were generally content with legal adoption and greeted the passing of norm-conforming laws as indications that their demands were fulfilled” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 58). However, the examples of many post-Soviet countries show that mere legal adoption of a rule does not guarantee rule-based behaviour within any of the sectors of democracy promotion or democratization. In addition, the assessments of democracy promotion projects acknowledge that even if the rule has been legally adopted, “the challenge, however, lies in converting new formal rules into working rules” (ARD 2002: 24). Moreover, the formal adoption of the rule on civil society level does not guarantee its prevalence also on political or state levels, often due to the weakness of the civil society in democratizing countries. Thus, while “compliance” is useful to understand short-term effects of rule promotion, democratic transformation within domestic political and societal systems as a dependent variable would be more useful for understanding the potential overall outcome of democracy promotion, providing a better understanding of its impact.

It should be underlined that exclusively outcome as a democratic transformation and not “success” or “effectiveness” is taken as a dependent variable, as the latter two concepts, though widely used in literature, are too subjective and normative. What may be a measurable and an achieved success for the promoter can be a failure for the researcher if it does not

improve the state of democracy in the target country. In its own turn, democratic transformation cannot be always the same on all levels of promotion and will often depend upon the implemented policy and domestic conditions. The outcome of democracy promotion is the result of a complex interaction between specific domestic and international factors. Thus, the outcome of democracy promotion cannot be measured looking only at democracy promotion strategies but should also involve the analysis of domestic factors. The variation in the outcome of democracy promotion—formal, behavioural, and unintended (Schimmelfennig 2002: 9)—is based on the discussion on conceptions of norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998) and is often used in the norm diffusion literature (Raymond 1997; Risse et al 1999; Cortell and Davis 2000). Though this research partially adopts the terms used in the literature, it operationalises the outcome of democracy promotion differently to show the transition from legal rule adoption to rule based behaviour and account for unintended consequences of democracy promotion ([Table 10](#)).

Table 10. Dependent Variable. Outcome of democracy promotion policy.

<u>Formal</u>	<u>Behavioural</u>	<u>Unintended</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> project completion, accomplishment of specific project goals and adoption of law, code etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fulfilment of specific functions according to democratic norms and rules recorded improvement in democracy (free and fair elections; freedom of media; independent judiciary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> neglect of specific functions in comparison to previous observation overall democracy setback early project shutdown

Source: author's own compilation.

While the international socialization framework uses a dichotomous categorisation of its dependent variable (compliance vs. non-compliance), to fully account for possible outcomes this research opts for a trichotomous categorisation. At the same time, taking into consideration the implementation process of a policy and customary monitoring and

evaluation strategies of promoters, the measurement of democratic transformation involves indicators from two dimensions: promoter and target. This is justified by the fact that often promoters measure the effectiveness of their projects not by domestic political dynamics but according to their checklists of completed activities. In addition, it is important because the outcome of democracy promotion occurs as a result of the interaction between promoters and targets.

Formal democratic transformation of this study resembles the compliance variable of Schimmelfennig et al (2006) the most. Formal democratic transformation from a promoter's perspective occurs upon project completion and the accomplishment of specific project goals such as training of a specific number of officials or reporters, organisation of a number of conferences etc. Within domestic target realm formal democratic transformation entails formal adoption of a law (in case of the state level), of a code of conduct or a specialised law (in the case of political society) or a code of conduct/ethics and a law on media (in case of the civil society/media). It is less likely to occur on the individual target level of democracy promotion. Knowing that not always democracy promotion projects proceed smoothly, this study also introduces the possibility of an unintended outcome. Unintended outcome/transformation is understood as an early project shutdown (regardless of reasons), as democracy setback, neglect of democratic functions of the target level, or worsened evaluation in comparison to previous assessments.

Behavioural democratic transformation entails the overall improvement of democracy, which is *inter alia* understood as the conduct of free and fair elections, free media and is measured by various democracy indices such as Freedom House, Polity IV, and Bertelsmann Transformation Index. This category of democratic transformation fully resembles the components of liberal democracy and happens when those are not only theoretically but also

practically adhered to. Behavioural democratic transformation is also the most difficult one to achieve because it would mean that democracy has become “the only game in town”. In addition, behavioural democratic transformation is measured within each analysed sector of democracy promotion (elections, party politics, and media freedom) and entails fulfilment of specific functions ascribed by democratic rules. Thus, if elections are not free and fair, it is concluded that behavioural democratic transformation has not happened. Each sector under consideration is assessed based on its specific functions and indicators ([Table 11](#)). Following Levitsky and Way (2010: 366), the elections are considered as unfair in the evidence of *any one* of the indicators given below. Consequently, if *all* the indicators are absent, behavioural democratic transformation has happened.

1. At least one major candidate is barred for political reasons;
2. Centrally coordinated or tolerated electoral abuse is asserted by credible sources.

Indicators include:

- serious partisan manipulation of voter rolls;
 - large-scale voter intimidation or disruption of voting
 - ballot-box stuffing, multiple voting, or other forms of ballot tampering;
 - falsification of results;
3. Significant formal or informal impediments—coordinated or tolerated by the national government—prevent the opposition from campaigning nationally on reasonably equal footing. Indicators include:
 - violence against opposition party activists, candidates, or infrastructure;
 - use or abuse of law regulating public meetings limits the oppositions ability to campaign;
 4. Uneven electoral playing field. Indicators include:

- electoral authorities systematically biased in favour of incumbent;
- highly uneven access to media;
- highly uneven access to resources (Levitsky and Way 2010: 366).

While parties are bestowed with numerous functions to fulfil (Diamond and Gunther 2001), the most important one within new democracies is “to make the elected government accountable” (Burnell 2006: 17). On the other hand, to make the government accountable, undemocratic parties should become democratic themselves and this will constitute their behavioural democratic transformation to match with the rhetorical liberal constellation of parliamentary convocations. Even if this kind of accountability is a matter “left for future discussion” (Burnell and Gerrits 2010: 1078), it is suggested that behavioural democratic transformation of parties in the parliament happens if *all* of the following holds true:

1. lack of broad access to state resources (Bader 2010);
2. lack of domination by a narrow leadership (Bader 2010);
3. stable and clear political platforms;
4. being elected in free and fair elections, without using illegal methods before or during elections.

As argued before the main function of media within a democratic framework is that of a watchdog “function of keeping the elected accountable to the electorate, and if the press is to disseminate information, which will enable citizens to make informed choices and to participate in a meaningful way” (USAID 1999b: 22). Thus, behavioural democratic transformation happens when media performs its watchdog function, which is within the powers of media to choose whether to perform it or not. Partially based on definitions of

watchdog media given by Waisbord (2000) and Hughes (2006), behavioural democratic transformation within media sector is registered if media outlets do *all* of the following:

1. report on the topic of their choosing;
2. critically cover powerful political actors, including the incumbent;
3. do not impose self-censorship;
4. provide equal and unbiased coverage to all elections contestants;
5. do not show bias towards the incumbent.

On the other hand, the choice to be a watchdog may depend upon other conditions, including economic or physical pressures, state regulations, or imposed censorship, which boil down to freedom of media. Although freedom of media does not indicate behavioural democratic transformation within the media sector, it indicates overall democratic improvement in the country and its absence is a possible reason for not performing the watchdog function. Thus, freedom of media is also observed and measured by indices of Freedom House, Reporters without Borders, IREX, and the Committee to Protect Journalists, chosen based on their “prominence and longevity” (Becker and Vlad 2007: 18) in evaluating media freedom.

Table 11. Sectoral indicators for behavioural democratic transformation.

Elections	Parties	Media
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • major candidates are not barred for political reasons; • credible sources assert there is no coordinated or tolerated electoral abuse; • the opposition campaigns nationally on reasonably equal footing; electoral playing field is even 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of broad access to state resources; • lack of domination by a narrow leadership; • stable and clear political platforms; • being elected in free and fair elections, without using illegal methods before or during elections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports on the topic of their choosing; • critically covers powerful political actors, including the incumbent; • does not impose self-censorship; • provides equal and unbiased coverage to all elections contestants; • does not show bias towards the incumbent.

Source: author's own compilation based on, Waisbord 2000, Hughes 2006, Bader 2010, and Levitsky and Way 2010.

3.2.2 Independent Variables/International and Domestic Conditions

While the initial independent variables of the international socialization framework are investigated, additional international and domestic (independent) variables are added to account for the absence of membership incentive (Table 12) and enhance the explanatory leverage of the framework. Yet again taking into consideration the importance of the promoter-target interaction, this study looks into a combination of international and domestic independent variables. Independent variables borrowed from the international socialization framework are incentives, credibility, and legitimacy on the international dimension and costs, identification, and resonance on the domestic dimension. Initially assigned positive and negative values, these variables were also originally categorised as rational (incentives, credibility, and costs) and constructivist (legitimacy, identification, and resonance)

(Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 59). However, a dichotomous classification of the variables and their sometimes limited operationalisation does not allow to capture a full picture of promoter-target interaction and possible variations in international and domestic factors. Thus, substantial modifications are made and each of the original and new variable is assigned a low (-), moderate (+), or a positive value (++). In addition, more detail is given to the elaboration of variables and one of the variables is assigned a different term merely to fall under the logical reasoning of the methodological approach (Table 13). The operationalisation of the variables is empirically motivated taking into consideration possible outcomes of democracy promotion projects rather than the original constructivist-rationalist divide, which though seems a solid theoretical motivation does not add to a policy-driven research.

Despite the traditional view of democracy promoted by international actors as a benign phenomenon per se, there is also a substantial criticism of democracy. Relying only on the attractiveness of democracy's virtues would be short-sighted for promoters inducing them to offer certain incentives for democratic transformation of their targets. *Incentives* are understood as the type and size of rewards offered to the target country for compliance, while the combination of political and economic incentives (++) are more likely to produce behavioural democratic transformation, economic incentives without the political ones, would have only moderate effect on behavioural change (-). The absence of any incentives would make the chances of a behavioural democratic transformation highly unlikely.

Credibility is understood as “the credibility of the threat of withholding the rewards or inflicting punishment in case of non-compliance, and the credibility of the promise to pay the reward or abstain from punishment in case of compliance” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 59). Credibility of threats and promises can be of major importance for the outcome of democracy promotion not to create the image of Westerners who “will make a fuss [about violations of

democracy] for a few days, and then they will calm down and life will go on as usual” (Shevarnadze in Karumidze and Wertsch 2005: 24). A lack of credibility—not fulfilling the threat or promise (-)—is likely to damage the target’s reliance on the promoter, making further similar actions useless. Such threats or promises are as a rule made with an expiration date, thus a fulfilment that passed the deadline set by the promoter or a partial fulfilment (+) will not be as negative as in the case of the lack thereof but would signal the target that it may in future either receive a small reprimand instead of the promised sanction or get a marginal reward despite good performance. On the other hand, timely fulfilment of a threat or a promise has the potential of underlining the commitment of the promoter and encouraging similar commitment from the target.

Legitimacy refers to the application and observation of promoted rules by the promoter, in order to avoid resistance from the target that may claim the “incompetence” of the promoter. Thus, “the minimal condition is that demands on the target governments must be based on organisational rules rather than *ad hoc* interests” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 59). Legitimacy of the promoter would be low if it shows neither rhetorical nor behavioural commitment within its own territory or structure (-), in other words neither talks nor walks the walk of democracy. Merely rhetorical commitment without corresponding behaviour would make the promoter moderately legitimate (+) for democracy promotion, while demonstrating both rhetorical and behavioural commitment would also have a positive (++) influence on achieving behavioural democratic transformation.

As mentioned the variable of *costs* (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 59) is changed to the variable of *utility of adaptation* to harmonise its operationalisation with the ones of other variables and reflects the utility for the domestic stakeholders to adapt to democratic rules. This variable is defined as any material or physical costs or the imminence of losing status

quo by the target that can occur in case of compliance with promoted democracy rules. An imminent threat to the status quo or its loss makes the utility of adaptation to democracy low, as it may *inter alia* result in a loss of the occupied position (-) if elections are free and fair, in exclusion from governing coalition by the non-complying counterparts, or loss of professional occupation or even physical damages to civil society members. An uncertain possibility of losing the status quo would make the utility of adaptation moderate (+), while preservation of the status quo would have a positive (++) influence on behavioural democratic transformation.

Identification implies the willingness of domestic targets to be associated with the promoter. Identification expressed through rhetoric would be low if domestic stakeholders show commitment to non-democratic principles (-). Uncertainty between non-democratic and democratic principles and the promoter would make the identification moderate (+), while firm commitment to democratic principles and approval of the promoter would have a positive influence on behavioural democratic transformation. However, there is no pretence made by this research of measuring genuine attitudes of local stakeholders towards democracy and democracy promoters. Rather than claiming the vague possibility of measuring ideas and beliefs, this research analyses rhetorical identification of local stakeholders through their discourse. Thus, this research allows for the possibility that in case of strong identification but no behavioural democratic transformation, local stakeholders may simply pay lip-service to democracy. Nevertheless, even such lip-service identification provides better opportunity for democratic transformation than a pronounced opposition to democracy.

The final variable of Schimmelfennig et al (2006) is *resonance* that supposes cultural or institutional reflection of the promoted rule with domestic laws, rules, and customs. To avoid arbitrariness this variable is measured by documented rules and declarations and not by individual attitudes. Presence of opposing concepts makes the resonance of the promoted rule

low (-), lack of corresponding concepts and rules makes resonance moderate (+), while presence of such rules and concepts makes resonance positive (++).

All these variables are investigated in this study. However, this study argues that they are not enough to account for possible changes in the domestic situation of a target and for possible variations of democratic transformation. Thus, this research introduces additional six variables, which as the previous ones can be distinguished on international-domestic dimensions. However, there is no goal of choosing variables according to the rationalist-constructivist divide. Rather than taking theoretical assumptions as the basis for the choice of variables, this research bases its variables on empirical evidence and the actual practice in the field taking into account conditions that can influence the outcome of the interaction between democracy promotion and domestic democratization. The newly proposed variables of the international dimension are cooperation, consistency, and involvement. The variables of the domestic dimension are party constellation, democracy blocker, and ownership. It should be clarified that international variables do not reflect the current international situation but are attributed to the democracy promoter itself, thus are under full control of the latter. Similarly, domestic variables are associated with the target of democracy promotion. Following the setting of the international socialization framework these variables are also assigned values—low, moderate, and positive—, however, because the dependent variable is not categorised dichotomously there is no absolute threshold value for the independent variables. Nevertheless, the highest positive value is assigned to the operationalisation of the variable that has the strongest potential to result in a behavioural democratic transformation as the latter is the ultimate goal of democracy promotion policies and domestic democratization. [Table 12](#) presents the old and new independent variables and [Table 14](#) presents the operationalisation of the new variables.

Table 12. Independent Variables

OLD (taken from international socialization framework)		NEW (especially for countries without membership perspectives)	
International	Domestic	International	Domestic
Incentives	Costs	Cooperation	Party constellation
Credibility	Identification	Consistency	Democracy-blocker
Legitimacy	Resonance	Involvement	Ownership

Source: author's own compilation

Table 13. Modified operationalisation of the variables of International Socialization.

	Low (-)	Moderate (+)	Positive (++)
Incentives (international)	social incentives	economic but no/almost no political incentives	economic and political incentives (often leading to the desirable membership if permitted by the structure of the promoter)
Credibility (international)	no fulfilment of the threat or promise	past-deadline or partial fulfilment of the threat or promise	timely fulfilment of the threat or promise
Legitimacy (international)	no rhetorical and no behavioural commitment to democracy	only rhetorical commitment to democracy	rhetorical and behavioural commitment to democracy
Utility of adaptation (domestic)	imminent loss of status quo/ threat to status quo survival	high possibility of losing status quo	status quo preservation
Identification (domestic)	with non-democratic principles/against democracy promoter	with democratic principle/democracy promoter and partly with non-democratic countries	only with democratic principle/democracy promoter
Resonance (domestic)	opposing concepts	lack of/confusion over specific concepts	corresponding concepts

Source: adapted by the author from Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 61

Cooperation primarily refers to the joint programs between promoters in a target country and the involvement of at least two sectors of democracy promotion within the framework of one project, e.g. involving state while the primary target of the project is civil society. As the same area of democracy promotion is often a simultaneous target for democracy promoters, democracy promotion starts being a competition for promoters. This

makes the promoters hastily design democracy promotion programs without close consideration of domestic conditions, thus leading to one-size-fits-all approach. Consequently, this not only negatively affects the quality of a democracy promotion project itself but also decreases its potential influence on the overall level of democracy in a given country. Cooperation as described above is believed to alleviate the pressure from the state and tackle the reluctance from civil society and individuals, at the same time combining the resources of different promoters for augmented results. Cooperation is low (-), when it is either absent or is present only in the form of annual promoter meetings or dinners, where the yearly activities are presented. Cooperation is moderate (+) in the case of any programmatic joint activities though targeting only one sector because in this case the promoters assure that their strategies do not conflict (which is sometimes the case in the field). Finally cooperation is positive (++) and more conducive to behavioural democratic transformation in the case of joint activities targeting more than one sector.

Democracy promoters tend to work on short-terms, without much needed follow-ups to their projects (de Zeeuw and Kumar 2006), necessary to avoid the usual lip-service of domestic actors. To avoid the stagnation of democratic progress on a lip-service level, democracy promoters need *consistency*, which entails a follow-up to the completed project with further deepening of the initiative targeting a particular level and issue. Consistency in democracy promotion is important because “the danger is that donors and financing agencies will declare victory when the formal rules have been modified...and will not follow through to ensure that they are enforced” (ARD 2002: 24). In the case of low consistency (-), the promoter is satisfied with the legal adoption of the rule (formal democratic transformation) especially if that is the final objective of a specific project and shuts down the project without overseeing whether the rule is actually adhered to (the behavioural democratic

transformation). In the case of a moderate consistency (+), the promoter launches a similar project, sometimes changing the implementer of the project and not following up on the previous activities. In contrast, a promoter with positive consistency (++) follows-up with the issue and initiates projects or activities that are directed at the actual enforcement of the newly adopted rule building on previously completed projects.

Involvement measures the level of presence of the promoter in the issues of national or regional importance since positive and effective participation in the other issues of a target country (region) may enhance the domestic identification and promoter's credibility. In addition, such involvement may eliminate outstanding issues that hinder or stagnate democratization. The involvement of democracy promoter in other areas than democracy promotion is especially important in countries with outstanding conflicts, low level of economic or human development, or other issues that are internally considered as national priorities. The degree of importance of a specific issue to the domestic politics can be determined through available surveys and political discourse. Involvement is considered low (-) in case the promoter limits itself to democracy promotion and related issues, moderate (+) in case of mostly rhetorical involvement in other issues, and positive (++) in case the promoter tries to regularly and substantively engage in other local issues. However, such encompassing involvement may be possible only for large democracy promoters whose agenda can also accommodate additional issues. While in the case of smaller promoters they can seek cooperation with larger promoters to boost their local presence and give more weight to their democracy promotion activities.

The first domestic variable of *party constellation* is borrowed from further analysis of Schimmelfennig et al (2006: 245), who argue that “the effective international socialization [democratization] will depend upon the party constellations in the target countries and their

respective domestic power costs of compliance” as the course of reforms would depend upon the coalitional government formed by these parties. Party constellation can be distinguished as liberal/positive (++), mixed/moderate (+), and anti-liberal/low (-). Liberal party constellation is understood as a liberal, West- and democracy oriented programs and declarations of parties with parliamentary seats. By contrast, in an anti-liberal party constellation the party programs and declarations are based on nationalistic, authoritarian, communist, and/or populist grounds. In the case of a mixed constellation, parties do not enjoy consensus on liberal reforms and despite liberal coalitions some of them are still in the process of reshaping their authoritarian or communist pasts. Thus, a liberal party constellation is the most conducive for the behavioural democratic transformation, especially in the cases of party development projects. Although this variable is argued (Schimmelfennig et al 2006) to have substantial influence on smooth norm transfer, here it is assumed to play a decreased role in countries with semi-presidential or presidential regimes, where executive dominates over the parliament. Thus, it is expected that party constellation is rather an intervening variable, which encourages or further discourages democratization depending upon the values of other variables.

Democracy promoters are often blamed for unilateral programmatic decisions and for not involving local stakeholders in the development or implementation of democracy promotion projects. This issue was first addressed in 1999 when World Bank introduced its Comprehensive Development Framework emphasizing the importance of country ownership in developmental programs. Thus, another domestic variable to be considered is *ownership*. It is acknowledged that local ownership of a democracy promotion program by an authoritarian government may block the advancement of the project. However, exclusion of local stakeholders is unlikely to have positive results either, because reforms would be blocked in any case. On the other hand, the exclusion of civil society actors from projects developed for

them is likely to result in indifference and in accusations of local inapplicability. In this dissertation, it measures the involvement of local stakeholders regardless of the sector of promotion in both development and implementation of the project. Often local stakeholders are given limited ownership in project development but not the implementation and moreover not the monitoring and evaluation. Accordingly, the absence of any local involvement in the project is considered as low (-) level of ownership. Limited involvement only in the developmental stage is considered as moderate ownership (+) and involvement or ownership in the course of the development and implementation of a project as positive (++) .

Following the argument by Whitehead (2005) that successful democratization is possible if there is no major power in the region opposing democracy, another domestic variable of *democracy blocker* is introduced. Democracy blocker is understood as a kind of a regional bully that is a powerful authoritarian regional actor and has the potential and is willing to influence, though not always directly, the domestic policy choices of a democracy promotion target. The potential to influence stems from the military, economic and to some extent cultural interconnectedness with the target country. A mere proximity of a non-democratic neighbour is not considered as an indicator of a democracy blocker. Russia's influence over the post-communist territories may be considered as a sign of democracy blocker, while for example Iran's shared border with Armenia does not influence its political choices. It is important to note that democracy blocker is regarded as a domestic variable even if it may seem as external to the target country, because it is not in the powers of the promoter to control its presence. Nonetheless, it is in the powers of a promoter to contain the negative influence on democratization projected by a democracy blocker by alleviating the reasons of its influence. However, in the case of a democracy blocker the opposition to democracy is not necessarily outspoken and can be covert aiming at distancing the target country from

democracy promoter. The absence of such an actor is a positive (++) condition for behavioural democratic transformation, whereas the presence of it with local resistance may moderately (+) hinder democracy promotion. The presence of democracy blocker with local support is likely to lower (-) the chances of the behavioural democratic transformation. In addition, understanding the reasons for support is important to give recommendations on democracy promoter's *involvement* in specific areas and possible minimisation of democracy blocker's influence.

Table 14. Operationalisation of new independent variables.

	Low (-)	Moderate (+)	Positive (++)
Cooperation (international)	absent or annual meetings, dinners etc	joint activities between promoters or implementers of the same promoters targeting only one level	joint activities between promoters or implementers of the same promoters targeting more than one level within the same activity
Consistency (international)	shut down/closure of the project without follow-up	similar project with a different implementer	follow-up to the completed project building on the latter's experience
Involvement (international)	only democracy promotion	rhetorical involvement in other issues of national importance	other issues of national importance
Party Constellation (domestic)	anti-liberal	mixed	liberal
Ownership (domestic)	absent	local involvement either in the development or implementation of the specific project	Local involvement both in development and implementation
Democracy Blocker (domestic)	present with local support	present with local resistance	absent

Source: author's own compilation

As elaborated below this study examines democracy promotion by two international actors, the EU and the USA, in Armenia targeting elections, parties, and the media. Given there are three sectors of democracy promotion analysed in this study, some of the variables

have to be measured within each sector. Thus, the dependent variable of democratic transformation is measured separately for each of the target sectors and is expected to have different results. Among the independent variables, the ones that need to be measured separately are the international variables of incentives, credibility, cooperation, and consistency and domestic variables of utility of adaptation, identification, resonance, and ownership. Thus, only the variables of involvement, democracy blocker, and party constellation do not need to be measured vis-à-vis each sector of democracy promotion. Consequently, when measuring for example incentives provided by a democracy promoter, a differentiation should be made between elections, parties, and the media, as the incentives (and other factors/variables) may not be the same for all three sectors.

3.3 Hypotheses

While it is argued that democratic transformations happen as a result of the interaction of all the presented variables, it is nevertheless assumed that depending upon a target country, some of the independent variables will have greater importance. For example in the case of the post-Soviet countries, the variable of democracy blocker is likely to be more distinct due to Russia's constant strategic interests in the region. If so, then the efforts of democracy promoters should be supported by cooperative actions and positive involvement in resolution of national issues. Based on the theoretical frameworks and the variables, the following hypotheses are suggested:

Credible involvement and material incentives within consistent and cooperative framework of democracy promotion supported by at least moderate utility of adaptation, and absence of a democracy blocker are likely to achieve behavioural democratic transformation.

Other hypotheses to be considered during research:

1. Even with low degree of cooperation and moderate party constellation, formal democratic transformation on both promoter and target sides is likely to be achieved with the presence of credible social incentives, identification, and ownership.
2. The outcome of democracy promotion is likely to be unintended if in case of high adaptation costs, mixed party constellation combined with low resonance, the promoter does not offer consistency and cooperation.
3. For the formal democratic transformation to become behavioural, democracy needs to be promoted within highly cooperative framework with consistent involvement of the promoter offering material incentives combined with positive utility of adaptation.

3.4 Unit of Analysis

The units of analysis are democracy promotion policies of main democracy promoters and actions of their target sectors. Democracy promotion policies are studied in their developmental and implementation stages. Democracy promotion policies are further distinguished into specific democracy promotion projects, relevant statements, actions, and strategies. To incorporate both components of liberal democracy—contestation and participation—based on the definition of democracy given above (pp. 11 and 12), elections, party development, and media development projects are studied. The analysis is presented in

blocks of information that represents the status of the variables before, during, and after elections cycles. Studying individual democracy promotion projects is an innovative contribution because previously democracy promotion was studied only on its macro level of overarching policies but not on the micro level (Crawford 2002) of sectoral implementation. In addition, democracy promotion projects represent the general democracy promotion policies and allow full observation of the interaction of the selected variables. Democracy promotion projects are analyzed within the course of their development, implementation, and depending upon the availability, the evaluation. This includes all the trainings, conferences, statements, visits, financial transfers and other related activities conducted in the course of the project implementation. However, projects alone cannot account for the changes in the domestic milieu, because individual projects are always accompanied by other democracy promotion actions, statements, or discussions.

At the same time given that the dependent variable of this study is democratic transformation, another unit of analysis is the state of democratic functionability of each of the analysed sectors and the country. The research looks at the state of democratic functionability in line with the analyzed projects before, during and at the end of project implementation. Democracy is understood as defined in [Chapter 1](#) (p. 17), incorporating competitive and participatory elections, equal provision of rights, freedom of media etc. Looking at the state of democracy is essential for the initial identification of the domestic variables and their further interaction with the international ones.

3.5 Methods

This research draws on elements from both inductive and deductive approaches by starting from an empirical observation, then identifying theory (deductive), applying theory to later chosen cases and investigating for additional variables (inductive). This research employs

qualitative research methods of case studies by choosing a target country where two chosen promoters engage in the same type of democracy promotion and within different target-sectors. Case studies “provide the intensive empirical analysis that can find previously unnoticed causal factors” (Achen and Snidal 1989: 167-168). For the purposes of generalisation it may seem more appropriate to test the hypotheses and the theoretical framework on a larger sample, however due to the variety of considered variables, time, human, and financial constraints a single country-case is chosen. Nevertheless, as the primary focus of this study is the democracy promotion policy as implemented by two chosen promoters, the study still provides a comparative research on promoters and sectors and can generalise to other targets and promoters with similar conditions. In addition, a large-N sample is more conducive to theory-testing, while small case-study analysis allows for the development of an analytical framework since it enables more in-depth analysis of the dependent variable.

The study analyses democracy promotion projects according to sectors and types from the year of launching democracy promotion (in the early 1990s) and until shortly after the latest general elections. Democracy promotion policies (further categorised as projects) are analyzed by tracking their initial development and further evolution. The selected country represents states that have legally embraced the fundamental democratic principles and has been in interaction with selected promoters since the initial transition to democracy. The domestic conditions of the target country (from the first “democratic” general elections until shortly after the latest general elections) are also classified within the analytical framework to observe the interaction with the international conditions and to provide full account of possible effects. Domestic and international changes after the latest general elections will be discussed however without covering their outcome, which according to the adopted

framework is to be revealed after the next elections. To avoid static results and account for the dynamics of democracy promotion, the country-case is viewed beyond the limits of a single observation (Kubicek 2003; Flockhart 2005). Thus, because the observations of this research are based on the interaction of various international and domestic conditions ([Table 12](#)), any change in those leads to a new observation.

From the perspective of analysing the actions and policies of promoters, this is a comparative study that analyzes and compares first actions and then reactions of two democracy promoters within the framework of their democracy promotion projects to the developments in the same target country and different target-sectors. From the perspective of analyzing the target country, this is a single-case study that observes and analyzes the actions and reactions of the domestic targets to the policies of the promoters. Following the example of Schimemlfennig et al (2006), this research uses the methods of within-case analysis—the congruence method, before-after comparison, and process tracing. Cross-case comparison is used in regard to different projects (mostly the ones targeting the same sector) of the promoters to account for similarities of their strategies given the same domestic conditions or to pinpoint their differences. Comparisons between promoters and targets of democracy promotion will help to explain possible differences between the strategies and effects in various domestic milieus and identify the variables that account for the specific outcome of a certain policy. These methods also provide detailed examinations of cases, which is necessary in identifying missing variables (George and Bennett 2005). Thus, comparison will be made between promoters policies and strategies, possible outcomes of democracy promotion on different levels of promotion within the country-case by looking at the state of democracy before promotion programs and after (before-after comparison), and possible outcomes on the levels of democracy promotion (cross-case comparison).

According to George and Bennett (2005: 181), when using the congruence method:

the analyst first ascertains the value of the independent variable in the case at hand and then asks what prediction or expectation about the outcome of the dependent variable should follow from the theory. If the outcome of the case is consistent with the theory's prediction, the analyst can entertain the possibility that a causal relationship may exist.

Thus, the values of a theoretically defined variable are checked against the expected outcomes within the period of observation. The ultimate goal of this method is to find one set of conditions that result in one type of outcome. However, this is not always possible and usually one set of conditions may lead to different outcomes, or one type of outcome may be the result of a different set of conditions. Even if a researcher achieves the ultimate objective of "one set of conditions-one type of outcome", the findings should be further verified by other methods (George and Bennett 2005; Schimmelfennig et al 2006).

One of the methods for verifying the results of the congruence method is the before-after comparison. Because the country-case is not treated as a single observation, it is possible to perform the before-after comparison, each time one of the conditions (variables) or the value of the variable changes. This method allows controlling for the possible changes in the outcome and comparing different sets of conditions (independent variables). To further refine the findings and limit the possibility that simultaneous though not causal change has occurred in both dependent and independent variables, the process tracing analysis is used.

Process-tracing helps to identify "the causal chain and causal mechanisms" (George and Bennett 2005: 206) between the independent and dependent variables and contributes to further development of an analytical framework. Since the outcome of democracy promotion

is the result of interaction between different variables, process tracing will help to identify “interacting causal variables” (George and Bennett 2005: 212) and understand the link between the international and domestic conditions of democracy promotion and its effect. In addition, it will help to “overcome the dilemmas of small-*n* research by providing more observation to the implications of a theory” (King, Keohane and Verba 1994: 227). The first step is the identification of the current state of the dependent variable in the given country. With the help of process-tracing, as discussed by George and Bennett (2005), the next step is tracking the design and implementation strategies of democracy promotion projects and their influence on domestic change by observing the reaction of domestic actors to the conditions of promoters. As this research aims to contribute to policy-making, process-tracing also helps to understand whether “similarity or variance of the independent variable [democracy promotion strategy and domestic conditions] leads to different outcomes [in the dependent variable]” (George and Bennett 2005: 219).

3.6. Case Selection

3.6.1. Democracy Promoters

While a vast amount of literature is available on individual democracy promotion efforts of specific countries or organisations, limited comparative knowledge is available. Among the reasons for the lack of comparative research has been the alleged incomparability of democracy promoters, given their structural differences as an individual state or an international governmental or non-governmental organisation, and the absence of an adequate and generally applicable theoretical framework. The choice of democracy promoters is primarily based on their comparative influence as international actors as considerable leverage is needed to persuade domestic actors to change their behaviour. In addition, the general

assumption characterises them as pursuing different strategies, however, given low level of democratic progress, resulting in similar outcomes.

Despite an array of international actors, the EU and the USA are the most prominent democracy promoters (Burnell 2008). Initially these actors seem to represent two absolutely different and incomparable structures. However, closer consideration shows that “they are two different species of the same political genus” (Fabbrini 2007: 3) of compound democracy, which is “based on territorial or state cleavages and necessarily function without a government” (Fabbrini 2007: 203) and where “decision-making capacity is constrained and limited through the sharing of its resources by distinct institutions” (Fabbrini 2005: 190). Similarities and differences between EU and US democracy promotion policies in comparative perspective are not yet established using a clear analytical framework. The usual perception of the EU is as “one of the most important, if not the most important, normative powers in the world” (Barroso in Petersen 2007), while the USA is seen as a power that for the sake of democracy promotion can “send [its] soldiers, when [they] are needed” (Bush 2002). However, here the actions of the EU and the USA are not viewed in isolation or confrontation but as complementing each other and in their own way influencing the potential outcome of democracy promotion and democratization processes.

The EU promotes democracy to its candidate countries by its powerful instrument of membership incentive. However, it also promotes democracy to countries that do not have membership incentives. Currently the most important democracy promotion instrument of the EU is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The USA is one of the largest and most visible democracy promoters that cannot offer membership incentive per se. The case of the USA broadens the geographic and structural applicability of the analytical framework, giving an opportunity for its further development. This study researches democracy promotion of

USAID—the largest democracy promotion instrument of the USA. Though the USA also uses military means in democracy promotion, this project does not take those into consideration, as they do not require the consent of domestic actors, thus increasing the probability of non-compliance with promoted principles and rules of democracy. According to the mainstream literature on democracy promotion and foreign policy, these two promoters represent different images of normative (EU) and hard (USA) powers, they are supposed to have different policies of democracy promotion though still not resulting in democratic change in the behaviour of domestic actors. However, this study aims to demonstrate that despite the seeming differences, these two actors are likely to employ the same strategies when dealing with democracy promotion. Looking at the policies of these two promoters helps in identifying missing variables for effective democracy promotion and further reframing of the policies.

3.6.2. The Target of Democracy Promotion

Case selection is done to reflect the independent variables of this study and have both democracy promoters actively implementing their policies. Thus the selected case needs to have all variables present, with special focus on important variables that can be assigned negative values without in-depth research. Researching a case where the important variables have negative values would make findings generalisable, as democracy promotion is likely to be more effective and efficient in cases where these variables have positive values. Based on the argument of Schimmelfennig et al (2006) that rationalist variables of costs (here utility of adaptation) and incentives account for the success of norm transfer, they are taken into account when selecting the target case. On the other hand, it was hypothesised above that democracy blocker variable would account for the variations in democratic transformations, and if powered by domestic support will have a negative effect on democracy promotion and

democratization. However, the chosen country-case does not account for its own democratization only, but rather serves as a democracy promotion environment, where specific variables deemed crucial are particularly pronounced. Thus in the presence of several crucial variables, the chosen country is the least conducive target for effective democracy promotion, allowing for research findings to be straightforwardly applicable to other more positive cases.

To find a compatible case that would allow for testing of all the selected variables in the vast number of democracy promotion targets and where both promoters are active, the initial selection is narrowed to the ENP participants. The ENP is the EU's most recent democracy promotion instrument, which guarantees the most extensive "democracy promotion relations" apart from the candidate countries. The choice of the ENP limits the number of possible cases to 16. Countries participating in the ENP are Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. However, agreements with Belarus, Libya, and Syria are not activated yet due to resistance by domestic political actors. Due to Israel's status as a democracy, the ENP Action Plan for Israel does not include democracy promotion. These limit the choice of countries to 12. USAID is not present in Algeria, OPT and Tunisia; the ENP does not include democracy component and USAID has just been starting its activities in Jordan limiting the choice to eight countries. The scarcity of financial resources and limitations in time and human resources, make field research in Lebanon, Egypt, and Morocco unfeasible. In addition, these countries do not indicate the presence of the democracy blocker variable, which is perceived as important by this study.

The possible cases left are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Further selection of the cases needs to be based on the possibility to test all the variables and

yet again the feasibility of the research. Due to technical constraints mentioned above the choice of a country-case is limited to one. In regard to the feasibility of testing all the variables, the variable of democracy blocker might not be equally relevant for all the countries left after the initial selection. Russia is an important actor for all the five countries. However the domestic stance towards it is not the same everywhere, with Moldovan and Ukrainian official positions towards Russia changing after each election. While Georgian government and population demonstrate outspoken resistance to Russia's policies, Azerbaijan follows more neutral and pragmatic approach. On the other hand, given highly cooperative relations of Russia and Armenia, and the latter's energy and security dependence on Russia, Armenia is a good choice for observation. Thus, Russia's role as a democracy blocker in the South Caucasus is taken as a constant, while the main attention is paid to capture the variation in support of democracy blocker and to some extent the reasons for this support outlining the areas for greater involvement of democracy promoters. Presence of Russia with outspoken domestic support worsens conditions of democracy promotion, thus potentially successful policies in this environment, would be applicable also to countries where democracy blocker meets resistance or is absent.

Armenia meets other requirements of the research as it has been willingly and extensively exposed to democracy promotion after 70 years of the Soviet rule, has adopted democratic constitution and political systems, identified with the "family of democracies", and undergone market reforms and liberalisation with subsequent economic growth. Despite some domestic prerequisites conducive to the establishment of democracy, an ethnically homogeneous and small in size Armenia (Freedom House, Bertelsmann Transformation Index, Polity IV, and the Economist) scores low on various democracy indices and regularly receives mixed to negative observations after elections. In addition, since 2005, the start of the

ENP, Armenia has even worsened its democratic rankings. Even if Armenia is not an entirely successful case of democracy promotion and democratization and cannot help in identifying sufficient conditions for democratization, it has the potential to identify necessary and facilitating conditions behavioural democratic transformation, especially in the countries facing similar external and domestic conditions. Thus, with democracy promotion and democratization achieving some of the goals in Armenia, then the likelihood of higher achievements in more favourable conditions would increase. A study with a larger number of country-cases may have provided insight into the sufficient conditions for behavioural democratic transformation. However, due to abovementioned reasons, it remains beyond the scope of this dissertation, but is a step to be based on the findings of this research.

3.7. Data Collection

The empirical research is mostly based on primary sources. Initial analysis starts by the overview of literature on the issue that allows observing democracy promotion policies of the promoters. To assess the domestic conditions (independent variables), the limited amount of literature available on Armenia is also used. This is supported by the analysis of local and international daily news services (in Armenian, Russian, and English) to keep track on the domestic developments and democracy indices. Among the primary sources are the official documentation of democracy promotion of the EU and the USA, such as Country and Progress Reports, Strategy Papers, communiqués, project proposal descriptions, evaluations and project highlights by the promoters available online or upon request. To assess domestic conditions of the target countries this study analyses official statements by the domestic political and societal actors, and official documentation of the target country.

To crosscheck the information gathered from other sources, two rounds of semi-structured interviews have been conducted in Yerevan, Armenia with the managing staff of

democracy promoters and implementing organisations (list of interviewees and questions is given in Appendix 2). Interviews help to understand the decisions behind specific actions and events and compensate for missing or unclear data. The results of the interviews are embedded into the following empirical chapters. The management of democracy promoters is interviewed to identify the strategies of democracy promotion and see whether strategies are modified depending on the progress of democracy. Thus, the interviews aim to explore the actual strategies of democracy promotion and not the rationale behind those, since that is beyond the focus of this dissertation. For a similar reason, local targets of democracy promotion are not interviewed, since the interviews may only partially reveal their attitudes towards democracy promotion, while this research is interested in their behaviour. While identification with democracy is one of the independent variables it can be measured without interviews based on the available statements. Interviewing local targets may be beneficial if investigating local discourse on democracy or aiming to measure their attitudes, however this is not in the scope of this dissertation. In addition, this dissertation focuses on behavioural dimension of democracy promotion rather than attitudinal or ideational dimensions, which, though often attempted, are rarely validly measured.

**PART II. LOCAL INGREDIENTS OF THE GLOBAL
DEMOCRATIC RECIPE**

Chapter 4. Armenia: The Road to Democracy Turning into a Blind Alley

This first empirical chapter analyses the domestic socio-economic and political situation in Armenia after the independence from the Soviet Union to introduce the conditions of domestic democratization and map the environment where democracy promotion programs have been implemented. This period spans over the start of targeted democracy promotion throughout the latest general elections of 2008. Setting the environment for democratization, this chapter starts with an overview of Armenia's democratic legacies, state-building after the independence of 1991, issues of national importance, foreign relations, including political and economic relations with the Armenian Diaspora, and regional conflicts.

Before the independence proclaimed on 21 September 1991, the landlocked Armenia, with a population of approximately 3 million had a brief independent period between the Bolshevik Revolution and the annexation to the Soviet Union. According to some Armenian analysts these three years marked the first democratic period in the history of Armenia. However, these cannot be considered democratic in the modern sense of the concept. The perestroika period of Mikhail Gorbachev and the popular movements in the Eastern Europe have triggered looming intentions of Armenians to annex the enclave of 75 % Armenian populated Nagorno Karabakh (Derluguian 2005). In addition being the only country to secede from the Soviet Union according to the provisions of the Soviet Constitution, Armenia was regarded a frontrunner in democratic developments (Gardner et al 1996). The first decade of transition in Armenia was turbulent: it witnessed a war, years of economic blockade, the resignation of its first president, and the assassinations of the popular prime minister and the

Speaker of the Parliament. This was followed by a more stable and autocratically matured politics supported by double digit GDP, and economic though not democratic growth.

Although several independent variables such as [identification](#), [resonance](#), and [utility of adaptation](#) are examined in this chapter, the main focus is on the [democracy blocker](#) variable. Russia's role as a democracy blocker is scrutinised and is considered as a domestic variable, since it is not in the power of promoters to control its existence and its influence is inseparable from the position of Armenian political elites and the situation with Nagorno Karabakh conflict Russia. In addition, this chapter sets the context for the discussion of the independent variable of [involvement](#), by thoroughly analysing the main pressing issues in Armenia. This chapter demonstrates the importance of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict for Armenian internal and external politics and the negative influence an unresolved conflict may have on democratization attempts. On the other hand, it is argued that despite the reputation Armenian Diaspora is not as influential in political matters as often considered to be and economic development is not necessarily accompanied by democratic progress. However, Russia's ubiquitous and controversial activities in Armenia and the region coupled with its dubious and often provocative promotion of conflict resolution, keeps Armenia from more consolidated democratization despite the latter's identification with democracy promoters.

4.1. The Haunting Nightmare of the Nagorno Karabakh Conflict

The regional conflicts in the South Caucasus are unavoidable when analyzing political and economic aspects of the three countries. Nevertheless, this dissertation does not venture on assessing the validity of claims over Nagorno Karabakh, neither does it propose a potential resolution to the conflict. It rather aims to demonstrate the nature of the conflict as an intervening negative factor for democratization and democracy promotion, as a possible influence on local politics, and as an area, which needs active involvement by a democracy

promoter. The region, mostly populated by Armenian, had been a reason for dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan since the 19th century. The dispute had been partially resolved by Joseph Stalin, who had decided to grant the region to Azerbaijan to avoid retaliation from Turkey. Citing economic underdevelopment, Armenians in the regions started asking for the transfer of control to Armenia in the 1960s (Way 2009). The *perestroika* period emphasised the nationalistic sentiments of ethnic Armenians even more, with the Karabakh Soviet voting for the transfer to Armenia. The claims have become more determined after the Sumgait Massacre of February 1988—a targeted killing of Armenians in the Azerbaijani city of Sumgait. After the independence of both countries, the dispute over Nagorno Karabakh turned into a full-fledged war, later turning the South Caucasus into a region of frozen conflicts and dominating the politics of both Armenia and Azerbaijan for the following two decades. As some analysts argue “Armenia’s pro-democracy movement...merged completely with the Karabakh issue” (Goldenberg 1994: 165).

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the former’s defence of the right of self-determination of Nagorno Karabakh population and the latter’s claims over its territorial integrity had been violent for 1988-1994. The conflict had resulted in thousands of deaths from both sides and had caused hundreds of thousands of Armenians and Azerbaijanis to become refugees. While the Armenian population of Azerbaijan had been forced to flee to Armenia, the Azerbaijani population of Nagorno Karabakh had been forced to flee to Azerbaijan. Despite the international involvement, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has received the “frozen” status with occasional skirmishes, with the 2008 Mardakert ones being the most publicised.

The OSCE Minsk Group was created in 1992 and has since been holding peace talks over the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Under the co-chairmanship of France,

Russia and the USA, the OSCE Minsk Group is comprised of the representatives of another six EU members (Germany, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland), Belarus, Turkey as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, the OSCE Minsk Group has so far failed to produce tangible results, subsequently undermining its potential with both Armenians and Azerbaijanis (Zakarian 2003a; Corwin 2006; Medzhid 2011; Babayan 2012). The primarily Russian-negotiated ceasefire was signed in 1994, with Nagorno Karabakh proclaiming its de facto independence.

Despite the ceasefire, the Nagorno Karabakh conflict dominates Armenian domestic and foreign politics and has caused almost 3000 lives from both sides since 1994 (International Crisis Group 2011). The independence of Nagorno Karabakh has not been recognised by any state including Armenia. Nevertheless, a large presence of Karabakh natives in Armenian politics demonstrates the extent of the interconnectedness and importance of the Nagorno-Karabakh issue to Armenia.⁸ The former president Levon Ter-Petrosyan⁹ was more open to the option of Nagorno Karabakh remaining on the territory of Azerbaijan. Among other points, the Minsk Group co-chairs proposed in 1997 that Armenia cedes all Azerbaijani territory outside of Karabakh and Shusha within Karabakh, and the OSCE peacekeepers be responsible for security of returning Azeri refugees and the Karabakh population (Migdalovitz 2001; Zourabian 2006). Azerbaijan was proposed to allow Karabakh Armenians to maintain armed forces, which after the end of the Baku-Stepanakert talks would have been reduced to a militarised police (Migdalovitz 2001). Arguing that neither Azerbaijan nor the international community would accept the independence of Nagorno Karabakh, former president Ter-Petrosyan called the plan realistic. However, Ter-Petrosyan's position went into a sharp contrast with the positions of his government members (especially then

⁸Both former president of Armenia Robert Kocharyan and the current president Serzh Sargsyan are from Nagorno Karabakh. Kocharyan has also served as the president of Nagorno Karabakh.

⁹ The Latin transliteration is as on the official website of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

prime-minister Robert Kocharyan¹⁰ and defence minister Serzh Sargsyan¹¹), Diaspora, and local Armenians (Migdalovitz 2001: 9). Eventually he was forced to resign.

Settlement talks sponsored by the Minsk Group collectively and often by Russia and the US individually continued, with the newly elected President Robert Kocharyan calling for a stronger position of Armenia during the talks (Zourabian 2006). After meeting for 14 times in the period of 1998-2001, both Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents have expressed their dissatisfaction with the OSCE mediation and even voiced the possibility of a regionally grown solution (Peuch 2001). Nevertheless, according to the OSCE, the meetings under the auspices of the Minks group continued, though without tangible results and with several disruptions due to the inability of thee presidents to prepare their publics for a settlement (Migdalovitz 2001). Since the shaky peace of 1994, several settlement agreements had been proposed by the mediators but none of those had managed to satisfy both sides. Among others, the “stage-by-stage” proposal of 1997, the “common state” proposal of 1998, Paris-Key West proposal of 2001 were rejected by one side or the other (Hakobyan 2008b). The Armenian and the Azerbaijani sides, agreed to the preamble of the Madrid principles, the latest proposal of 2007 (updated in 2009). However, still negotiating on the other parts and without any progress on the implementation of the peace settlement (Relief Web 2010).

The urgency of the peace settlement is underlined by the deteriorating situation over the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, with occasional skirmishes killing dozens a year (International Crisis Group 2011). The presence of Armenian and Azerbaijani snipers on the 220-kilometer Line of Contact has cost lives of 25 in 2007 (Orudzhev 2008), 30 in 2008 (OSCE 2009), and 19 people in 2009 (Caucasian Knot 2010b) in violation of the 1994 ceasefire. Despite repeated calls from the mediators supported by Armenia’s agreement

¹⁰ The Latin transliteration is as on the official website of the President of the Republic of Armenia.

¹¹ The Latin transliteration of is as on the official website of the President of the Republic of Armenia

(PanArmenian.Net 2010), Azerbaijan refuses to pull back its snipers (RFE/RL 2010c). Though none of the governments have promised a full-fledged offensive in the nearest future, the perpetual disagreement of the peace settlement may eventually lead to a war near the borders of the EU and strategically important region for the USA. The potential imminence of war is emphasised by the regional “weapons spending spree” (Kucera 2010), which saw Armenia increase its military spending from USD 93 million in 1999 to USD 217 million in 2008 and Azerbaijan from USD 133 million in 1999 to USD 697 million in 2008 (SIPRI) with a subsequent increase to USD 3.1 billion in 2011 (Caucasian Knot 2010a). Bellicose statements of the Azerbaijani government (Osborn 2009) that Azerbaijani people “have to be ready to liberate [their] lands by military means, and [they] are ready” (Aliyev in RFE/RL 2008a), and promises to shoot down civilian planes in case they fly to the Stepanakert airport (Bulghadarian 2011), do not contribute to peaceful conflict resolution either.

Pursuing less combative position, Armenia, nevertheless, opts for political pressure at the same time expecting military support from Russia. At the December 2010 session of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) the Armenian president Sargsyan stated “...in the event of Azerbaijan’s venturing a new aggression, Armenia will have no choice other than de jure recognise the Nagorno Karabakh Republic and ensure the security of its population with all available means” (in Khojoyan 2010). Armenia maintains close economic and political connections with Nagorno Karabakh and sends recruits to serve in the Nagorno Karabakh army (Gradirovski and Esipova 2007). Close connections between the Armenian and Nagorno Karabakh authorities underline the unlikelihood of an Armenian agreement to leaving the breakaway region on the territory of Azerbaijan without any autonomy.

The importance of the Nagorno Karabakh issue to the Armenian politics is echoed by the population. According to a series of USAID-funded surveys conducted by the IRI in

Armenia and Armenian Sociological Association in 2006-2008, Nagorno Karabakh conflict has been a major source of problems and fears of the Armenian population (see [Table 15](#)). Thus, it is not surprising that over 70 % of the respondents considered the solution of the Nagorno Karabakh problem a priority for the Armenian government. The positions on the ultimate solution to the conflict, however, may vary among the population, government officials, and international actors as demonstrated by the ousting of the former president Ter-Petrosyan in 1998. However, taking into consideration that the conflict hinders the economic development, endorses an atmosphere of insecurity, and places democracy issues at the bottom of the priorities list¹², makes conflict resolution and regional cooperation an area to be given priority attention by democracy promoters. As shown in the following section, the conflict also reiterates the dominating position of Russia in Armenia and in the South Caucasus.

¹² In 2008 democracy was #12 in the list of issues Armenians are concerned. Importance of democracy in 2008 decreased by 7% in comparison to 2006.

Table 15. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict according to the Armenian population.

	Importance of the Issue	Fears of Armenians	Importance of solution to the Karabakh conflict
2006 ¹³	Unemployment 43% ¹⁴	Karabakh 58%	Very important 77%
	Socio-economic issues 26%	Slow development of economy 16%	Rather important 20%
	Karabakh 25%	Migration 13%	Not very important 2%
	Development of economy 26%	Unemployment 7%	Not important at all 1%
	Corruption 13%		
	Democracy 11 %	Socio-economic issues 4%	Don't know 0%
2007 ¹⁵	Unemployment 40%	Civil War 24%	Very important 64%
	Socio-economic issues 30%	Karabakh 20%	Rather important 27%
	Karabakh 16%	Socio-economic situation 19%	Not very important 5%
	Corruption 11%	Unemployment 9%	Not at all important 1%
	Development of economy 6%	Migration 8%	Don't know 2%
	Democracy 3 %	Corruption 4%	
2008 ¹⁶	Unemployment 40%	Karabakh 19%	Very important 63%
	Socio-economic issues 32%	Uncertainty for the future 18%	Rather important 31%
	Karabakh 20%	War/security 15%	Not very important 4%
	Development of economy 15%	Socio-economic situation 13%	Not at all important 1%
	Corruption 12%	Unemployment 10%	Don't know 1%
	Slow development of democracy 3%	Migration 7%	

Source: author's own compilation based on IRI 2006, 2007, 2008.

The protracted Nagorno-Karabakh conflict damages democratization prospects of Armenia by giving its authorities a reason to justify undemocratic measures during elections or censoring media by a conflict. In addition, it negatively affects the utility of adaptation of the incumbents to democracy promoted from outside if rewards are conditioned by concessions in conflict resolution or friendly relations with neighbours, as it may endanger their position with hard-liners. On the other hand, the persistence of the conflict damages

¹³Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, May 2006.

¹⁴ The percentile shows the percentage of respondents that mention the issue.

¹⁵Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, July 2007.

¹⁶Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, January 2008.

trade and energy plans of the promoters in the region, especially of the EU. Strained relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan force them to refrain from multilateral cooperation projects, making promotion of not only democracy but also regional cooperation an ordeal (Babayan 2012). Constrained by their strategic interests in the region, the international actors will not openly take sides. However, ignoring the Nagorno Karabakh problem and merely resorting to moral support of the peace process will not produce peace settlement and may result in an unwanted war. As further elaborated, active involvement in conflict resolution is a necessary condition for successful democracy promotion in Armenia (and the South Caucasus), especially in light of Russia's self-appointed and meticulously guarded mediation plans. Moreover, positive involvement in the conflict will help the EU and the USA to advance their other strategic interests, such as energy diversification for the EU and fight against terrorism for the USA.

4.2 The Democracy Blocker: Russia in Armenia and the South Caucasus

Russia's first decade after the break-up of the Soviet Union was highlighted by the armed conflicts in the Northern Caucasus, the economic "shock therapy", the financial crisis of 1998 with a further decline in GDP, the constant search for a prime minister, and its declining weight in international politics. Nevertheless, Russia maintained the democratizing image emphasizing friendly relations with Western leaders, with the "Bill and Boris"¹⁷ friendship (Pushkov 2010; Rutland and Dubinsky 2008) being the most notable. The nostalgia for the imperialistic past and undeniable political influence became even stronger after NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 despite strong Russian opposition and the eventual

¹⁷ This refers to the officially friendly relations of former US president Bill Clinton and former Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

disillusionment in the US “spinach treatment” (Talbot 2003). Russia’s second president Vladimir Putin opted for a “harder” approach towards foreign affairs and economic development. Admitting slim chances of Russia to liberalise to the extent of the USA or the UK, Putin (1999), nevertheless, stated that Russia had been and was a superpower. Putin’s further statements and actions spread concern among Western observers due to the “breaking away from the core democratic values of the Euro-Atlantic community” and “the return of rhetoric of militarism and empire” (Ahlin et al 2004).

Underlining Russia’s awakening from hiatus, in 2000 President Putin approved less cautiously worded foreign policy strategy. The strategy overtly called the USA a threat to a multi-polar world and Russia’s interests as a great power. It pointed out the dominance of the USA, international terrorism, promotion of regional groupings, and globalisation of the world economy as Russia’s main challenges. However, understanding that the forced allegiance of the Eastern Europe is long lost to the EU, Russia gave the post-Soviet countries the priority in its foreign policy. President Putin’s annual address to the Federal Assembly of 2002 underlined the importance of post-Soviet countries (Babayan and Braghiroli 2011). Asserting its great power status and regaining its traditional sphere of influence have become the primary task of Putin’s Russia (Secieru 2006). Through military cooperation and economic investments Russia has taken direct action to stabilise authoritarian regimes in the post-Soviet space (Grävingholt et al 2011). Its own energy resources, the initial Western neglect, and the economic indebtedness of the former Soviet republics have together provided a rather fertile ground for Russia’s authoritarian manoeuvre.

Even if not a real empire, Russia aims to shape the domestic environments of neighbouring countries according to its interests at the same time resisting to the presence of other international actors (Babayan and Braghiroli 2011). Georgia’s Rose Revolution of 2003

and Ukraine's Orange Revolution of 2004 were initially regarded as a challenge to Russia's dominance in the neighbourhood. However, they rather provided Russia with a justification for launching more proactive and aggressive policies. Though Russia has yet to create a consolidated authoritarian regime in its neighbourhood, concerns have been raised on the increasing authoritarianism of Russia's regime ([Table 16](#)) and its authoritarian influence projected over the countries of the former Soviet Union (Abushov 2009; Ambrosio 2009; Tolstrup 2009; Grävingsholt et al 2011). Possible promotion of authoritarianism by Russia is disguised behind neologisms and euphemisms as "*suverenitet demokratii*" (sovereign democracy) and "*vertikal' vlasti*" (hierarchy of power)¹⁸ making it more appealing to the countries struggling with the economic and institutional consequences of their dubious transitions. In addition, Russia often adopts democracy promotion rhetoric, following a "Machiavellian approach" of supporting whatever regime it deems profitable for its own (Shapovalova and Zarembo 2010). Stating that Russia "has a sphere of privileged interests" (Averre 2010: 13), President Medvedev (2008) claims Russia's commitment to "the development in all possible ways of rights and freedoms, the struggle with corruption...Russia has no other choice". However, the announced swap of positions in 2012 between Putin and Medvedev is likely to further consolidate authoritarianism in Russia.

¹⁸ "суверенная демократия" (*suverenitet demokratii*) and "вертикаль власти" (*vertikal' vlasti*). See for more details (in Russian) <http://www.kommersant.ru/Doc/718419> ; <http://www.russ.ru/Mirovaya-povestka/Suverennaya-demokratiya-ili-demokraticeskij-suverenitet> ; <http://www.inop.ru/publication/page78/> ; <http://politike.ru/dictionary/472/word/%C2%C5%D0%D2%C8%CA%C0%CB%DC+%C2%CB%C0%D1%D2%C8>

Table 16. Russia’s democratic performance since Vladimir Putin’s first term (PF-partly free; NF-not free).

Year	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Political Rights	4	5	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
Civil Rights	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Status	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	PF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF	NF

Source: Freedom House.

Russia has been present in politics and economy of Armenia and the South Caucasus since the early 19th century and the inclusion of the South Caucasus countries into the Russian Empire. After a short-lived independence following the Bolshevik Revolution and a brief war with Turkey following the Turkish invasion in September 1920, Armenia yet again appeared under Russian dominance, this time as the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Russian dominance of the USSR resulted in the penetration of Russian culture into Armenia’s social life¹⁹ and the political dominance of Moscow over Yerevan. Nevertheless, many viewed Russian border guards as the saviours from possible Turkish aggression (Hakobyan 2008a). The confidence that the military pact with Russia protects it “against some of the vocal and demonstrated threats by... [the] neighbor to the West” (Oskanian 2002) persisted especially after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. This opinion has been shared by the majority of the Armenian population (see [Table 17](#)). Thus for the most of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries, Russia has been Armenia’s main security provider. In the 21st century Russia’s role in the Armenian economy has also increased. While the USA and European countries often provide unconditioned aid, Russia usually engages in specific business development mechanisms based on its own strategic interests. This strategy of “if not by tanks, then by banks” (Tsygankov 2006) underlined the recent employment of non-military instruments in reinforcing Russia’s policies.

¹⁹ However, the dominance on Russian/Soviet culture did not result in cultural or linguistic divisions as it may have been the case in other Soviet republics. Nevertheless, Russian-speaking Armenians educated in Russian schools were viewed as the elite society.

Russia's foreign policy after the USSR has been guided by the endeavour of regaining Russia's status of super power, which *inter alia* included keeping its "*blizhnee zarubezhye*" (near abroad)²⁰ under its direct influence. Thus, Russia initiated the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1991, which has become its the main tool for projecting its influence. However, the appeal of the CIS in comparison to other regional organisations is weakened by the lack of any financial aid (Rywkin 2003). Nevertheless, Russia has obtained a dominant status in the Armenian economy. Russia forgave Armenia's post-Soviet debt of USD 98 million in exchange for five Armenian state-owned military-industrial enterprises (Migdalovitz 2004). Closer economic cooperation was established in 2001 by signing an economic agreement for an amplified economic integration. Armenia's government welcomed Russia's purchase of large shares in Armenian telecommunications, energy, electricity networks, and banking industries. As then head of the Armenian side in the Armenia-Russia Economic Cooperation Commission and current president Sargsyan welcomed Russia's investments and did not see "any risk at all in the growth of Russian capital in our country" (Socor 2006a). This opinion, however, has not been shared by others in the South Caucasus (Tsereteli 2005; Saakashvili 2006).

The energy relations between Russia and the South Caucasus countries have been characterised as "highly asymmetric" (Perovic 2005: 1) and potentially endangering the ability of small states to make independent decisions (Inbar and Sheffer 1997). Privatisation of state-owned facilities, under the pressure of Russian energy companies allegedly to increase the effectiveness of the governance, made the Western companies reluctant to invest in the South Caucasus energy sector (Tsereteli 2005). However, Russian companies closely associated with Russian authorities use energy revenues to invest in other sectors of economy (Tsereteli 2005), making their "partners" even more dependent. In addition to this, the

²⁰ *ближнее зарубежье*.

Nagorno Karabakh conflict forces Armenia to depend upon Russia for its supplies of natural gas, instead of importing cheaper hydrocarbons from closer Azerbaijan. Gas is procured to Armenia by the ArmRosGazprom (ARG) CJSC. ARG was founded jointly by Armenia and Russia in 1997 with Russian gas monopolist Gazprom and the Armenian Energy Ministry each owning 45 %, and the ITERA²¹ company 10 % of stocks. However, currently Gazprom holds 80 % with the Armenian government holding 20 % of shares.

The dependence upon Russian gas was supposed to be ameliorated by the 2007 inauguration of Armenia-Iran Natural Gas Pipeline, meant to supply 400 million cubic meters to the annual Armenian consumption of 1,5 billion cubic meters (Socor 2007). Understandably, Russia did not meet the initiative of another pipeline with enthusiasm and the latter's construction and launch had been repeatedly postponed (Markarian 2005). However, the Iran-Armenia pipeline was put under the control of Russian-dominated ARG after Gazprom had threatened to substantially increase gas prices for the South Caucasus from January 2006 (Markarian 2005). Armenian officials replied with a rare criticism of Russia calling the move politically motivated (Danielyan 2005e) and suggesting charging Russia for stationing its troops in Armenia (Bedevian 2005a). Gazprom replied that Armenia would be charged a higher price unless it transferred the control over the Armenia-Iran pipeline to Russia (Kalantarian 2006). Subsequently, regular Armenian concessions and Russian bullying secured unchanged gas prices in 2011 (Harutyunyan 2011b), keeping it at USD 180 for 1000 cubic meters. In comparison, Gazprom has sold gas to Western and Eastern Europe for more than USD 300 per thousand cubic meters. Moreover, though subsidised by the Armenian

²¹ Itera Holdings Ltd. is a holding company based in Curaçao with investments in Russian natural gas, and US timber and real estate. It has headquarters in Moscow, Russia, and offices in Limassol, Cyprus, and Jacksonville, Florida. Itera was allegedly involved in artificial price lowering to benefit Gazprom managers and in dealings with the Italian mafia. See http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/02_07/b3770079.htm

government (Harutyunyan 2011b), the gas price for economically vulnerable Armenian households is lowered for at least one heating season (Avetisian 2011b).

Russia's presence in Armenian security matters is as vivid as in economy. Armenia signed the Russian-promoted CSTO in 1992, with Azerbaijan and Georgia joining in 1993. Though involving all South Caucasus states, the organisation did not contribute to the resolution of the regional conflicts (Saat 2005). However, in 1999 Azerbaijan and Georgia refused to renew the treaty and withdrew from the organisation. Armenia, however, stayed in the CSTO and also hosted one of the largest CSTO command and staff exercises Rubezh 2008 (PIMS 2008). In addition to the CSTO, Armenia and Russia signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1997, which was characterised as an "element of alliance" by former president Ter-Petrosyan (Migdalovitz 2004: 4). The treaty allowed for Russian guards patrolling the borders of Armenia with Turkey and Iran. Accordingly, the Russian 102nd military base has been stationed in Gyumri, the second largest city of Armenia. After the withdrawal of two Russian military bases from Georgia in 2005-2007, a significant part of the military hardware was moved from Batumi and Akhalkalaki, Georgia to Gyumri (Martirosyan and Mir Ismail 2005). According to Azerbaijan's president Aliyev the move induced an arms race in the region and forced Azerbaijan to increase its military spending (Martirosyan and Mir Ismail 2005). Thus, while reducing its military presence in Georgia, due to latter's NATO aspirations, Russia has basically not reduced its military presence in the South Caucasus but simply moved its troops from Georgia to Armenia.

The military and security influence of Russia over the region and especially over Armenia is exacerbated by the persistence of the Karabakh conflict. Closed borders with Azerbaijan and Turkey, and Turkey's financial and military assistance to Azerbaijan makes Armenia turn to Russia for protection. As then Minister of Defence Sargsyan put it in 2002,

such security cooperation makes Armenia feel protected in its “difficult region” (PanArmenian.Net 2002). With Georgia’s continuing efforts to lessen Russian influence in the region and Azerbaijan’s increasing leverage due to its natural resources, Armenia also seems a natural partner for Russia in maintaining its influence over the South Caucasus. In 1997 Armenia and Russia ratified a 25-year agreement on stationing Russian troops in Armenia (The Jamestown Foundation 1997a), ensuring Armenia’s security (The Jamestown Foundation 1997c) and “protecting Russian strategic interests” (Cornell 2000: 364). This was followed by an August 1997 Treaty on “Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance” ((The Jamestown Foundation 1997b). Up until 2002, 14 bilateral agreements on security matters had been signed by Armenia and Russia. In September 2001, Defence Ministers Sargsyan and Ivanov signed two intergovernmental agreements on business trips to Armenia of Russian military consultants and favourable conditions for Russians serving in Armenia (Kelkitli 2008). In October 2001, a protocol was signed on the provision of the 102nd military base with anti-aircraft systems (Kelkitli 2008). The agreements on joint usage of military infrastructure and information exchange were signed in October 2002. Another agreement on military-technical cooperation followed in January 2003 (Blagov 2003).

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was once again behind the Armenian agreement of signing new security protocols with Russia. With more than a decade left before its expiry, the Russia-Armenia Treaty was extended from the initial 29 to 45 years until 2044 with subsequent ratification of the defence pact by Armenia’s parliament (Martirosian 2011). The renewed agreement goes beyond the protection of Russian interests and pledges to ensure the security of Armenia. The extension of the agreement was viewed in Armenia as an assurance against possible aggression from Azerbaijan. However, Azerbaijan, voiced concerns over Russia’s increased and impartial presence in the region (Smbatian 2010). Russia’s military

presence in the region showed to be even more controversial than thought after reports in Russian media (Kucera 2010) of defence systems sale by Russia to Azerbaijan. Though considered a “bluff” by some (Ayson 2008), the possible purchase was considered as “betrayal” (News.am 2010) and negative meddling in the region’s affairs by the others (Stepanian 2010).

Russia’s involvement in Armenia’s security matters spreads also to its mediation talks for brokering the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Considering the South Caucasus as its sphere of influence, Russia, though supports the efforts of the OSCE Minsk Group, prefers to organise trilateral meetings with the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. However, during Vladimir Putin’s presidency the status quo of the conflict seemed to be the preferred option, while France and the USA have attempted to mediate a settlement. However, after the 2008 armed conflict with Georgia and destruction of Russia’s peaceful image, Russian president Medvedev has put the resolution of this conflict among the top foreign policy priorities. In three years he has organised over ten trilateral meetings. The USA and the EU seem to be satisfied with Russia’s lead as Medvedev has regularly updated them on the meetings. Nevertheless, even the much anticipated trilateral meeting in Kazan in summer of 2011 did not result in any settlement. The extent of Russia’s involvement in the issue results from its own domestic politics: with Vladimir Putin predicted to reclaim presidency in 2012, the chances of Russia to be satisfied with current status quo are high as it currently guarantees presence of Russia and containment of Western interests in the South Caucasus.

The Armenian population has shown undeniable positive attitude towards the relations with Russia ([Table 17](#)). Despite the threats of increasing the prices of commodities, the approval ranking of bilateral relations has increased over the course of three years. This may be explained by the increasing levels of fear towards the Nagorno Karabakh conflict ([Table](#)

15) and the presence of the Russian military base in Armenia that provides the feeling of security. Thus, 65 % of Armenian respondents were in favour of the Russian military base, 11% (in 2006) and 18 % (in 2007) were indifferent, with only 2 % (in 2006) and 1 % (in 2007) against. Given low approval ranking of the authorities, high level of popular support cannot be credited to pro-Russian rhetoric of the government. It is rather a result of general apathy with the government and lackadaisical approach of international actors.

The omnipresent threat of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, aggravated by the rocketing military spending of Azerbaijan, makes Russian involvement in Armenia's security structure not only advisable but also desirable by domestic actors. However, such penetrating involvement does not contain Russian influence only to security matters, but also spreads it over political and economic issues. Moreover, Russia seems to apply Caesarean "*divide et impera*" approach to the South Caucasus countries; an approach that helps it to maintain its influence over the region. The military support to Armenia, the allegedly disguised sell of weaponry to Azerbaijan, and the recognition of independence of Georgian breakaway regions, while flirting with the status of Nagorno Karabakh, show that Russia's interest in regional cooperation or conflict resolution is merely oratorical. In addition, its own increasing authoritarianism does not contribute to the democratization of the region, since, along with resolved conflicts, it would most probably turn the South Caucasus towards the EU and NATO. On the other hand, the increased involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the main source of local support to Russia, economic investments, and energy supply diversification can increase local support of democracy and Western promoted policies not only rhetorically but also behaviourally. With the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, Russia would lose its grip over Armenia as the security threat would be eliminated and borders with energy-rich Azerbaijan open.

Table 17. Russia's involvement according to the Armenian population.

	Relations with Russia are...	Russian military base in Armenia	Russia as a trustworthy ally of Armenia
2006 ²²	Good 95%	Positive influence 65%	Definitely yes 45%
		Neither positive nor negative 16%	Probably yes 42%
	Bad 4%	Both positive and negative 11%	Probably no 7%
		Negative 2%	
	Neither good nor bad 1%	Don't know 6%	Definitely no 3%
		Don't know 3%	
2007 ²³	Good 98%	Positive influence 65%	Definitely yes 46%
		Neither positive nor negative 18%	Probably yes 41%
		Both positive and negative 12%	Probably no 5%
	Bad 2%	Negative 1%	Definitely no 2%
		Don't know 4%	Don't know 6%
2008 ²⁴	Good 98%	N/A	N/A
	Bad 1%		
	Neither good nor bad 1%		

Source: author's own compilation based on IRI 2006, 2007, 2008.

4.3 Democratic Aspirations and Obstacles

Due to historical background and geographic positions of the South Caucasus states linking Europe to the Middle East and Asia, the internal politics has become more complicated given international interest in gaining control over the region (Nichol 2010). Relatively long and continuous formal Russian control over the whole region had put an end to external military invasions. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, international actors have restarted this time peaceful battle for allegiance in the South Caucasus. Though Armenia's secession

²²Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, May 2006.

²³Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, July 2007.

²⁴Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, January 2008.

from the USSR is traditionally regarded as a general movement supported by the entire population, some (Poghosian 2001 in UNDP 2001) mention the concerns voiced during national polls for independence. The public opinion poll conducted in March 1991 showed that a large portion of the surveyed population was sceptical of the independence and the survival of the country without the support of the Soviet Union. The main reasons for concern came from the survivors of the disastrous earthquake of 1988 that practically destroyed two cities and took lives of 25000 people. On the other hand, others predicted an immediate occupation of Armenia by the neighbouring Turkey, which has been the historical antagonist of Armenia for at least a century, largely dominating Armenian self-perceptions. Despite these considerations, Armenia has managed to stay at the vanguard of the initial democratization in the Soviet Union in 1988-1991 (UNDP 2001). However, the early jubilation of the independence and the democratization momentum had been lost, giving way to political and economic problems that Armenia had to face during its transition period.

With 95 % of the population ethnically Armenian, the homogenous country does not face the problem of ethnic cleavage that according to some theorists (Norris 2006) may hinder the democratization process. However, what Armenia has to deal with is its large and comparatively affluent “*haykakan spyurq*”²⁵ or the Armenian Diaspora that consists of about 10 million people²⁶, compared to the 3 million residents of Armenia. “The Armenian Diaspora is one of the most resilient and perhaps best organised in the world” (PFA 2010:4) and often carries “the images of a militarist and victorious state” (Simão and Freire 2007: 4). Outside of Armenia proper, Armenian communities formed centuries ago stretching from Esfahan to Venice and beyond. However, the major part of the Armenian Diaspora was established after

²⁵ Հայկական Սփիւրք

²⁶ For more information see <http://www.armeniadiaspora.com/population.html>

the events²⁷ in the Ottoman Empire during the WWI, which had resulted in massive immigration of Armenians²⁸ from the lands, which now comprise the eastern part of Turkey. The outflow of Armenians also happened after the Sovietisation of Armenia. Though links between Soviet Armenia and Diaspora were not uncommon, diasporan political structures were reluctant to recognise Soviet Armenia as a successor of the short-lived republic of the early 1920s (PFA 2010). However, with the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Karabakh movement and the devastation after the 1988 earthquake, the links between the Diaspora and newly independent Armenia have renewed with increased vigour, allowing Armenia to benefit from the Diaspora's wealth, and Diaspora benefit from state-endorsed support to some of their historical claims. Since then, Armenia has attempted to consider the Diaspora's opinion, though without encouraging substantial influence on its foreign policy actions, simultaneously trying to account for the possible impact on the Diaspora (Oskanian 2004).

Nevertheless, the renewed relationship started with a tension after the Diaspora, though ambitious about nation- and statehood, had been taken aback by the enthusiasm of the Karabakh movement, a major event that it had had little initial input in (Libaridian 1999). Citing potentially heavy economic and cultural consequences diasporan political parties have issued a call of cautiousness upon their "valiant brethren in Armenia and Karabakh" (in Libaridian 1991) asking to subdue the movement. Thus, unlike the large outflow of assistance from the Diaspora as a result of the 1988 earthquake, the assistance during the Karabakh war was minimal (Sargsian 2010). Similarly reserved was the attitude of the Diaspora towards the

²⁷ The events refer to the Ottoman massacres of Armenians in 1915-1916, which were recognized as genocide by a number of countries () and the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities (http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.169/current_category.6/affirmation_detail.html#13)

²⁸ Later in the text, the term Armenian(s) refers to a person who is a resident or a citizen of the Republic of Armenia, while non-citizens of the same ethnicity are referred to as diasporans or Diaspora Armenians.

events following the 2008 presidential elections.²⁹ A joint statement by the leading diasporan organisation in the USA stated that American Armenians who are “vital partners in the future of the Armenian nation” are “deeply saddened by the violence” and “are ready to cooperate with the newly-elected President and the government” (ANCA 2008). As Foreign Policy Forum (2010) reports the detached statement of the Diaspora was largely influenced by then Foreign Minister Oskanian to ensure diasporan statements adhere to the ones of the official Yerevan. Nevertheless, diasporan Armenians have also complained of the sometimes estranged and somewhat utilitarian attitude of Armenians (Lima 1999; Beylerian 2008 in PFA 2010).

Despite the debate on the extent of influence on Armenian politics to be allowed to the Armenian Diaspora and some disagreements, the influence as such on socio-economic matters is inevitable. Diaspora organisations have donated or invested approximately USD 900 million in assistance to Armenia through several official channels such as the Pan-Armenian Fund *Hayastan* (Minoian and Freikman 2004). In addition, private funding to Armenia consisted of approximately USD 900 million per year (Roberts 2004), with one-third of the amount being direct transfers and the remaining being working remittances (Minoian and Freikman 2004). Notwithstanding the involvement of the Diaspora in the economic and sometimes cultural life of Armenia, its involvement in the political life has always been limited to the extent allowed by the incumbent regime. The laissez-faire approach to the Diaspora of President Ter-Petrosyan, who had banned one of main extra-territorial parties after an alleged assassination attempt (Sargsian 2010) was followed by “lip-service” (PFA 2010: 18) of President Kocharyan, however, successfully securing further economic assistance. President Sargsyan’s speech stressing the need for economic help to Armenia, so the latter “would help them stay Armenian through generations” (in Gregorian 2008) also

²⁹ A detailed account of the 2008 presidential elections is provided in Chapter 6.

shows the somewhat utilitarian approach of Armenia to the Diaspora. Nevertheless, although without official political involvement into Armenia's affairs, there is a cause that has been meticulously pursued by the Diaspora since the early 20th century and has received renewed push after Armenia's independence from the USSR.

The events of 1915 in the Ottoman Turkey have dominated the social and political agenda of the Armenian Diaspora. Strained relations with Turkey, which aggravated after the start of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, negatively affected politics and economics of Armenia proper. The campaign directed to Turkey's recognition of the events as a genocide has received a larger coverage and an additional impetus after the independence of Armenia. The heated debate over the "Declaration of Independence of Armenia" in 1990 was the result of the disagreement whether Armenia should pursue the recognition of the genocide. Though then president of the Armenian Supreme Soviet Ter-Petrosyan argued against the inclusion of the genocide issue in the declaration, "Armenian simplistic emotional elements [had] once more prevailed over rationality" (Ishkhanian 1991: 136 in Astourian 2000: 20). Turkey recognised the independence of Armenia in 1991 and Armenia's government has stated on numerous occasions that relations with Turkey should not be influenced by the Karabakh conflict (Kocharyan 2003). Due to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict Turkey endorsed religious and cultural kin Azerbaijan in the early 1990s by closing its borders with Armenia. The border issue is one of the dividing lines between the diasporan and Armenian positions: while the hard-line diasporans demand the annexation of the Eastern Anatolia (Western Armenia) to present day Armenia, the Armenian government recognises the current territory of Armenia established by the Treaty of Kars in 1923. Thus, using its economic influence on the Armenia, the Diaspora has attempted to block any reconciliation with Turkey, unless the latter recognises the genocide and returns the land.

Nevertheless, specific societal and international events underlined the urgency of the rapprochement. The assassination of the ethnic-Armenian intellectual Hrant Dink by a Turkish nationalist (BBC 2007a) and tens of thousands of Turks marching throughout Turkey in protest (BBC 2007b) stressed the potential of establishing societal links. The 2008 armed conflict between Russia and Georgia emphasized the volatility of security in the South Caucasus. The conflict also drew closer attention from the international actors to the reconciliation of Armenia and Turkey, to avoid possible escalation of conflicts that may *inter alia* endanger energy diversification plans of the EU. In addition, it temporarily disrupted supplies of gas to Armenia from Georgia, with the closed Russia-Georgia border, making already grave situation with the closed Turkish- Azerbaijani-Armenian borders even worse. Closed borders with Turkey have also been economically disadvantageous for Armenia, which has to import goods through the neighbouring Georgia. On the other hand, it has boosted the position of Iran in the region. Despite disagreements over security strategies influenced by the events of 11 September 2001, Armenia has maintained good economic and political relations with Iran throughout its recent statehood. The new gas pipeline is supposed to deepen the economic cooperation even more. Thus, given the security and energy issues, and Iran's increasing economic ambitions over the region, the improvement of relations between Armenia and Turkey should be on EU and US agenda for the South Caucasus.

The thaw came into Armenian-Turkish relations following the acceptance of the Turkish president Abdullah Gül of the invitation by the Armenian president Serzh Sargsyan to attend the Armenia-Turkey FIFA World Cup qualifier match in Yerevan (BBC 2008). The steps to rapprochement dubbed "football diplomacy" helped the governments of two countries in developing a roadmap for normalisation of relations. In April 2009 it was announced that diplomatic talks held in Switzerland since 2007 "had achieved tangible progress and mutual

understanding,” and “a road map has been identified” (Tavernise and Arsu 2009). The progress was “applauded” by the USA and “underscored Administration’s firm support for both Armenia and Turkey” (Biden 2009). The USA, France and Russia sponsored “Protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations” and the “Protocol on the development of bilateral relations” signed in Zurich on 10 October, 2009. The protocols “witnessed stronger-than-expected demonstrations in the Diaspora and milder-than-expected resistance in Armenia” (PFA 2010: 19).

On the other hand Azerbaijan expressed its serious concerns over the protocols that did not include the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a precondition and feared for its energy relations with Turkey, despite the latter’s assurance that nothing would change (Today’s Zaman 2009a, 2009c). The international reaction, however, was positive. Then EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn and then External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner issued a joint statement welcoming “the progress in the normalization of relations between Turkey and Armenia” (Dombey et al 2009). The reaction from the US followed the same congratulatory character (Biden 2009; Today’s Zaman 2009b). The international statements went in line with Foreign Minister Nalbandian’s (2009) statement that Armenia’s “goal is to contribute to regional peace,” and “Diasporas who are not in favour of improving relations, should be ignored”.

Yet, despite the political and economic advantages for both countries, the ratification of the signed protocols was suspended. Signing the protocols included opening of the borders and establishing diplomatic relations without any preconditions. However, under the pressure from Azerbaijan (ArmeniaNow 2010) the Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, reiterated that the ratification of the protocols would depend upon the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In addition, he accused Armenia of setting unachievable

preconditions with the Constitutional Court's ruling that the protocols cannot influence the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict or prevent Armenia from seeking recognition of the genocide (Avetisian 2010). On the other hand, Armenia, still resisting the pressure from the Diaspora, decided to officially suspend the ratification without waiting for the first move from Turkey (Sargsyan 2010). President Sargsyan threatened to formally annul the protocols if Turkey continued stressing the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh issue (Danielyan 2011a). Though sponsored by an EU-member France and the USA, neither of the international actors has initiated any tangible steps to resolve the stalemate. In addition, while the Diaspora's insistence on the recognition of the genocide did not affect the determination of the Armenian authorities to sign the protocols, a potential concession in the Nagorno Karabakh issue did.

Both the Armenian Diaspora and the lack of diplomatic relations with Turkey have influenced the economy of Armenia. However, while there has been a substantial financial inflow in the form of donations and cash remittances and to a lesser extent investments from the Diaspora, there has been no financial or trade activity through the closed Turkish border. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict, along with the blockade, the inflation, the hasty privatisation shock therapy reforms, led to mass unemployment and incapacitating of the industry in the 1990s. However, Armenia managed to progress in the development of market economy and apply the economic reforms promoted by major financial institutions (Simão and Freire 2007). Dubbed as the "Caucasian Tiger" (Mirta et al 2007), Armenia registered high growth rates since the mid-1990s and double-digit growth rate for the first half of the 21st century. Such consistency in growth has been credited to the persistence in market-oriented reforms, "assisted by large external inflows or grants on soft terms" (Mirta et al 2007: xiii). As a result, the overall poverty fell from over half to one-third of the population with extreme poverty falling from over one-quarter to six per cent of the population in the period of 1998-2004.

However, though the growth has reduced poverty, it has not had the same positive influence on unemployment due to “business climate that has discouraged the flexible use of labour” (Mirta et al 2006: xiv).

The proponents of modernisation and liberal theory would greet such rapid economic growth with enthusiasm as it supposedly would lead to democratization (Przeworski and Limongi 1997). However, seemingly parsimonious relationship between economic development and democratization has been established on large-case studies without a considerable attention to single domestic cases, which would allow deciphering all nuances of this correlation or even causality (Colaresi and Thompson 2003). Thus, the arguments that democratization and economic development are not resistant to the international environment and other domestic realities (Rasler and Thompson 1989; Thompson 1996) seem to account for Armenia’s good economic but poor democratic performance. In addition, such factors as “external threat conditions and the trade interdependence of a country” (Colaresi and Thompson 2003: 397) may hinder country’s democratization despite economic growth. The analysis presented in this chapter partly underlines the flawed conclusions of modernisation theory by showing different levels of Armenia’s economic development and democratic progress, at the same time briefly exploring other factors that downgrade the significance of economic growth on democratization.

Interestingly, Armenia ranks high on economic freedom, ahead of EU members Slovakia, Malta, Latvia, France, Slovenia, Poland, Portugal, Italy, and Greece (Index of Economic Freedom 2011). Nevertheless, the hasty liberalisation resulted in the “concentration of the wealth in the hands of minority, sharp social polarization and widespread corruption” (Derghoukassian 2006: 12). Armenian economy has been closely connected to “its decaying, corruption-plagued industry”, which have failed to attract Western investments, including

from its own Diaspora (Socor 2002). Subsequently, the global competitiveness of the Armenian economy has been lagging behind mainly due to corruption, tax regulations, and inefficiency of state bureaucracy (Global Competitiveness Report 2011) with anti-competitive domestic environment and government-connected individuals owning de facto monopolies. The “businessmen holding state positions have turned into oligarchs” (Nercissiantz in RFE/RL 2009a) have benefited from the oligopolistic structure of the economy. The oligarchs and wide-spread corruption were named as the main obstacles for higher level of development by the World Bank (Danielyan 2009a) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) officials (Meloyan 2009). With several industries, including natural gas import and distribution, oil import and distribution, basic foodstuffs, newspaper distribution, and civil aviation under monopolistic rule, the calls of the World Bank and the IMF are timely.

Conceding to Russian economic and political interests in the South Caucasus has fostered the blooming atmosphere of corruption and oligopoly. Similarly, low competitiveness within Armenia has not hindered the entrance of Russian state-owned companies into Armenia’s economy. However, Russian capital has entered not within free market framework but within the sale of infrastructure for “moderately priced gas” (Socor 2006b). The November 2002 debt-swap deal with Russia passed five enterprises from the ownership of the Armenian state to Russian state: “the Hrazdan thermal power plant, Armenia's largest by far; the Mars electronics and robotics plant in Yerevan, a Soviet-era flagship for both civilian and military production; and three research-and-production enterprises” (Socor 2002). It marked the “repayment” of USD 93 million debt to Russia. In August 2002, the Armenian government sold an 80 % share in the Armenian Electricity Network (AEN) to Midland Resources, a British offshore-registered firm. The construction of the new nuclear power plant (NPP) instead of the outdated and largely criticised Metsamor NPP (ARKA 2008) has also

involved Russian participation, thus moving roughly 80 % of the Armenian energy sector under Russian control (Grigoryan 2008).

With the disagreements on a theoretical level over the relationship between corruption and democracy (Rock 2007), on the empirical level corruption is viewed as one of the major obstacles to development and democracy. Similarly, the UNDP mission in Armenia considers corruption as “a serious challenge to [Armenia’s] development” (Vidal 2006), and is the "number one problem that obstructs all our reforms" (Grigoryan 2008). As Transparency International reports the main anti-corruption body of the Armenian government has hardly functioned since its establishment in 2004. Though some high-profile dismissals have happened on the accounts of bribery and corruption (Grigoryan 2008), the fight against corruption has been sporadic, with Armenia’s score in the Corruption Perception Index steadily decreasing since 2004. In addition, the misappropriation of international loans and the accusation of World Bank officials in alleged misuse of loans (EurasiaNet.org 2008), added to the grave situation with corruption in Armenia. The aggravation of corruption in Armenia has happened despite the signing and ratification in 2003 and 2006 respectively of Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, adoption of Government Anti-Corruption Strategy and Implementation Action Plan in 2003, joining of the Group of States Against Corruption in 2004, the establishment of the Department for the Fight Against Corruption in 2004, and the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2007. Transparency International attributes this to low level of political will in fighting corruption (Harutyunyan 2011c). Without going into the causes of corruption and other obstacles to democracy, the level of democracy in Armenia (see Table 19) correlates with the low level of resonance of the democratic principles. While rhetorically outspoken in their support for

democracy and understanding the maladies of the Armenian regime, the behaviour of the Armenian authorities and often the citizens is far from being called democratic.

Despite close relations with Russia and support to its regime, the virtual commitment to democracy in Armenia is beyond doubt because the incoming and outgoing authorities have seized every opportunity of proclaiming their devotion to democracy, respect for human rights, and free and fair elections (Danielyan and Kalantarian 2006). In President Sargsyan's words: "democracy is an absolute value and in this respect we highly assess it in our country" (2011). The long-awaited membership of the CoE was met by the former president with exuberant statements abound with commitments to fulfil the requirements for democracy. By its accession to the CoE, Armenia "confirmed the commitment of the entire region to the common values of democracy and human rights" (Kocharyan 2001). Unwilling to lag behind their Central European counterparts, state officials of Armenia declared not only adherence to democracy but also integration into Europe or even reestablishment "in the family of the European nations" (Kocharyan 2001) as their top priority. Demonstrating high level of identification with Europe or at least paying lip-service, the former and long-serving Minister of Foreign Affairs Vartan Oskanian (2009) found "no alternatives to EU integration" also praising the EU for the opportunity given to the South Caucasus States to once act in unison without being occupied by an external power. Though not as pompous as other ENP countries in their determination to join the EU, Armenian officials at least rhetorically identify with EU norms, and this aspiration is supported by mostly favourable views of the Armenian population (see [Table 18](#)).

The positive outlook of the international institutions among the respondents of the IRI surveys ([Tables 18](#) and [19](#)), underlines relatively high identification of the Armenian population with the institutions and actors promoting democracy. The relations both with the

EU and the US are viewed as good by the majority of the respondents. However, the EU leads with over 80 % of positive answers in comparison of 60 % in support of the US. While two-decade-long US assistance has helped to gain Armenian's affection, the constant exploitation of the genocide issue during US elections without its further recognition, has been likely to lower the support for the US. The EU also leads the confidence list of the Armenians, with the CIS on the second position. The high position of the less active CIS is explained by the dominant position of Russia in the organisation and highly favourable views of Russia in Armenia ([Table 17](#)). The US associated NATO scores worse than the EU on the confidence chart, which may be associated with the former's military nature and Russia's strong opposition to NATO. On the contrary, joining the EU seems to be not only a high rhetorical commitment of the Armenian authorities but also a straightforward aspiration of the Armenian population as over 80 % of the respondents view EU membership as favourable. In comparison, only 40 % of the respondents view NATO membership as favourable.

Table 18. The EU from the Armenian population's perspective

	Relations with the EU are...	As an ally	Joining EU?	Confidence in...
2006	Good 85%	Partner 44%	Definitely yes 38%	EU 87%
			Probably yes 42%	CIS 83%
	Bad 7%	Threat 3%	Probably no 9%	UN 78%
			Definitely no 3%	OSCE 63%
			Don't know 8%	NATO 51%
Neither good nor bad 5%				
2007	Good 80%	Partner 29%	Definitely yes 37%	EU 84%
			Probably yes 45%	UN 79%
	Bad 4%	Threat 2%	Probably no 8%	CIS 77%
			Definitely no 1%	OSCE 64%
			Don't know 9%	NATO 52%
Neither good nor bad 10%				
Don't know 5%				
2008	Good 84%	Partner 29%	Definitely yes 30%	EU 83%
			Probably yes 51%	CIS 83%
	Bad 7%	Threat 6%	Probably no 9%	UN 80%
			Definitely no 2%	OSCE 74%
			Don't know 8%	NATO 57%
Neither good nor bad 6%				
Don't know 3%				

Source: IRI/Gallup Voter Study 2006-2008

Table 19. The US from the Armenian population's perspective

	Relations with the USA are	As an ally	Joining NATO?
2006	Good 66%	Partner 34%	Definitely yes 10%
			Probably yes 30%
	Bad 21%	Threat 19%	Probably no 28%
			Definitely no 17%
Neither good nor bad 9%		Don't know 14%	
2007	Good 69%	Partner 14%	Definitely yes 12%
			Probably yes 30%
	Bad 9%	Threat 8%	Probably no 32%
			Definitely no 11%
Neither good nor bad 19%		Don't know 15%	
2008	Good 68%	Partner 19%	Definitely yes 14%
			Probably yes 32%
	Bad 15%	Threat 10%	Probably no 28%
			Definitely no 13%
Neither good nor bad 15%		Don't know 13%	
Don't know 2%			

Source: IRI/Gallup Voter Study 2006-2008

In addition, a series of surveys of opinion leaders and general public funded by the EU in 2008-2010 demonstrate a strong inclination of Armenian population towards the EU. The surveys have found that “most Armenians feel their country has good relations with the EU, and that the EU shares the same values that they hold dear”. Considering the EU as “strong but not predatory, like a bear ... [because it is] soft, big, powerful, but not aggressive”, 98 % of opinion leaders give a positive assessment of Armenia’s relations with the EU, with 86 % of opinion leaders and 84 % of general public respondents saying that the EU can contribute to bringing peace and stability not only to Armenia but also to the whole region. The respondents also want to see greater EU involvement in economic development, security, defence, democracy, and trade. However, the fourth top answer to a spontaneous projective association for the EU was “slow”, as if indicating often inefficient responses of the EU to regional matters. In addition, given the waning public enthusiasm on the EU’s involvement while comparing survey results of December 2009 and November 2010, should be an additional impetus for the EU to develop well-grounded and proactive policies likely to be supported by the population, which has still retained its highly positive image of it.

The dissatisfaction with the democratic progress of the 68 % of the Armenian respondents (IRI 2006 surveys) makes democracy promotion projects timely and promising in prompting a democratic change. Similarly, another survey supported by the Civic Education Project and carried out by the Yerevan State University (Markarov et al 2004) in 2004, showed that only 3.5 % of the respondents were satisfied and 29 % somewhat satisfied by the regime established after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In addition, the issue of increasing democracy received the second highest share of responses after creating jobs, when asked what the Armenian government should do to attract the support of the population (IRI 2006 surveys). These results are echoed in the YSU 2004 survey with 71 % of the respondents

supporting democracy and another 72 % considering traditionally the main criterion of democracy, the elections, as important. Moreover, 66 % of the respondents believed that democracy possessed the ability of solving Armenia's problems.

However, an alarming 43 % of the respondents answering to what type of authority they would prefer opted for "unelected but consisting of good people" (Markarov 2004: 22). The results of these surveys show on the one hand the fascination of the Armenian population with the loosely understood concept of democracy, and on the other, the deep-rooted misunderstanding of democratic mechanisms and functions aggravated by the disappointment in the authorities. Thus, while the Armenian population highly identifies with democracy, the latter hardly resonates given the lack of democratic legacies and awareness. However, whether understanding the concept of democracy or not, Armenian population has felt unprotected by its government. Thirty-four per cent of the respondents stated that their rights were not protected, while 38 % and 25 % stated their rights to be little or satisfactorily protected (Markarov 2004). Thus, the Armenian population has correctly captured the undemocratic nature of its authorities.

The academic literature where Armenia is mentioned, usually classifies it as either a type of a competitive authoritarian regime (Levitsky and Way 2002) or as transitional government (Emerson and Noutcheva 2004) but never as liberal and even rarely as an electoral democracy. None of democracy indices, such as Freedom House, considers Armenia an electoral democracy ([Table 20](#) for the compilation of Freedom House scores). Furthermore, Freedom House rankings show not only stagnation but also deterioration of democracy in Armenia, after the initial hopeful performance. Polity IV places Armenia in between an autocracy and democracy. Like Freedom House, Polity IV also records decrease in democracy level in comparison with the early 1990s. Armenia performed the worst in 1996-1999, and

then gradually improved until 2008-2011 result—still lower than the one of the early 1990s. The 10 point decline between the periods of 2003-2007 and 2008-2011³⁰ shows the instability of democratic progress in Armenia and the inability or unwillingness to transform rhetorical commitment to democracy into a behavioural one.

Table 20. Armenia's ranking according to Freedom House

	Political Rights	Civil Liberties	Status
1991	5	5	Partly Free
1992	4	3	Partly Free
1993	3	4	Partly Free
1994	3	4	Partly Free
1995	4	4	Partly Free
1996	5	4	Partly Free
1997	5	4	Partly Free
1998	4	4	Partly Free
1999	4	4	Partly Free
2000	4	4	Partly Free
2001	4	4	Partly Free
2002	4	4	Partly Free
2003	4	4	Partly Free
2004	4	4	Partly Free
2005	5	4	Partly Free
2006	5	4	Partly Free
2007	5	4	Partly Free
2008	6	4	Partly Free
2009	6	4	Partly Free
2010	6	4	Partly Free
2011	6	4	Partly Free

Source: Freedom House

4.4 Conclusion

Armenia’s constitutional break-up from the Soviet Union, high levels of literacy and education of its population, ethnically homogenous society, subsequent rapid economic growth, and readiness to integrate into democratic structures seemed to be the required requisites for successful democratization. However, two decades after its independence from

³⁰ See http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/Maps_2003_2007_2011_FINAL.pdf

the Soviet Union, Armenia is still a democratic straggler. While more in-depth research of Armenia's elections, party politics and media development will reveal the nuances of its regime, it is clear that since the break-up of the Soviet Union Armenia has transformed into a competitive authoritarian regime. Formally existing democratic institutions are "viewed as primary means of gaining power", however, "incumbents' abuse of the state" makes competition "real but unfair" (Levitsky and Way 2010: 5).

This chapter focused on the overview of the regime in Armenia that ruled since the early 1990s and analysed several of the independent variables ([Table 21](#)). Besides focusing on the variables, this chapter also demonstrated that due to indifference and utilitarian approach of the Armenian government, often-mentioned Diaspora does not influence Armenian politics. Despite the Diaspora's protests, the rapprochement protocols had been signed with Turkey, with suspension announced only after Turkey's insistence on the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Both authorities and the population, however, highly identify with democracy and democracy promoters, especially the EU. Nevertheless, it seems the population has not always been aware of the principles or rights that accompany democracy, making governmental manipulation less complicated. On the other hand, strong support and confidence in EU institutions has the potential to overcome the confusion over the concept of democracy and the apathy towards democratic institutions. The receptiveness of the population to democratic ideas should be further supported by democracy promoters, however without abandoning the efforts of democracy promotion through state and political society. Given the geopolitical situation of Armenia (or any other country under consideration), democracy promoters must primarily address the needs of the target levels and country overall.

Table 21. Domestic conditions of democracy promotion and democratization.

	Identification	Resonance	Issue needing involvement	Democracy blocker
1995-1996	positive	moderate	Karabakh (economic development)	low (present with local support)
1998	positive	moderate	Karabakh (economic development)	low (present with local support)
2003	positive	moderate	Karabakh (economic development to lesser extent)	low (present with local support)
2007-2008	positive	moderate	Karabakh (economic development to lesser extent)	low (present with local support)

Source: Author's own compilation.

The persistence of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and its negative influence on Armenian politics and economy provide a fertile ground for democracy promoters. Low effectiveness of international mediation in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict has provided the authorities with basis to justify their undemocratic behaviour by security concerns. As it is argued here Nagorno Karabakh conflict is also one of the main sources of other maladies in Armenian politics such as halted rapprochement with Turkey and economic and energy issues due to closed borders. In addition, Russia's presence is boosted by the Nagorno Karabakh and other ethnic conflicts in the South Caucasus. Its position on conflicts has largely depended upon the state of domestic affairs in Russia and its foreign policy interests. While quickly recognizing the independence of Georgian breakaway regions in 2008, Russia during Putin's presidency has not showed much interest in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Willing to restore its image after 2008 armed conflict with Georgia, President Medvedev

actively engaged in the organisation of trilateral meetings, which however seem to guarantee quantity but not quality. However, the status quo of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict serves Russian interests, as it keeps Armenia and Azerbaijan's options rather limited in terms of closer association with other international actors. Thus, the democracy blocker qualities of Russia are beyond doubt. Consequently, in the case of Armenia, democracy promoters should be increasingly involved in the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will lead to alleviated security and economic problems and will move Armenia away from the authoritarian grip of Russia, increasing the influence of democracy promoters. In addition, conflict resolution will settle other regional disputes and allow multilateral regional programs, which are impossible due to conflicts. This is, however, possible if the promoters consistently follow-up on their threats and promises without competing with each other but working in the fields of their comparative advantages and efficiently grasping the opportunities to act.

Chapter 5. The EU and the USA: Confused Actions and Great Ambitions

During the two decades of its independence from the Soviet Union, Armenia has developed into a competitive authoritarian regime, which highly identifies with democracy promoters but at the same time has been forced to support Russia's democracy-blocking policies. In addition, the continuance of the Nagorno Karabakh problem has hindered its economic development and democratic transformation and has needed more active involvement of democracy promoters. While the previous chapter focused on the domestic context of democratization, this chapter analyses the international context. This chapter assesses the legitimacy and credibility of the EU and the USA in promoting democracy and their actual and potential involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The chapter examines the correlation between a specific decision-making process and its outcome to show that a complex and incoherent decision-making-process may decrease the efficiency and willingness of a democracy promoter to carry through its policies. Preferring to channel their democracy promotion activities through different targets, both the EU and the USA have chosen similar strategies, which suffer from similar shortcomings.

This chapter focuses on the independent variables of [credibility](#), [legitimacy](#), and [involvement](#). An overall assessment of credibility within democracy promotion policies and instruments is developed in this chapter, while the credibility of each promoter within target-sectors is evaluated in more detail in the next chapters. One of the international conditions, legitimacy, is inherently connected with democracy promoter and though playing an important role in the interaction with the target, it mainly derives from the internal political situation of a promoter. To evaluate the legitimacy of each promoter in their democracy promotion activities, the commitment to democracy and related internal developments are

assessed. The chapter argues that both the EU and the US have been legitimate in their democracy promotion policies targeting areas that enjoy high democratic stance in their domestic milieu. However their legitimacy has been repeatedly undermined by their often laissez-faire approach to their own credibility.

To show whether positive legitimacy of the EU and the USA in democracy promotion spreads over other areas, the variable of [involvement](#) in national issues is analysed by the examination of the EU and the USA's actions in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Lenient and inconsistent interest in national and regional issues and often tiptoeing policies towards a democracy blocker is likely to leave democracy promotion policies without success. While showing varying degree of involvement in issues other than democracy promotion, neither EU nor US strategies result in long-awaited resolutions. In addition, to assess their capacity and willingness of formulating policies vis-à-vis another important regional actor and general feasibility of exporting democracy, the variable of [democracy blocker](#) is brought back in by the analysis of relations of the EU and the USA with Russia.

5.1 The European Union: the Confused Missionary

The abundance of the terms describing the European Union (EU) and trying to capture its nature points to the disagreement not only in the academic circles but also to the current inability of the EU to “speak with one voice”. Despite the adoption of a common foreign policy, individual member states do not yet act unanimously on foreign policy issues, the Iraq war, Palestinian UN bid, and the Eurozone crisis being among the examples. The descriptions of the EU vary from the sympathetic “normative power” (Manners 2002) and “quiet

superpower” (Moravcsik 2007) to the fashionable “metrosexual power”³¹ (Khanna 2004) and the rather negative “irrelevant” and “neo-colonialist” entity (Kagan 2003; Crook 2007). The negative descriptions usually reach their peak when dealing with EU foreign policy because European governments seem to be “entirely preoccupied with their internal, intra-European machinations” (Crook 2007) and are reluctant to cooperate, leaving the EU’s foreign policy inconsistent even in times of important international developments like the Georgia-Russia crisis of 2008 and earlier crises in Albania, Kosovo, Rwanda, and most recently the events in MENA. Thus, scholars mention the non-cooperation of member-states as the biggest obstacle towards the effective and coherent EU foreign policy (Hoffmann 2000; Smith 2008). The EU’s foreign policy consists of the least arguable options for actions, ones to which even the most reluctant member-state could, theoretically, agree (Smith 2008). This disagreement over interests and preferences and the constant search for consensus blocks the creation of a supranational mechanism of foreign policy-making, as does the member-states’ unwillingness to pool their sovereignty or alter their preferences so they can stay in full control of their foreign policies (Gordon 1997).

Disagreements between member states and the notoriously low actorness of the EU in pursuing its policies have prompted some analysts to claim that the EU and its member states could become an obstacle to the development of the multilateral order (Emerson et al 2011). The multitude of voices within its decision-making process results in its indecisive role in the international arena and the image of the EU as an important donor but not as an important international player. The failure to present a unified EU position at the December 2009 climate change summit in Copenhagen, the disintegrated responses to the financial crisis, the failure to guarantee backing from the developing countries to its attempt of getting enhanced

³¹ By comparing the EU to a metrosexual man based on the example of football player David Beckham, the author argues that the EU has become more effective in spreading its message than the US because, unlike the latter, it uses both its “hard power and its sensitive side” (p. 66) of a norm generator and promoter.

participation rights at the September 2010 UN General Assembly, and the confused reaction to the early 2011 events in North Africa have underlined the confusion within the EU and have undermined its international actorness. However, despite internal disagreements and inconsistency, the EU has been an attractive club of elite states and an important and major donor for developing countries. The number of countries striving for EU membership has not dropped but instead increased, as the attractiveness of its financial and political perks outweighs its internal discrepancies. However, even if these discrepancies may not negatively affect the magnetism of the EU, it may substantially affect its credibility and its ability to be taken seriously by its partners.

5.1.1 Foreign Policy Formation: Still no one to Answer for Europe?

The foreign policy of the EU has been long characterised by Henry Kissinger's complaint in the 1970s of having no phone number for Europe. Despite regulatory and substantial changes in decision-making and representation of EU foreign policy, it still opts for vague propositions and creates non-coordinative framework for its institutions (Babayan 2010b). In the case of the EU, foreign policy usually entails "the capacity to make and implement policies abroad which promote the domestic values, interests and policies of the actor in question" (Smith 2002: 7), and to manage relations with other international actors (Smith 2008). In addition, the EU pursues a "missionary foreign policy" (Babayan and Braghiroli 2011), which endeavours not only to safeguard and promote its interests but also to alter the political and economic environments of other countries. The creation of its own foreign and security policy was an answer to the regional conflicts in Europe and a means to combat terrorism, which convinced European leaders that the EU should have institutionalised diplomatic and intervention instruments. Globalisation and the increasing interdependence of member-states have also motivated the EU to create a foreign policy enabling it to act as a unified actor. Understanding

that in an interdependent world where there are more opportunities for the EU to act autonomously, multilateral action is more effective and sometimes even desirable (Smith 2008). In addition, the economic success of the EU has pressed it to “externalise” (Ginsberg 1999: 437) its economic power and to exercise political influence beyond its borders, especially in countries aiming to have closer economic or political cooperation with the EU. From the perspective of member-states’ internal affairs, a unified EU foreign policy can afford greater leverage to the national interests of a member-state if the same interest is also pursued by other member-states, or it can serve as a “shield” (Weiler 1985: 21) when implementing domestically unpopular measures.

Though the foundations of EU foreign policy were laid as early as March 1948 with the Brussels Treaty of collective defence,³² the CFSP institutional structure was distinctively set up by the Maastricht Treaty of 1993, which also introduced the three-pillar system of the EU. The Maastricht Treaty allowed the European Council to set broad guidelines for the CFSP action for which qualified majority voting (QMV) could be used (though member-states have always insisted on consensus), while the Council of Foreign Ministers was to implement those. While the European Commission was at the same time fully involved with the possibility of initiating proposals, the European Parliament was mostly left out of the process as its decisions were communicated to the Council but were not required to be incorporated into the CFSP. The Amsterdam Treaty of 1999 allowed QMV and abstention for Council’s common strategies.³³ However, QMV was possible only for the policy implementation but not decisions.

³² Treaty of Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence.

³³ Common strategies cover areas of particular interest to the member states and are implemented through common positions and joint actions.

It also created the position of the High Representative for the CFSP who led the EU troika on external relations, which comprised him, the foreign minister of the country holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Commissioner for External Relations and the ENP. Due to rotating presidency, the composition of the troika changed every six months, thus creating inconsistency in policy cooperation. Moreover, as in the case with QMV, the institutions were important in coordinating policy, while the intergovernmental decision still dominated decision-making. The Treaty of Nice of 2001 introduced changes into the QMV voting rights making those more in line with the population size of each member and assigned voting weights to the then candidates.

These mechanisms of CFSP decision-making have aimed to promote specific foreign policy objectives outlined in the treaties. Because objectives operationalise interests (Sjostedt 1977), the objectives of the CFSP have shown the EU's determination to increase its actorness. However, the accomplishment of these objectives requires sacrifices in time, finance, and other resources (Wolfers 1965). For the first time the EU's objectives within the CFSP were defined by the Maastricht Treaty and were supposed to be achieved "by establishing systematic co-operation between Member States in the conduct of policy" (Article J1.3). The objectives were rather vague and general reflecting the strong preference of the EU to act in consensus rather than a strong unified position on a foreign policy issue:

- to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union;
- to strengthen the security of the Union and its Member States in all ways;
- to preserve peace and strengthen international security, in accordance with the principles

- of the United Nations Charter as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the
- objectives of the Paris Charter;
- to promote international co-operation; and
- to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The EU initiated further attempts through the Amsterdam and Nice treaties at specifying its objectives; however, they were still rather general and not prioritised (Smith 2008). Although the promotion of democracy or international and regional cooperation may serve for the advancement of the EU's interests, the effects, if any, of these activities are likely to occur in long run only. This may be the case because the mutuality of interests of all EU members may not be high and instead of setting specific objectives that may create further discord; the EU opts for vagueness for the sake of cooperation (Babayan 2010b).

The development and implementation of these objectives are channelled through intergovernmental decision-making and, thus, are limited to those that do not offend member states' sensitivities over certain foreign policy issues because a non-decision in case of a lack of consensus is always possible. The efforts to reach consensus are praiseworthy but can decrease the possibilities of cooperation because member-states realise that no decision can be taken without their full endorsement. In addition, the focus on more economic and neutral issues is a move by the EU to guarantee agreement by member-states and avoid internal conflict. However, these "soft" objectives and this type of approach may influence the EU's international image negatively if they do not result in tangible outcomes e.g. advancement of democracy promotion, resolution of conflicts or decrease in organised crime. This clearly

shows that the mutuality of interests among the member-states is rather low in security issues but can be rather high in economic issues. Nevertheless, the EU needs to support its economic and political aspirations with a strong stance on security and military issues at the same time not aggravating its relations with NATO.

One of the main involvements of the EU in security issues is its endeavour to facilitate conflict resolution in war-torn or conflict-ridden regions (e.g. the Balkans and the South Caucasus). However, the divergent geopolitical interests of the member-states do not always allow them to utilise EU resources to full extent, with member-states unable to agree on a joint action, as in the case of the Georgia-Russia conflict. The CFSP has always rested on reaction to emerging or frozen conflicts (like in the Balkans or the South Caucasus) rather than on proactive development of a coherent and generally applicable foreign and security policy. Without setting concrete goals, deriving from specific needs—the resolution of a specific conflict to ensure European security through proactive and consistent engagement—and delivering concrete results—actual advancement in conflict resolution—the EU is unlikely to gain the status of a global power it strives for. Instead, it is doomed to remain merely a financial donor attractive to less developed neighbours but not taken seriously by more powerful counterparts.

Though the actual impact of the Lisbon Treaty on foreign policy making and democracy promotion enforced after much debate in December 2009 falls out of the scope of this dissertation, the Treaty demonstrates the steps taken by the EU to improve its functioning. The Lisbon Treaty has aimed to overcome the institutional obstacles by eliminating the pillar system and urging the institutions to “practice mutual sincere cooperation” (Article 9). The Lisbon Treaty has also stressed the importance of “strengthening systematic cooperation between Member States in the conduct of policy” (Article 12C) to “conduct, define and

implement a common foreign and security policy, based on the development of mutual political solidarity among Member States, the identification of questions of general interest and the achievement of an ever-increasing degree of convergence of Member States' actions” (Article 10 C). The role of the Commission in foreign policy making remained practically unchanged, but its powers of representing the EU have been limited by the exclusion of CFSP matters. The status of the Parliament as a passive observer to be regularly consulted and informed have remained unchanged. The European Council and its president (now an official position as per the Lisbon Treaty) have retained the most powerful position within the CFSP to “identify the strategic interests and objectives” of the EU and to adopt CFSP decisions. Although the Treaty has introduced substantial changes to EU foreign policy making, it has rather created confusion and competition between its institutions than a coherent framework for cooperative policy making (Babayán 2010b).

On the other hand, the establishment of the European External Affairs Service (EEAS) provides the EU with a comprehensive vision for peace in the South Caucasus, including its security, political and economic dimensions (Boonstra and Melvin 2011). However, this would require closer coordination by EU delegations within the CFSP and the ENP accompanied with a critical evaluation of the EU’s contribution to the neighbourhood by the EEAS (Huff 2011). Nevertheless, the failure of the Lisbon Treaty to cure EU foreign policy ailments has prompted analysts to argue that foreign policy coherence would depend upon the “chemistry” between the main EU institutions (Grevi 2011). By converting Commission delegations into EU delegations and by bringing them all under the single roof of the EEAS, the EU has emphasised the attempt for improved coherence. On the other hand, some of the hardly distinguishable competences of the HR and specific Commissioners with certain foreign policy competences vested in the Council President have created confusion and

competition among EU institutions resulting in a hybrid representation of the EU (Babayan and Shapovalova 2011b).

Due to the inter-governmental nature of the CFSP, EU foreign policy followed the governmental politics type of decision-making, where decisions are taken as a result of a compromise. On the other hand, creating policies based on a pre-established routine, as in the case of modelling the ENP on the enlargement policy, the EU has loosely followed the organisational behaviour model. While the Lisbon Treaty has brought a number of procedural changes it has hardly resulted in any substantive ones. The institutional changes have increased the workload of the delegations, “however the transformation from a multi-headed structure to a single-headed but multi-handed one is still in the embryonic stage” (Babayan and Shapovalova 2011b: 18). The halt in foreign policy activities does not seem to be conducive for the EU’s role in Armenia in particular or the South Caucasus general, where it is often compared by local stakeholders to the USA and Russia. The most outspoken and intentioned progress in actorness is pledged by the EU in resolution of the protracted South Caucasus conflicts, in which the same USA and Russia still play more influential roles. Within policy areas of trade, democracy, and energy, the EU endeavours to connect its activities, showing the broad range of its involvement in the development of the partner country. However, given the still embryonic character of the EU’s renewed foreign policy, this approach does not yet wield tangible results (Babayan and Shapovalova 2011b).

5.1.2 The EU’s Commitment to and Its Legitimacy in Promoting Democracy: Good Intentions Need Strong Action

Despite the disagreements between member states on how much power to give the EU over foreign policy decision, neither the EU nor individual member states have spared efforts in hailing the importance of democracy. Thus, “democratization is by no means a new departure

for the EU” (Ferrero-Waldner 2006: 2) because “the best protection for our security is a world of well governed democratic states” (European Council 2003:10). Many even claim that the most important function of the EU is to serve as a democratic model (Petersen 1995: 62 in Olsen 2002: 137). The EU recognises the importance of democracy promotion by stating in the Maastricht Treaty that “Community policy in this [development co-operation] area shall contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Article 130 U, Section 2). This commitment to democracy is reiterated in the Agenda 2000 of the European Commission (EC), which states that “the Union must...promote values such as peace and security, democracy and human rights” (Commission 1997: 27). In addition, Article 8A of the Lisbon Treaty states that “the functioning of the Union shall be founded on representative democracy”. Due to lack of military power and internal political structure, when exporting its democratic model, the EU supposedly acts as a normative power trying to have an ideational impact on its partner and target countries (Manners 2002). At the same time, the EU has the highest membership criteria, which were set during the European Council meeting in Copenhagen in 1993. These criteria include requirements for candidate countries, or the countries ever endeavouring to have closer cooperation with the EU, to embody institutions that guarantee democracy, rule of law, and respect and protection of minority rights.

Though a part of the Copenhagen criteria is labelled as democratic, the EU has preferred to distance itself from such concepts as “democracy” and even more “liberty” (Magen et al 2009). The subtlety of EU democracy promotion is traced when analysing its official documents and statements, where the phrase preferred to democracy but as a rule containing the same meaning is “good governance”. Wherever democracy is mentioned, it is always followed by a group of other concepts such as human rights, stability, and rule of law

that can actually be included in the overall concept of democracy (e.g. ENP documents). Similarly, EU democracy promotion, includes a whole variety of policies that aim to address social modernisation, human equality and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Cremona 2004; Leonard 2005) in addition to the commitment of emphasizing “the importance ... of the principles of parliamentary democracy and the rule of law” (European Community 1986). The Paris Charter provides one of the clearest understandings of democracy by the EU and its members:

Democratic government is based on the will of the people, expressed regularly through free and fair elections. Democracy has as its foundation respect for the human person and the rule of law. Democracy is the best safeguard of freedom of expression, tolerance of all groups of society, and equality of opportunity for each person.... Democracy with its representative and pluralist character, entails accountability to the electorate, the obligation of public authorities to comply with the law and justice administered impartially (Paris Charter 1990: 3-5).

These conceptualisations and commitments have put the EU understanding of democracy, which includes contestation, participation, and representation with further advancement to conflict resolution and social modernisation, in between the minimalist and maximalist academic conceptualisations. In its democracy promotion, the EU aims to handle a range of issues, which, however, are more likely to address democratic consolidation rather than foster democratic transition or promote democracy on its early stages. Clearly dividing one process from the other and preparing the target level for further advancements should be one of the important objectives for the EU in these initiatives.

Nevertheless, after two decades of democracy promotion, the EU has acknowledged that there was no “ready-made recipe for political reform. While reforms take place differently from one country to another, several elements are common to building deep and sustainable democracy” (ENP Communication 2011). The establishment of deep and sustainable democracy, a new buzzterm in the EU’s vocabulary, requires a strong and continuous commitment on the part of governments and includes:

- free and fair elections;
- freedom of association, expression and assembly and a free press and media;
- the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary and right to a fair trial;
- fighting against corruption;
- security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police) and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces (ENP Communication 2011).

This conceptualisation adopted in 2011 has brought the EU closer to the concept of democracy adopted in this research and moved it away from its traditional avoidance of the word democracy.

Despite the EU’s rhetorical commitment to democracy, a “widespread feeling” has been expressed on the EU’ actual commitment to promote democracy and human rights:

Within the EU, there is an apparent absence of political will fundamentally to revise approaches to democracy support, even if the shortcomings of these policies have been apparent for some time (Youngs 2008: 7).

In addition, profound critique has been raised over the quality of democracy within the EU itself. Rejection by France and Netherlands of the European Constitutional Treaty (Bogdanor 2007), low turnout during elections, and widespread unawareness and indifference towards the EU's policies have prompted critics to speak of democratic deficit in the EU (Marquand 1979; Chryssochoou 2007). The term democratic deficit coined by Marquand (1979) has even entered the EU terminology and has referred to the domination of the EU's institutional set-up by an institution, which combines legislative and government powers (the Council of the European Union) and an institution, which lacks democratic legitimacy (the European Commission). However, others have either maintained the view that there has been no need to bother of fully democratizing the EU (Schmitter 2000) or have outright rejected the existence of such deficit (Moravcsik 2002). In addition, others have taken into consideration the arguments of both camps regarding the issues of democracy and accountability as "absolutely fundamental to the success of the European Union" (Bogdanor 2007: 5). Since the central decision-making bodies of the EU, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, result from democratic elections, the EU "is fully legitimate" (Bogdanor 2007: 5). Nevertheless, due to the complex system of decision-making and representation, the issue of accountability still triggers questions from Eurosceptics. However, these issues that bother EU scholars are not directly related to the legitimacy of the EU in promoting democracy. The states and populations of target countries rarely question democracy within the EU because of its low level of accountability to its own citizens. They are rather interested in the democratic nature of the issues that the EU supports, namely free and fair elections, multiparty system, and free media.

The EU members have always been characterised as free electoral democracies since the start of the EU's activities in Armenia.³⁴ With numerous elections observation missions commissioned by the EU and its member states, the EU has demonstrated its own belief in the legitimacy of democracy promotion. Though elections within the EU do not enjoy high turnouts, they have regularly been characterised as free and fair without widespread claims of infringements. Human and minority rights have been on the EU's agenda since the end of the Cold War and have become important criteria for membership. Though the EU has not pursued protection of minority rights as a legally binding principle, it has mentioned issues of national minorities in several legal acts and relies on the international law for more specific provisions (Smihula 2008). Human rights in the EU have enjoyed a good record of observation, with only the issue of human trafficking into Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy distorting otherwise favourable internal conditions for human rights (BBC 2007c). Favourable conditions of human rights lead to press freedom and general safety of journalists in all EU members, with only organised crime in Italy and ETA activities in Spain, having hindered fully free press according to Reporters without Borders. Freedom House characterises press freedom as free in all EU members, with only Italy being an outlier in the partly free category due to occasional government interference in editorial policies of state-run broadcast outlets. However, single cases of violations of democratic principles do not hinder the high level of legitimacy of the EU to promote democracy in Armenia, which is lagging behind according to all indicators.

5.1.3. The Strategies of EU Democracy Promotion: Piling Policies Up

In the regions where membership perspective is not applicable but domestic conditions are less conducive, the EU pursues a strategy of persuasion and example, e.g. South Caucasus,

³⁴ See Freedom House rankings for more information.

Africa, and the Middle East. The EU's policies of democracy promotion to non-candidate countries follow the usual practice of the EU on norm promotion: slight political conditionality with some economic and boosted political incentives, putting a strong emphasis on the "shared values" notion. The EU has developed numerous policies and instruments for promotion of democracy and human rights, targeting countries in different regions of the world: PHARE, TACIS, MEDA, Barcelona process, the European Instrument (formerly Initiative) for Democracy and Human Rights and others. Practically, every region of the world has been given its own policy to underline the context-tailored projects. However, all the policies have followed the same line of development and implementation and have often met the same criticisms.

The main instruments of EU democracy promotion in the CEE were the Copenhagen criteria and thousands of pages of the *acquis communautaire*. Through democracy promotion, the EU aimed to strengthen the international order by "spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law, and protecting human rights" (European Council 2003: 10). Though, these democracy promotion priorities can be addressed on all target levels mentioned above, EU democracy promotion through the enlargement policy was marked by an evident top-down approach, which preferred to tackle the state rather than society. Instead of focusing on civil society groups, elections, or political parties, the EU opted for strengthening the state capacity, through constant monitoring of the enlargement policy implementation. Thus, the whole EU accession process was characterised by the "preference of order over freedom" (Kopstein 2006: 90). The enlargement policy has become the great success of EU foreign policy in general and democracy promotion in particular. The alluring membership incentive closely tied to conditionality of any material or social benefits played the most important role in the

success of EU democracy promotion in the CEE. The EU follows the same scenario with current candidate countries. However, the lack of membership incentive and a credible conditionality in relations with other target countries is likely to negatively affect the performance of its initiatives (Kelley 2006; Schimmelfennig et al 2006; Babayan 2009).

TACIS was initiated in 1991 with the allocation of ECU 54 million as a technical assistance to the CIS to improve nuclear safety. TACIS funding for 1991-1999 was mainly “demand-driven”, as CIS ministries would send requests based “on scarcely existing information” and assistance was mainly provided as “single small-scale projects” (Frenz 2007: 6). However, in 1998 the European Commission revised TACIS to include *inter alia* closer collaboration on democratization, the rule of law, trade, border management, and trafficking. In addition, for 2000-2006 it moved to a “dialogue-driven” strategy (Frenz 2007: 6). However, the EU grouped its budget headings and activities on human rights and democratization under the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).³⁵ The EIDHR was based on macro- and micro-projects promoting justice and the rule of law, fostering the culture of human rights, promoting the democratic process, and advancing equality, tolerance and peace. Through the EIDHR, the EU contracted NGOs and international organisations and could operate even without the consent of host governments. This feature may seem advantageous in preventing unwanted interference of authorities in allocation of funds or project implementation. However, it runs the risks of retaliation from authorities in the case of exclusion and diminished ownership, through stricter control over civil society. The EIDHR (2010) in Armenia was launched in 2003 to support NGOs in Armenia through 11 selected projects:

³⁵ In 2007 this was renamed into European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

1. “Campaign Against Corruption/Friendly Legal and Social Settings in Armenia” (Centre for Counterterrorism assistance)
2. “From Equal Rights to Equal Opportunities” (Havat)
3. “Introduction of European Charter on Local Self Government in the Legislation of Armenia as the Basis of Democratization and Development of Local Government” (Communities Finance Officers Association)
4. “Armenia and Azerbaijan on the Crossroads of neither War nor Peace: How to Overcome the Stereotypes” (Association of Investigative Journalists of Armenia)
5. “Interactive Human Rights” (Youth for Achievements Association)
6. “Strengthening the Role of Media in Promoting the Rule of Law in Armenia” (Femida)
7. “Towards New Leadership: Measures Facilitating the Peaceful Conciliation of Group Interests” (International Centre for Human Development)
8. “Human Rights Radio Series” (Antenna-Assistance to Electronic Mass Media)
9. “Accountability to Community” (Information Educational Centre for Supporting the Development of Local Government)
10. “Creation of Armenian Economic Court Web Information Centre” (Armenian Public Relations Association)
11. “Human Rights and Knowledge to Action” (Helsinki Committee of Armenia).

Encouraged by the enlargement success, the EU created the ENP, which, however, does not offer membership to target countries. The ENP greatly differs from other geographically limited EU policies because it includes countries from Africa, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The ENP, a response to enlargement (European Commission 2004) and first outlined in the Commission Communication on Wider Europe, calls for bridging the dividing lines between EU member states and their neighbours by promotion of democracy, stability, and security. In its Strategy Paper on the ENP published in May 2004, the EU

outlines the strategies of cooperation with its target countries (European Commission 2004). Further in December 2006 and December 2007 the EU proposed strategies of strengthening the ENP (European Commission 2006a; European Commission 2007).

A policy without a “uniform *acquis*” (Kelley 2006: 36), the ENP, offers its partners a “privileged partnership” and “sharing everything with the Union but institutions” (Prodi 2002), based on “mutual commitment to common values principally within the fields of the rule of law, good governance, the respect for human rights, including minority rights, the promotion of good neighbourly relations, and the principles of market economy and sustainable development” (Commission 2004: 3). The neighbouring countries can reach the “privileged partnership” depending upon the “extent to which these values [respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights] are effectively shared” (Commission 2004: 3). Taking into consideration the “joint ownership” (Commission 2004: 8) of the action plans, it can be assumed that on the initial level the determination of the extent of adherence to shared values will be carried out based on the country’s declarations and country reports.

The EU strategies of democracy promotion usually follow the path of the reinforcement by reward with a positive political conditionality (Schimmelfennig et al 2006; Schimmelfennig and Scholtz 2008). The political conditionality is also present in the ENP on the stage of acceptance into the policy. In its ENP Strategy Paper in regard to the countries, not yet worthy to be included in the initial stages of the ENP—the South Caucasus countries—the Commission has stated “the EU should consider the possibility of developing Action Plans ... in the future on the basis of their individual merits. With this in view, the Commission will report to the Council on progress made by each country with respect to the strengthening of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights” (Commission 2004:

10). However, the EU has not always followed its own rules since it included the South Caucasus countries in the ENP largely due to Georgia's Rose Revolution (Bardakçi 2010; Kurowska 2009) and despite lack of democratic progress in other two states of Armenia and Azerbaijan (Babayan and Shapovalova 2011a).

On January 1, 2007, the EU reformed its external funding structure and replaced MEDA, TACIS, and other programs with the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), which financially assists the implementation of the ENP in target countries. For the budgetary period of 2007-2013 EUR 12 billion is available to support the reforms in the countries according to the priorities mentioned in their Action Plans. For this assistance the EU introduces conditionality stating "where a partner country fails to observe the principles referred to in Article 1 [once again confirming the shared values principle], the Council, acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, may take appropriate steps in respect of any Community assistance granted to the partner country under this Regulation" (European Parliament and the Council 2006: Article 28:1).

However, the conditionality and the threat of exclusion are partial since the Parliament and the Council further clarify that "Community assistance shall primarily be used to support non-state actors for measures aimed at promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms and supporting the democratization process in partner countries" (European Parliament and the Council 2006: Article 28:2). Also Youngs (2009) finds that at least in Mediterranean and East Asia, the EU has started implementing a bottom-up approach, increasing the budget for civil society support, mainly through human rights NGOs. However, even in the case of non-compliance, the EU does not completely withdraw the financial assistance but simply changes the channel from the state to civil society. The effectiveness of such strategy is doubtful because most of the ENP countries are autocracies with weak civil societies and the

transnational channel of international socialization has “proved ineffective” (Schimmelfennig et al 2006: 9). In addition, a question rises of how consistent and impartial the EU conditionality will be provided that it does not always adhere to its own criteria.

To make the conditionality work the ENP has to offer certain incentives to encourage the compliance of countries with the promoted rules and norms, which otherwise either do not officially exist or are violated. Even if the benefits of the ENP “may be substantial” there has been doubts “whether governments agree to submit to a system of rules in which they have little decision-making power” (Kelley 2006: 37). To increase the attractiveness of the ENP, the Commission elaborates the following incentives:

- a perspective of moving beyond co-operation to a significant degree of integration, including a stake in the EU’s internal market and the opportunity to participate progressively in key aspects of EU policies and programs;
- an upgrade in scope and intensity of political co-operation;
- opening of economies, reduction of trade barriers;
- increased financial support;
- participation in Community programs promoting cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links;
- support for legislative approximation to meet EU norms and standards;
- deepening trade and economic relations (Kelley 2006: 37).

At the same time trying to encourage compliance, the EU has developed the Governance Facility, which allocates EUR 50 million annually for countries making progress (Ukraine and Morocco were the first to receive this support for reinforcement). Though these

might seem as considerable incentives for compliance, the membership incentive is still absent and each of the mentioned incentives should be assessed in regard to individual countries and their domestic conditions.

However, some of the EU member states deemed the ENP insufficient, especially in light of the existing Northern Dimension covering Baltic States and Russia, and the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) covering 16 Mediterranean partner countries from MENA and the Balkans.³⁶ In addition, to these policies, Poland and Sweden put forward the initiative to strengthen the EU's policy towards the Eastern Neighbours, which seemed to be a timely undertaking given the outbreak of the conflict between Georgia and Russia (Shapovalova 2009). The initiative met a positive response from other member states, including France, which was looking for support for its own UfM initiative. The main argument of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) supporters was the inclusion of partner countries' interests unlike in the cases of previous policies (Runner 2008). The EaP covers ENP partners Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. With the budget of EUR 600 million through the ENPI, the EaP offers political association and economic integration through association agreements (AA), Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA) and visa liberalisation. However, just as the ENP, the EaP is considered another weak instrument of the EU because it does not offer membership perspective (Boonstra and Shapovalova 2010) and yet again fails to reward the frontrunners and punish the laggards (Babayan 2011).

Introduced and perceived by some as an upgrade (Danielyan 2010) to the ENP and conditioned on the performance of partner countries, the EaP, however included all South Caucasus countries, despite their poor democratic performance. Some local observers have

³⁶ The UfM was created in July 2008 as a re-launched Barcelona process, however the 2009 and 2010 summits were not held due to the stalemate of the Arab-Israeli peace process. In addition, the Arab revolutions seem to add "the last nail in the UM coffin" (Torreblanca and Fanes 2011).

noted that the EaP will have a positive effect “on democratic changes in Armenia only in one case: if the European structures put forward very serious demands before our authorities” (Danielyan 2010). Association Agreements are supposed to be signed only with functioning democracies. Despite Armenia’s deteriorating democratic performance, the negotiations for an EU-Armenia Association Agreement began in July 2010 with subsequent “good progress” (Avetisian 2011a). In order to get Armenia closer to qualification for the AA and free-trade agreements, the EU has provided an additional EUR 33 million (Shoghikian 2009). With visa liberalisation talks started in September 2011, the EU seems to bid on the strategy of additional support prior to compliance to incentivise democratic performance in 2012 elections. The binding nature of the AA may increase the likelihood of successful implementation. However, the EU’s inconsistency regarding political conditions decreases its credibility and future bargaining power. Thus, due to the EU’s flawed strategies, the added value of the EaP as a policy that can address the needs of partner countries and promote the goals of the EU is dubious. The attractive terms of notions of “free trade” and “visa liberalisation” lack substance (Bonstra and Shapovalova 2010) and specific terms and conditions that provide an effective framework for implementation.

Despite its rhetoric and emphasis on the importance of civil society for democracy, the EU has implemented its democracy promotion through intergovernmental channels. While pursuing an exclusive approach with EU candidates, with other countries it has pursued an intermediary approach. Despite conditioning inclusion into a new policy by democratic progress, the EU has included non-complying countries shortly after afterwards. It is unlikely that current conditionality or incentives approach towards non-candidates changes. Considering assistance to opposition parties and NGOs as “an interference into a country’s internal affairs” (Risse 2009: 251), the EU follows a statist and top-down approach to

democracy promotion, with uncertain intentions and inefficient learning techniques. In its democracy promotion activities within the EaP framework, the EU has channelled its funding through civil society only in Belarus, where the authorities refuse to cooperate.

However, there is a chance that the EU may change or even better combine its targets. When answering to the question on the interaction with academia that calls for projects addressing both state institutions and civil society for better results, the Democracy and Human Rights project manager in Armenia mentioned that the EU delegation planned such a project and it might be included in the upcoming Action Program. However, she proceeded with clarifying that “it is not about applying theory into practice, it is rather we got more mature and learned on our own mistakes” (Papian 2010). In its May 2011 ENP Communication (2011), the EU has proposed the concept of “partnership with societies”, while the Commission and the EEAS have proposed the establishment of a Civil Society Facility and the European Endowment for Democracy. Nevertheless, the specific actions and strategies of the EU in this sector are still to be seen since those are still limited to regular statements of establishing partnerships and promoting human rights dialogues.

5.1.4 The EU’s Involvement in Armenia while Battling for Allegiance with Russia

Unlike the other post-Soviet states grouped in a region—the Baltic States—the South Caucasus republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia have never been in the spotlight of the EU’s attention. However, the South Caucasus shares borders with important international actors such as Russia and Iran and NATO member and EU candidate Turkey and hosts large reserves of oil on the territory of Azerbaijan. Hence, the EU “has a strong interest in the stability and development of the South Caucasus” (European Commission 2004). After the finalisation of the 2004 enlargement, the EU has paid more attention to Armenia and South Caucasus with regular financial injections for various reforms (Markarian and Stamboltsian

2004). The ENP Strategy Paper identifies the South Caucasus as a region that should receive “stronger and more active interest” than it does (Commission 2004: 10). However, at the same time, due to political and economic factors within the country, Armenia has had to be patient despite distinctive hopes for a future in the EU (Lobjakas 2004a). The EU’s interest also stems from three frozen, or in the EU’s words protracted, conflicts in Nagorno Karabakh,³⁷ Abkhazia, and South Ossetia, as the proximity of a conflicting region is not to the advantage of the EU. In addition, Azerbaijan’s energy resources make the South Caucasus an important partner for the EU in its attempts to reduce its energy dependence upon Russia.

The interconnectedness of South Caucasus politics performed by politically and economically rather different countries has led the EU to treat the region with “simplistic uniformity” (Babayan 2011: 4). The EU’s habit of treating countries in regional blocks (Smith 2008) despite outstanding regional disputes has led to a simultaneous initiation of relations with the South Caucasus countries, with Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) being signed and enforced in the same year with all three countries. The block-treatment in some cases resulted in negative outcomes, as in the case of delays of the ENP Action Plans talks due to the dispute between Azerbaijan and Cyprus³⁸, and positive, like the inclusion of all three countries in the ENP based on Georgia’s promising democratic turn of 2003, and the inclusion into the EaP based on Azerbaijan’s important role in energy diversification plans (Babayan and Shapovalova 2011a). This approach, however, is not characteristic of the EU only, but is also largely adopted by other organisations calling for similar reforms or advancement of democracy not in particular countries but the whole region (Zakarian 2003a).

³⁷ The Nagorno Karabakh conflict and its importance to Armenia’s democratization have been discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

³⁸ According to the former EU Special Representative Heikki Talvitie, the talks with all three South Caucasus countries on ENP Joint Action plans were delayed due to the anger of the government of Cyprus over Azerbaijan’s decision to establish direct contacts with the Turkish-occupied north of the island (in Saghalian 2005a).

However, the motives and consequences of this issue are not analysed in depth here but rather its importance is underlined when referring to EU policy formation.

Analysts argue that EU-Armenia relations have been shaped through three phases: the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia's accession to various international organisations, and its inclusion into the ENP (Minasyan 2005). The inclusion into the EaP can be added as the fourth phase. The EU initiated relations with the region later than some EU Member States, OSCE and the Council of Europe, which entered the region in 1992. The relations with the EU were channelled through the PCAs that were signed in 1996 and entered into force in 1999 in all three countries and assistance funds were allocated through TACIS and the EIDHR. However, in 2001 the EU expressed its willingness for closer cooperation with the South Caucasus, one of the objectives of such cooperation being resolution and prevention of conflicts. The South Caucasus governments were ready to welcome this initiative and in 2003 the European Council appointed Heikki Talvitie as the first EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the South Caucasus. Taking into consideration strongly expressed EU aspirations of all three states, the EU possesses the required legitimacy in acting as an external mediating actor. The region became closer to the EU economically because since 2004 the EU has been its primary trade partner (though for the EU the trade with the South Caucasus is only 0.5 % of its overall figure), and geopolitically because of the Eastern enlargements of 2004 and 2007. The EU prefers to include previously weak and unstable South Caucasus states in its "ring of friends" (European Commission 2003) because now they are able to help their partners in fight against terrorism and trafficking (Council of the European Union 2003).

The appointment of a EUSR for South Caucasus (European Union 2003) was taken as another token for the EU's increasing interest in the region (Grevi 2007). The first EUSR

Heikke Talvitie was financed by Finland during his first year and was based in Helsinki during his whole mandate. The SR's mandate was to

contribute to the implementation of the EU's policy objectives, which include assisting the countries of the South Caucasus in carrying out political and economic reforms, preventing and assisting in the resolution of conflicts, promoting the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, engaging constructively with key national actors neighbouring the region, supporting intra-regional co-operation and ensuring co-ordination, consistency and effectiveness of the EU's action in the South Caucasus (European Union 2003).

In fulfilment of these tasks the EUSR has regularly met government and parliament officials, opposition forces, and civil society. Before the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the EUSR reported to the Political and Security Committee, Committee on Civilian Crisis Management, and to the Council geographic working group on Eastern Europe. Despite regular statements and visits to the region the role of the EUSR rather followed than shaped the developments in democracy related areas in the South Caucasus (Tocci 2006). In addition to the low productivity of the EUSR and despite the calls from the European Parliament for a "firm approach", the importance of the region for the EU was put under question by the decision to scrap the post of EUSR to the South Caucasus. After months of doubts over the position of the SR for the South Caucasus, former French Ambassador to Georgia Philippe Lefort was appointed EUSR for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia in late August 2011, combining positions previously held by Peter Semneby and Pierre Morel.

One of the main tasks of the EUSR has been "to prevent conflicts in the region, to assist on the resolution of conflicts, and to prepare the return of peace" (Official Journal of the EU 2003). However, despite the initial hopes referring to the EU as an "honest broker" void

of US/Russia rivalries (International Crisis Group 2006), the EU has not substantially contributed to the conflict resolution in the South Caucasus (Grevi 2007). This was not surprising due to “very limited human and financial resources with no political advisor based in the region” (Grevi 2007: 57). In 2006, Peter Semneby was appointed EUSR with his mandate taking more specific language to “contribute to the settlement of conflicts and to facilitate the implementation of such settlement” (the Council of the European Union 2006). While most of the EUSR’s attention in conflict resolution was focused on Georgia’s conflicts, more direct attention started to be paid to Nagorno Karabakh after the EUSR had asked for two political advisors to be based in Baku and Yerevan.

The importance of the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and putting an end to ongoing clashes has been yet again underlined by the former EUSR Semneby (in RFE/RL 2010a). The concerns over the possible escalation of the conflict *inter alia* stem from its potential to block the prospect of energy diversification, result in another humanitarian crisis and deteriorate the EU’s relations with Eastern Europe, Iran, and Turkey (Ghazaryan 2010). In addition, the peace is shaky “because it is ... a self-regulated ceasefire with the two parties facing each other without any separation force in between” (Semneby in RFE/RL 2010a). The EU has rhetorically committed itself to the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict due to concerns that the “peace process has stopped since 10 years” and there is an “urgency” within the EU for solution (Prodi in Lobjakas 2004b). However, the urgency has not yet translated into an effective policy that would tackle the issue. Regular encouragements to end the stalemate and progress on the conflict resolution (Danielyan 2006b) were accompanied by seldom concrete actions through the European Parliament like first blocking calls (Melkumian et al 2004) and then calling for (RFE/RL 2010a) Armenian withdrawal from Azeri lands. However the efficacy of such actions is doubtful as they either demonstrate behavioural

indifference or may be interpreted as predisposition to a solution favoured by only one of the conflicting parties. Despite the survey of 100 Members of the European Parliament claims that there has been a general consensus of having a permanent non-military EU mission at the highly volatile Armenia-Azerbaijan Line of Contact (Ghazaryan 2010; ComRes 2010), no such action has been taken.

Despite the rhetorical commitment of the ENP to facilitate cooperation in the military-security matters, country related ENP documents show more concrete actions and less vague language in the economic matters (Babayan 2012). Regardless of the nature of the cooperation issue, the ENP provides long-term cooperation framework but does not clearly specify what partner countries can expect after the ENP implementation is over. The ENP entails regular rewards if applicable, however the rewards do not vary depending upon the priority area and domestic utility of adaptation. Through regular progress and country reports, the ENP provides reliable information about its and if possible the partner states' actions. However, the feedback on changes in actions of the partner states might sometimes be absent or not actually relevant because in case of non-cooperation or non-compliance instead of addressing the issue of divergence, the EU simply opts for amending the Action Plan. In addition, while the rhetorical commitments of the EU, Armenia and Azerbaijan to the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict are high, the ENP framework is vague and often sacrifices specific actions for consensus (Babayan 2012). In their turn Armenia and Azerbaijan strive for different outcomes of the conflict: Armenia advocates for the independence of Nagorno Karabakh, while Azerbaijan insists that the breakaway region is to be within its territory and shows readiness to advance its perspective through military means.

Although the number of actors in the South Caucasus regional cooperation is not large and they are coordinated by the EU, the situation is complicated by the EU's inconsistent

policy of conditionality. Unlike other international organisations present in the region, the EU due to its economic and political status has the leverage to sanction the regional actors in case they defect from cooperation. However, in the ENP documents sanctioning is mentioned only as a change of target within the country, through which the assistance is channelled. Nevertheless, despite the participating countries either rhetorically or even sometimes by action defected from the accepted framework of cooperation, the EU has not introduced any sanctions. The EU's reaction to the continuing arms race led by Azerbaijan and joined by Armenia has taken the form of lament on "less progress than we had hoped for in their peace talks which ... are attracting growing interest from the EU" (Semneby in Avetisian 2011c) and hopes that "the Azerbaijani leadership is aware of the enormous risks and potential costs that would be associated with an attempt to resolve the conflict by military means" (Semneby in RFE/RL 2010a).

The EU's interest in this conflict resolution has so far been channelled through other organisations and initiatives. In its multilateral approach to the conflicts in the South Caucasus, the EU has been closely connected to the current international initiatives (the OSCE Minsk Group). The initial mandate of the EUSR mentioned that in the efforts to prevent conflicts, the EUSR needs to support the activities of the UN. However, it gives the priority to other organisations with less leverage rather than acting proactively. Even if conflict resolution may not be the EU's main priority in the South Caucasus, conflicts that largely dominate the economy and politics of the region cannot be ignored. In addition, the ongoing conflicts may also be used by the partner countries as justification of their non-compliance. The mere rhetorical support to the OSCE Minsk Group undermines the visibility of the EU in the region. However, delegating its own representative to the Group, instead of scattered seven member states, would increase the involvement and stabilise the position of

the EU in the region. Such an action seems timely given the creation of the EEAS and support by a number of MEPs of replacing the OSCE framework by the one of the EU (ComRes 2010). Increased involvement may also garner more EU-enthusiasts and result in increased EUisation of regional policies. However, current approach of the EU, besides having marginal if any effect on the conflict resolution in the South Caucasus, risks decreasing the leverage of the EU in the region, inducing the local actors to turn for more concrete action to Russia or the USA.

On the other hand, democracy promotion of the EU is conditioned by its relations with other regional players. Despite the alleged “transatlantic divides” (Kopstein 2006), the relations with the USA have resembled more a partnership, while relations with Russia have been more strained due to Russia’s poor democratic record and regular bullying thanks to its energy resources. The initial enthusiasm over Russia’s democratization has been followed by the disillusionment in Russian politics. Despite long-lasting democracy promotion in Russia, there has been no progress in democracy and surprisingly the regular EU-Russia consultations on human rights have coincided with the deterioration of political situation in Russia (Youngs and Shapovalova 2011). In addition, the EU role in democracy and human rights promotion is downgraded by Russian civil society actors as compared to the USA (Youngs and Shapovalova 2011). The EU policy towards Russia has been largely reactive, however it is argued that it has become more coherent and realistic (Barysch 2011). More realistic approach to Russia is based on general acceptance by member states that the EU has limited influence over Russia (Barysch 2011) leading to democratization reluctance in areas that are unwilling to cooperate even rhetorically.

Initially an accepted process of EU enlargement has started to be viewed by many in Russia as the “apple of discord” between the EU and Russia, causing their rivalry (Arbatova 2006). One of the major concerns of Russia has been the launch of the EaP. Despite reassurances from the former EU foreign policy chief Solana that the EaP had not been designed against Russia, Russia’s foreign minister Lavrov interpreted the choice given to EaP partners as “either you are with Russia, or with the European Union” (Brunnstrom and Harrison 2009). Though the “reset” in relations with the EaP advocate Poland and Russia has helped to overcome some divisions, Russia has been indirectly trying to hinder smooth implementation of the EaP. In 2010 the European Commission started negotiations on DCFTA with Ukraine, announcing that similar negotiations with Moldova would start in 2011. Russia reacted with urging both countries to join its Customs Union, which is incompatible with DCFTA. However, battle for allegiance did not result in major tensions (ECFR 2010). The EU also managed to win over Moldova, after being unusually proactive and dispatching Swedish and Polish foreign ministers to support pro-EU coalition that later formed Moldovan government. This hindered Russia’s efforts to promote a centre-left coalition (ECFR 2010).

Though EU-Russia relations have improved closer to 2011, there has been a number of tensions, including the first and second wars in Chechnya (Haukkala 2011), the conflict in Georgia in 2008 and subsequent monitoring of Russia-Georgia border (Grevi 2007), gas crisis in 2009, and often voiced disapproval of Putin’s policies. Relations with Russia have also caused disagreements between the member-states: with Italy’s former premier Silvio Berlusconi over-enthusiastically supporting Russia, Germany’s former Chancellor Schroeder more realistically assessing Russia’s place in the EU and NATO, and UK leaders as a rule taking the toughest stance. However, Russia has managed to win over many of those who

previously opposed it, the rapprochement with Poland, not even affected by Polish president's tragic death while in Russia. Varying interests and preferences of the member-states and energy issues have influenced the EU's generally soft approach to Russia resulting in an ongoing confusion whether to firmly insist on democracy or not. In addition, the EU's indecisive role in frozen conflicts has added to Russia's dominant role in its neighbourhood. Tiptoeing politics over conflicts in the South Caucasus emphasise Russia's economic and military dominance, giving little chance for resolution.

5.2 The United States of America: the Powerful Crusader

Unlike the EU, the USA has rarely been faced by the challenge of proving or even defining its actorness in international politics. It has rather periodically debated the rationale for the involvement in the shaping of the international order. While the EU generated a line of neologisms coined with the term superpower, the USA has long been referred as a hegemon, a "superpower" (Huntington 1999), a "hyperpower" (Cohen 2004) after the collapse of its main rival the Soviet Union, and most recently but rarely a "besieged superpower" (Kolodziej and Kanet 2008). Though the degree of US influence on international affairs has varied over the course of time, its influence per se has never been doubted. Unlike the case of the EU, the doubt over the US role has come from within, questioning whether the USA should be involved in international affairs (Deudney and Meiser 2009). The US foreign policy has been marked by "searching for purpose" (Dumbrell 2009: 88) and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, liberal internationalism or democracy promotion of Bill Clinton became the motto of US foreign policy. The election of George W. Bush reaffirmed the position of democracy promotion, however coupled it with fight against terrorism produced by "the axis of evil", allowing military interventions under the banner of democracy promotion. Military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq dubbed by neoconservative Bush administration as

democracy promotion provided a fertile ground for the opponents of democracy promotion, but arguably had little negative influence on peaceful targets of democracy promotion.

The US has been traditionally portrayed as an actor with hard approach vis-à-vis the EU's soft and even pacifist (Speck 2011) approach to international affairs. The famous "Mars vs. Venus" (Kagan 2003) analogy underlined the transatlantic divide on democracy promotion, which was however argued to be blown out of proportions as the differences between EU and US strategies were marginal. However, unlike the EU, the USA has demonstrated little confusion on its actions. The unequivocal endorsement and alleged orchestration of colour revolutions in Eastern Europe, at least rhetorically quick reaction to natural disasters around the globe, including the recent one in Haiti, and comparatively cohesive reaction to the events in MENA demonstrate more efficient foreign policy decision-making mechanism than the one of the EU. However, despite advantages in decision-making efficiency, US foreign policy has often been marred by supporting the "oily" and friendly autocrats. Nevertheless, the importance of the USA in the international arena has not been put under doubt, maintaining its position as an acknowledged global actor, whose statements are often shaping the positions of its partners.

5.2.1 Foreign Policy Formation: The President is on the US Phone Line

The connecting line between the EU and US policy-makings is their sharing of the "compound polity" characteristic (Fabbrini 2007). From the establishment of the USA, sovereignty was fragmented within separate institutions, which pursued separate institutional interests. Such separation created an overlap between the institutional entities and their jurisdiction, thus creating a "decision-making paralysis", especially evident in the 19th century (Fabbrini and Sicurelli 2008: 298). After the WWII, the US has institutionalised two different

decision-making frameworks: domestic policy-making has involved all governmental institutions, while foreign policy was based on restricted decision-making of few actors (Wildavsky 1975). The fragmentation of sovereignty decreased due to centralisation of foreign policy-making at the federal level (Fabbrini and Sicurelli 2008). In addition, foreign policy, controlled mainly by state representatives in the Senate, has changed its main decision-maker. The Cold War has ideologically justified the President's growing influence over the Congress in foreign policy (Shlesinger 2004), though several events, such as the defeat in Vietnam and the Watergate, have shaken the centralisation of foreign policy-making within presidency (Polsby 2004).

The end of the Cold War influenced US foreign policy, traditionally marked by the concept of American exceptionalism and following an internationalist ideology since the end of the WWII. Although appearing in presidential rhetoric before the 1990s, democracy promotion proliferated into foreign policy after the end of the Cold War. With the disappearance of an eminent threat on behalf of the Soviet Union, the US foreign policy makers were left "searching for purpose" between internationalism and isolationism (Dumbrell 2008). "The vision thing" of President Bush Senior did not result in a coherent policy, leaving the Clinton administration with the debate of "Kennan sweepstakes" to find a foreign policy doctrine matching the one of Kennan's containment (Brinkley 1997). The debate ended upon the choice of multilateralism and democratic enlargement, a concept defined by National Security Adviser Tony Lake to promote the democratic peace theory. Bill Clinton's second term also concentrated on the promotion of economic globalisation, actually detected as a threat by Russia's foreign policy approved by Putin (Babayan and Braghiroli 2011). Given Constitutional powers, the President defines and directs foreign policy upon the

advice of the Secretary of State, represents the nation, and negotiates international treaties.³⁹ However, the election of George W. Bush and the September 11 terrorist attacks have changed the liberal direction of US foreign policy to a neo-conservative one. The National Security Strategy approved by President Bush in 2002 less than a year after 9/11, outlined security and foreign policy objectives, laying ground for Bush doctrine of pre-emptive strikes announced earlier (Bush 2002). The US National Security Strategy declared its “unparalleled military strength and great economic and political influence” ready to defend not only itself, but also its friends.

The 2001 terrorist attacks coupled with a unified party government (Hacker and Pierson 2005) “restored large margins of manoeuvrability to the President” (Fabbrini and Sicurelli 2008: 300). The unbreakable leadership of the President in foreign policy-making asserted by the Bush Administration has been dubbed an imperial presidency (Lieven 2004) and compared to centralised European powers of the early 20th century (Fabbrini and Sicurelli 2008). However, the changing nature of party control over the Senate and the House of Representatives has regularly challenged the absolute dominance of the President. Nevertheless, the reluctance of Congress to exercise its checks-and-balances powers in case of presidential party dominance, decreases its own significance in foreign policy-making and its chances of overtly opposing to President’s decisions. Thus, despite the constitutional constraints, the President has been recognised by the main institutions as the principal actor of foreign policy (Fabbrini 2005).

Unlike the EU, which underlines its regional priorities and increasingly focuses its foreign policy efforts on broadening its spheres of influence, the USA stretches its initiatives virtually all over the globe. Interestingly, it not only targeted the developing states with its

³⁹An international treaty enters into force after being approved by two-thirds of the Senate. Though the power to declare war is constitutionally vested in the Congress.

policies of economic and democracy development, but also considered the expansion of the EU to serve its interests and further weaken Russian influence at least in the post-Soviet region (Brzezinski 1998). Within the territory covered by the CIS and ENP projects, the USA actively employs its foreign policy instruments to advance its political and economic dominance and prevent any challenges to its leadership. The outspoken “missionary foreign policy” (Babayan and Braghiroli 2011) of the USA has committed itself to preserving US dominance not only through promotion of its own interests but also through altering others’ interests according to its own preferences. Extensive democracy promotion programs, embraced by the majority of post-Soviet countries, aim to change the regime of governance, bringing those more in line with the US interests and promoted values.

A defined framework of foreign policy formation has helped the USA to establish its position in the international system. Its stateness on the other hand has helped it to avoid the EU’s problems of actorness and representation and to define its “grand strategy” according to its needs or the vision of the administration. US foreign policy making lies with the constitutional powers invested in the presidential office, and president’s dominance over foreign policy matters. Although only Congress has the power to declare war, it has depended upon the executive for daily foreign policy responsibilities, retaining its right to draw attention to selective issues. Article 9 of the US Constitution prescribes the U.S. Senate an advisory and approval role over foreign policy as the President negotiates treaties with foreign nations, but treaties enter into force only if ratified by two-thirds of the Senate. The US Secretary of State is the primary conductor of state-to-state diplomacy representative of US foreign policy. However, the ultimate decision-making is vested in the President. The executive and the legislature basically share policy-making powers, with the executive having the creative power of developing the policies and the legislature approving them. Thus, unlike the EU, the

“division of labour” in decision-making and representation in US foreign policy is regulated by a clear framework of functioning.

Unlike the EU, the USA is not constrained in its foreign policy actions by a constant search for consensus. On the contrary, the sharing of foreign policy-making powers between the White House and Congress creates an “invitation to struggle” (Corwin 1964: 201). This invitation is often used especially after the 9/11 attacks when “a chasm the size of the Grand Canyon” (Cook 2007) divides the USA. The debates in the US Congress have revealed that the main dispute is not over the relevance of democracy promotion but over the strategies of promotion. Despite the debates and the constitutional powers, US Congress, however, failed in controlling the president in the 20th century. Nevertheless, the possible discrepancies in visions do not result in a confused and vague foreign policy as in the case of the EU. They rather underline the prevalence of the President over foreign policy issues and the smoothness of foreign policy-making in the USA as opposed to the EU. Nevertheless, while the USA attempts to base its democracy promotion actions on rational decision-making, its strategies largely replicate the established routine.

5.2.2 The USA’s Commitment to and Legitimacy in Promoting Democracy: The Way We Are

“The advancement of human rights and democracy is not just the policy of the United States; it is the epitome of who we are as a nation” declares the US State Department.⁴⁰ From the early 20th century, the US external affairs have been marked by Woodrow Wilson’s (1917) conviction that “the world must be made safe for democracy” and dates back to Washington’s

⁴⁰ See <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/index.htm>

(1796) assertion of the US mission “to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example”. After Wilson’s presidency, the USA has continued “to foster the infrastructure of democracy” (Reagan 1982) to “enlarge the community of democracies” and “advance America’s interests worldwide” (Clinton 1994) by means of foreign aid and sometimes military power. While the main mission of the USA during the Cold War was not democracy promotion per se but rather the containment of the Soviet Union (Cox et al 2000), democracy promotion neatly fit the “searching for purpose” task after the collapse of the grand rival (Dumbrell 2008: 90). Some (Robinson 1996) argue that there was a change in US foreign policy from supporting autocracies to promoting democracy. However, the policy goal has remained intact: “to gain influence over and try to shape their [national democratization movements’] outcomes in such a way as to pre-empt more radical political change, to preserve the social order and international relations of asymmetry” (Robinson 1996: 318-319). However, notwithstanding the growth of democracy assistance, its examination by US policy analysts has been sporadic and its understanding has been limited to practitioner circles (Carothers 2000).

Although democratic rhetoric has been present in US foreign policy since Wilson’s presidency, prior to the 1980s most of the foreign aid was concentrated on economic and military assistance to friendly countries, in an effort to prevent their going communist (Carothers 2010). The limited efforts on democracy promotion have been mostly funnelled through modernisation argument, hoping that economic development would result in democracy. The emergence of an established US democracy promotion appeared with the first Reagan administration, which was concerned with the USA’s insufficient engagement in the “war of ideas” with the Soviet Union (Carothers 2000: 183). After some disagreements with Congress, the establishment of the NED (Madison 1986; Carothers 1991) became the major

contribution to US democracy promotion industry (Pischikova 2010). The demise of the Soviet Union and reduced ideological tensions, have given the USA an opportunity to promote democracy with an “explicit political purpose” (Carothers 2000:184). The explicit purpose is articulated in the mission statement of the State Department, which is to

advance freedom for the benefit of the American people and the international community by helping to build and sustain a more democratic, secure, and prosperous world composed of well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, reduce widespread poverty, and act responsibly within the international system (US State Department 2010).

In addition, the collapse of the Soviet Union was called to be “an historic opportunity for a transition to a peaceful and stable international order” because the “international community has a vital interest in the success of this transition” (US Congress 1996) and the donors have to provide necessary support and expertise.

What has been changing from administration to administration has been not the commitment to democracy promotion, but the commitment to a specific mode of promotion: by consent or openly by force. Democracy promotion under Bill Clinton was dubbed as a “grand vision” (Yang 2000 in Carothers 2000) of his administration. The financial support to democracy promotion has tangibly increased from the Reagan years to the end of the Clinton administration (Carothers 2000). The Clinton administration pursued the “enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies” (Lake 1993)—democracy promotion—in a hope to replace the previous grand strategy of containment (Poppe 2010). However, the “pragmatic crusader” (Poppe 2010: 11) Clinton did not intend to place democracy promotion above other foreign policy or security issues, but rather intended to complement one with the other. In addition, the Clinton administration’s democracy promotion followed a non-

interventionist character and preferred to promote democracy in countries that had already showed signs of democratization. The policy towards states unwilling to reform would be “to isolate them diplomatically, militarily, economically and technologically” (Lake 1993). Meanwhile if the process of democratization would stagnate, the USA should have renewed it (Albright 2003). Thus, Clinton’s peaceful promotion of democracy to complement US strategic interests followed “pragmatic realism first, with idealism always a close second” (Brinkley 1997: 127).

The same cannot be said about the succeeded George W. Bush administration and its “democracy promotion on steroids” (Carothers 2007:11). The first months of Bush’s presidency implied the possibility of axing democracy promotion (Carothers 2003) and focusing more on traditional interests by cutting foreign policy commitments (Poppe 2010) However, after 9/11 attacks Bush opted for a hard approach of military interventions and for reinforcement by punishment whenever the target country did not show any readiness for democratic change and posed any threat to US national security. The Bush Doctrine went in sharp contrast with Clinton’s more diplomatic and peaceful vision of world affairs. Always being a military and not only an economic power, the USA unlike the EU has never constrained itself to a normative power image. Thus, democracy promotion under Bush was combined with the fight against terrorism. After the engulfing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, it may have seemed that the USA would abandon its march for democracy and turn inward.

However, Barack Obama (2007) in his turn has called for a “visionary leadership”, urging to seize America’s new moment and to fight the challenges that may shake the international foundation of liberal democracy. The Obama administration has distanced itself from its predecessor but contrary to criticisms in the “abandonment of democracy”

(Muravchik 2009), Obama (2009) preferred to assert that “no system of government can or should be imposed” on one nation by the other. Thus, Obama has reiterated the importance of promoting democracy by consent and looking at it “through a lens that is actually delivering a better life for people on the ground and less obsessed with form, more concerned with substance” (Obama 2009). With his low-key democracy promotion, the “open door” approach, and without boisterous statements, Obama has brought US democracy promotion approach closer to the one of the EU (Poppe 2010). Nevertheless, the liberal democratic model, though defined in “more detailed institutional terms than conventional political science definitions” (Carothers 2000: 192), underlies the US “crusade for democracy” (Scott-Smith and Mos 2009: 237) from Clinton to Obama.

Regardless of the rhetorical commitment, the formulation of democracy promotion policies has been sloppy due to the “lack of a clear definition of democracy and a comprehensive understanding of its basic elements” (Epstein et al 2007: 3). Without a clear definition of democracy it is nearly impossible to determine the success of democracy promotion and consequently the turning point when the target does not require further assistance (Epstein et al 2007). The lack of a definition was also acknowledged by Congress in 2006, which stated its concern that “the State Department and USAID do not share a common definition of a democracy program” (Senate Appropriations Committee 2005). It went further in 2007 to “ensure a common understanding of democracy programs among US Government agencies” and defined democracy promotion as “programs that support good governance, human rights, independent media, and the rule of law, and otherwise strengthen the capacity of democratic political parties, NGOs, and citizens to support the development of democratic states, institutions and practices that are responsible and accountable to citizens” (Senate Appropriations Committee 2006). Based on this definition, democracy according to

the USA can be conceptualised as the academic understanding of liberal democracy that requires contestation, participation, and respect for human rights. While the definition did clearly identify the targets and sectors of democracy promotion, it left the strategies of implementation open.

The USA has not only adhered to a democracy promotion rhetoric but has also positioned itself as the champion of liberal democracy and an exemplar of respect for human rights. The “free” record of the USA since Freedom House launched its research in 1973 has supported this democratic claim. Critiques have been voiced over the USA’s close relations with certain autocratic regimes, when scolding the others, and over its military deals with strategically important countries (Burnell 2010). However, its legitimacy in promoting democracy has been supported by its internal politics. According to Freedom House elections in the USA have regularly been characterised as free and fair with a high degree of transparency on the federal level.⁴¹ Similarly media has enjoyed freedom based on strong foundations in US law, which is under regular scrutiny to improve the conditions of media freedom. Media is predominantly privately owned and though in some cases it is partisan, it endeavours to keep a “wall of separation between news reporting, commentary, and editorials” (Freedom House 2010). However, the actual freedom of the press has remained vibrant, with dynamic debates over domestic and foreign policies of all three presidents since the boom in democracy promotion.

The US has played a fundamental role in the creation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (Ignatieff 2005), however later has reduced its participation either in signing or

⁴¹ US electoral process has been often criticized for long and expensive campaigns and for obsolete system of the electoral college, which caused a noticeable disagreement after presidential elections in 2000 and Florida count. However, These factors do not negatively influence the behavior of political actors involved in elections and do not induce them to resort to voter intimidation, vote rigging and other activities that may undermine the democratic character of elections.

ratifying international treaties. Main human rights and fundamental freedoms have been recognised by the USA, which *inter alia* has one of the most comprehensive civil rights legislations (Capozzi 2006). The observation of civil and political liberties in the USA has always received high scores from Freedom House, however some specific aspects have been criticised through regular reports of Amnesty International⁴² and Human Rights Watch. This criticism soared after the implementation of the measures of the war on terrorism declared by George W. Bush administration. However, the fundamental freedoms, constituting the core of US democracy promotion are guaranteed and observed, with the US getting high scores also from Polity IV. Thus, the rhetorical commitment of the USA is backed by a strong behavioural commitment, unless discussing the US handling of detainees in camps such as Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. Rhetorical and behavioural commitment of the USA to democratic principles provides it with high legitimacy for promoting democracy. However, as in the case of the EU, its shady dealings with certain autocratic states may damage its credibility of an actor with strong promises or threats.

5.2.3 The Strategies of US Democracy Promotion: Exploring New with Old Tools

The end of the Cold War was interpreted by US policy-makers as the cry of civil society for democratic development and freedom. The USA is inclined “to see a stable democracy as the product of a healthy and vibrant civil society” (Kopstein 2006: 89), with democracy being established as soon as the authoritarian leader is overthrown and elections are held. The overall institutional environment, however, does not seem to be so important (Kopstein 2006). However democracy is not only about elections, it is *inter alia* about independent media, political parties, checks on democratic government that must face the check of electable

⁴² Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have mainly condemned police brutality and handling of the detainees. See for example <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/1998/07/06/report-charges-police-abuse-us-goes-unchecked> and <http://www.hrw.org/en/node/12123/section/2>

opposition and leaders that must hand over power peacefully (Epstein et al 2007). This understanding of democracy also correlates with Huntington's (1991) "two-turnover test" for democratic consolidation, which requires two peaceful changes of governing power through elections. Democracy promoting organisations that are funded by US government concentrate heavily on elections, political parties, and civil society organisations, in most of the cases preferring not to work with state-related organisations, focusing on the opposition, especially in the case of media development as part of civil society. The USA has also largely invested in development of political and civil societies by supporting local NGOs and monitoring elections (Marinov 2004). Absence of the 'membership perspective', unlike in the case of the EU, and simultaneous cooperation with aspirant democracies and friendly tyrants makes the distinction of exclusive/inclusive approach dubious. In the case of the US the exclusive approach can be regarded as lack of diplomatic relations due to security or economic concerns, thus the USA's approach would most appropriately be classified as intermediate.

US democracy promotion is mainly channelled through three main organisations: USAID, Department of State and the non-profit National Endowment for Democracy (NED). Apart from these, the Ministry of Defense, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), and the Department of Justice conduct limited activities of democracy promotion, however with much lesser budget and programmatic variance. USAID has spent approximately USD 1.5 billion a year on democracy promotion, while the State Department has spent approximately USD 500 million, and the NED USD 100 million. Established by an executive order in 1961, USAID is the principal instrument of democracy promotion of US government with its distinct Democracy and Governance (DG) portfolio, which focuses on rule of law, elections and political processes, civil society, accountable governance, and independent media. USAID receives overall policy guidance from the US State Department. In addition, it

has to respond to several committees of Congress, which during the Republican domination of Congress in 1995–2006, seen considerable cuts in its budget (Thiel 2004). Some Republicans even proposed the elimination of USAID within a drastic reform of the State Department (Hook 2003). Nevertheless, USAID remains the main democracy promotion instrument of the USA, with its missions covering a large geographic and thematic variety. The US government funding for democracy promotion is primarily channelled through the State Department and its Governing Justly and Democratically objective, which includes the following four elements:

1. Rule of Law and Human Rights: supports constitutions, laws and legal systems, justice systems, judicial independence, and human rights.
2. Good Governance supports legislative functions and processes, public sector executive functions, security sector governance, anti-corruption reforms, local governance, and decentralisation.
3. Political Competition and Consensus-building supports elections and political processes, political parties, and consensus-building projects.
4. Civil Society supports media freedom, freedom of information, and civic participation (Epstein et al 2007: 19).

Present activities of USAID were launched after democratic transitions in Latin America and the former USSR in mid-1980s (Epstein et al 2007). Since then, USAID has initiated democracy promotion in more than 120 countries, regardless whether those showed any signs of democratization or not and regardless whether external democratization efforts were welcome or not. The US efforts of democracy promotion have been called as success

due to transitions in Chile, the Philippines, Poland, and South Africa (Epstein et al 2007). However, while there were improvements in democracy in Mali, there were deteriorations in democracy in Belarus and Venezuela (Finkel et al 2006). Despite the publication of regular success stories and reports, USAID's efforts are not as widely publicised as the ones of the State Department or the NED (Carothers 2000), even though they are more publicised than the ones of the EU. Although USAID develops a democracy promotion program, in most of the cases the implementation is carried out by an international or local partnering NGO, which has won the bid for the program. USAID differentiates between implementing partners and contractors, as the former have more freedom in the development and sometimes the execution of the project.

The end of the Cold War resulted in the addition of new departments and tasks to USAID to account for the initiatives in post-communist satellites and later in post-Soviet countries. A New Independent States (NIS) Task Force was created in 1991, employing development professionals with little experience in the former Soviet Union (Pishchikova 2010). Later in 1993, the NIS Task Force and the Eastern Europe Task Force were merged into the Bureau for Europe and NIS. Having little experience in the region, the Bureau eventually employed based on Russian language skills and "nobody quite knew what they were doing there in that bureau but it was said to be different from everything else" (Hansen in Pishchikova 2010: 76). However, what the Bureau and USAID did know was that they needed to differentiate new activities of democracy promotion from the previous aid framework (Pishchikova 2010) not to hurt the feelings of countries that were claiming to be European and did not want to be associated with the derogatory Third World. This differentiation, however, did not account for the differences between the NIS countries, treating them with the same simplistic uniformity of the EU.

Freedom for Russia and the Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Support Act (FSA) of 1992 spent a total of approximately USD 30 billion on assistance to 12 countries of the former Soviet Union, excluding the Baltics.⁴³ The USAID had to adapt to “new approaches, move quickly, and constantly adjust to changing circumstances” (Pressley: ii) and some of the projects were “literally written on the back of the napkin” (Lyday in Pishchikova 2010: 79). Rushing to have funds approved by Congress, USAID seemed to have overlooked a similar urgency of developing a clear and tailored monitoring and evaluation system. After a decade of treating democracy promotion targets in the former Soviet Union as a region, an attempt was made in 2001 to diversify the strategies based on country needs. However the gradual change is still in the process (Melzig and Sprout 2007). The change in strategy mainly considers the proximity of the Central Asian and the South Caucasus countries to the strategically important region of the Middle East (Pishchikova 2010).

Being convinced that democracy should come from endogenous forces, USAID also partners local political forces aspiring for democratic reforms (Nelson and Katulis 2005), which shows that the USAID often uses translational channel of democracy promotion. However, the involvement of local actors is limited as USAID mainly works with its implementing partners and contractors. Based on its regulations, USAID very rarely channels funding directly to a local recipient, but rather announces a bid for US contractors. Upon winning the bid a US contractor’s headquarters regulates the implementation process through its branch in the recipient country. USAID works with implementers through contracts and cooperative agreements. In the case of the latter, the implementer has relatively more freedom

⁴³ The efforts of Armenian-American lobby managed to exclude Azerbaijan from participation in the FSA under the section 907 due to the latter’s blockade of Armenia as a result of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. However, in return for Azerbaijan’s cooperation in the war on terror, in 2001 the Senate granted the President with the possibility of a waiver to Section 907, which has since been used in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

in the creative implementation of a project, provided it stays within strictly regulated USAID requirements. Often having the same implementer apply and receive the contract/agreement for a similar project in many countries, makes the project goals and evaluation indicators “travel from country to country without a change” (Zarycky 2010).

Despite limited local involvement in the development of the projects, and sometimes even their implementation, USAID, nevertheless, claims that it has had a positive impact on democratization. Specifically, its own and other “donor assistance has helped fuel the explosive growth of NGO sectors in these countries” (USAID 1999a: xi). At the same time most of the efforts through the transnational channel are not backed-up by the necessary governmental one. Although as former head of USAID Armenia DG acknowledged, the USAID had started planning a project that would involve both state and civil society levels (Zarycky 2010), however, the details of the project were still under elaboration. This move to include state actors into civil society projects is a necessary and a long-awaited step, as “assistance to civil society strengthening can lead to human rights repercussions” (Epstein et al 2007: 10) with Russia’s 2006 law limiting NGO activities as one of the examples.

In its democracy promotion efforts the USA has rarely resorted to an official conditionality as the EU, but often exercised conditionality and sanctions through statements and negotiations. The MCC, created by the Bush Administration in 2002 and authorised in 2004 as a poverty reduction tool, has become one of the rare conditionality examples. Due to its focus on democracy as a prerequisite for economic development, the MCC has been expected to be more successful than other instruments of democracy promotion (Beard 2009). Using 16 quantitative indicators based on the sources of Freedom House, the World Bank, the UN, and the IMF among the others, the MCC evaluates the state of democracy and country’s eligibility for poverty reduction assistance. The indicators are grouped in three larger

categories of ruling justly, investing in people, and economic freedom. The eligibility of a country depends upon its above the median performance on “at least half of the indicators in all three categories, and above the median on the Control of Corruption indicator” (Mandaville 2007: 1). Although the MCC does provide an important insight into its recipients and creates certain conditionality, its activities do not directly address democracy promotion. However, the MCC shows a positive involvement of the USA into Armenia’s other issues and indicates a useful trend of linking the status of democracy with the provision of democracy assistance.

5.2.4 Dynamics of Relations with Armenia, the EU, and Russia

The USA acknowledged the potential importance of the South Caucasus earlier than the EU and though being a comparatively new actor in the region, it has become one of the most active ones (Harutyunyan 2006). The USA has gradually increased its presence in the South Caucasus and Armenia by recognising Armenia’s independence in December 1991 and opening an Embassy in Yerevan in February 1992, which in 2005 moved to nine hectare compound—second in size only to the US Embassy to Germany. This was followed by the establishment of USAID mission and of branches of various governmental and non-governmental organisations that plunged themselves in development and democracy promotion. In addition, more than 70 US-owned companies operate in Armenia. The USA’s major concern over the course of the 1990s was “the development of the energy resources of the Caspian Sea basin” (Hautyunyan 2006: 15). However, the terrorist attacks of September 2001 have added establishing a conflict-free South Caucasus on US agenda, which would help the USA in its operations in the Middle East. US strategic interests in the region coupled with the influence of the large and well-organised Armenian-American lobby has secured Armenia’s place in democracy promotion policy, hence in receiving financial assistance.

USAID mission in Yerevan was opened in 1993, at the same time with the missions in Moscow, Kyiv, and Almaty. Initial budget appropriations and program planning was carried out and controlled from Washington, DC. However, by the mid-1990s the local missions were provided with bigger budgetary authority and an opportunity of implementing their own grant programs within a budget appropriated by Congress for each country (Pishchikova 2010). The assistance budget for Armenia has been USD 55-75 million per year (Mainville 2005), which totals to the highest per capita assistance in the former Soviet Union ([Table 22](#)). US government's activities in Armenia, mostly channelled through USAID, have started with humanitarian assistance (1992-1998) totalling to USD 750 million and focusing on provision of food, fuel, medicine, and clothing. Serving each year over 200 000 households and 1200 schools, USAID provided heating fuel through its Winter Kerosene Program, which covered years of the war with Azerbaijan and the consequent blockade. The humanitarian assistance also included the US wheat programs that supplied Armenia with half of its total requirements for bread consumption.

Table 22. US Assistance to Armenia (includes all sectors)

Fiscal Year	Obligated USD)	(million
1992	74.6	
1993	172.41	
1994	159.22	
1995	114.58	
1996	134.23	
1997	98.73	
1998	116.15	
1999	91.94	
2000	117.19	
2001	102.47	
2002	112.75	
2003	105.07	
2004	93.19	
2005	91.02	
2006	89.54	
2007	71.64	
2008	74.79	
2009	52.36	
2010	45.6	

Source: US Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of US Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, Foreign Operations Appropriated Assistance Factsheet December 2009; FY 2009 Foreign Operations Appropriated Assistance: Armenia Report

The humanitarian assistance was followed by assistance in privatisation (1998-2002) mainly targeting the privatisation of the Armenian Airlines. The Earthquake Zone Recovery Program (2001-2005) with a budget of USD 35 million provided permanent housing to at least 7000 families, creating a replicable strategy for housing since been used by the Government of Armenia. Besides the mentioned categories of projects, USAID has also been involved in energy sector (1996-2009), water regulation and management (2000-2009), decentralization (1995-2009), justice sector (1995-2009), tax/fiscal reform (1998-2009), SME/Industry development (1997-2009), financial sector reform (1999-2009), social protection and social insurance systems (1996-2009), primary healthcare reform (1998-2009),

and civil society and media (1995-2009). These and other USAID projects have been divided within thematic areas of democracy and governance, healthcare, private sector, social protection, and water and energy. The focus of the 2009-2013 strategy is on peace and security, economic growth, democracy and governance—alternative media, civil society, rule of law, parliamentary assistance, and political processes—, and social and health portfolio.

Despite criticisms of low budgets on democracy promotion, a rather large share of US assistance to Armenia has been allocated to democracy promotion, or in USAID parlance to governing justly and democratically ([Table 23](#)). US State Department's reports on its activities provide a cumulative figure for 1992-2000 budgets for democratic reform, with later reports providing detailed breakdowns of budgets. As if reflecting the importance assigned by the USA to elections, the budget for democratic reforms increased almost by 240 % from USD 9.45 million in 2002 to USD 22.40 million in the elections year of 2003. In similar fashion, the budget for democratic reforms was increased by 155 % from USD 13.41 million in 2007 to USD 20.77 million in presidential elections year of 2008. However, there was no similar increase for the 2007—the year of parliamentary elections—underlining the importance of presidential elections in Armenia over parliamentary ones.

Table 23. USG Assistance to Armenia for Democratic Reform (includes all sectors of democracy promotion)

Fiscal Year	million USD
1992-2000	34.5⁴⁴
2001	9.48
2002	9.45
2003	22.40
2004	14.06
2005	13.76
2006	12.17
2007	13.41
2008	20.77
2009	11.2
2010	12.33

Source: USG website

Democracy promotion funding had been channelled through USAID’s Strategic Objective 2.1 of Increased Citizen Participation in the Political, Economic and Social Decision-making Process. USAID Strategic Plan 1999-2003 clearly indicated its adherence to contestation and participation components of democracy as for its advancement Armenia needed:

1. elected leaders at all levels of government who are accountable to their constituencies;
2. citizens who are well-informed about pending issues and know how to voice their opinions to elected officials; and
3. governments at all levels, which are willing and able to respond to their constituents (USAID 1999c).

For the Strategic Plan 2004-2008, the objective was renamed to Improved Democratic Governance and aimed to consolidate “the achievements of past democracy objectives...to improve democratic governance by both expanding civic participation and governance institutions in Armenia” (USAID 2004: 29). For 2009-2013 Strategic Plan, the strategic

⁴⁴ As of the 3/31/96 report, these numbers no longer include transfers to other agencies that are implementing their own programs using FSA funds.

objectives were renamed into Priority Goals, and democracy promotion has fallen under Priority Goal 2 of “bolstering those institutions that effectively promote democracy” (USAID 2009: 11). Under this priority goal, USAID has de-emphasised “direct support to [government] entities that have been chronically resistant to good-faith cooperation and meaningful rather than superficial reforms”, however, without ruling out “new opportunities to engage” (USAID 2009: 11). As in this study, Freedom House democratization score has been used to measure the success of the strategic objective. Changing of objectives and their wording in strategic plans indicates USAID’s efforts to build on its previous activities and conviction that the institutions established in Armenia need to be prepared for democratic consolidation.

The efforts of USAID in assisting Armenia were further complemented by the Armenia’s government’s signing of a five-year and USD 235.65 million compact with the MCC on March 27 2006, which came into force on September 29, 2006. The compact has only one goal: “the reduction of rural poverty through sustainable increase in the economic performance of the agricultural sector”.⁴⁵ The program has been expected to impact 75 % of the rural population by boosting annual incomes. The compact was signed with Armenia by the MCC based on its evaluation of Armenia’s democratic performance, which, however, kept deteriorating at the time of signing. The disputed 2008 presidential elections turned the USA’s attention to the status of democracy in Armenia as it did not rush to congratulate proclaimed victor Serzh Sargsyan and announced that MCA funding may be revised. Nevertheless, no revisions had been made and the MCA continued its functioning. However, in May 2011 Armenia was classified as ineligible for MCC funding due to its deteriorating democratic performance (Harutyunyan 2011a). This announcement was largely attributed to the events of 2008 elections (Harutyunyan 2011a) and came a few months after a strain in US-Armenian

⁴⁵ See <http://www.mca.am/new/enversion/overview.php>

relations over the alleged sell of arms by the Armenian government to Iran had become public (Guardian 2010a). These arms were reported to be used in killing and wounding US soldiers in Iraq in January and March 2008 (Guardian 2010b). Given Armenia's stagnate and often deteriorating democratic performance, its ineligibility for MCA is not surprising. However, given previous silence on democratic violations, the cut of MCA funding seems in line with its own regulations but stimulated by motives not related to democracy.

The alleged arms deal between Armenia and Iran, puts the US hopes of a peaceful South Caucasus at risk. The USA is a co-chairman of the OSCE Minsk Group and thus its "State Department attempts to be neutral" (Migdalovitz 2001: i) in the talks over Nagorno Karabakh and other military-related issues. In its policy towards the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, the USA has preferred OSCE peacemaking to the UN, for the possibility to exclude Iran and control Russia (Migdalovitz 2001). The Clinton Administration attempted to be neutral, to keep good relations with Armenian-Americans to access the Azerbaijani industry, and to prevent a spillover of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict to its relations with Turkey. In addition, in an effort to be sensitive to Russian interests, the USA let Russia broker the settlement of the armed conflict in 1994. The Nagorno Karabakh conflict also underlined the divisions between the executive and legislative branches of US Government. While neither President Clinton nor President Bush agreed to the Section 907 prohibiting aid to Azerbaijan, Congress seemed to ignore their considerations and passed the regulations.

The USA has stated on numerous occasions it was "deeply involved" (Ordway in Danielyan 2002b) in the resolution of the half-frozen conflict, though stopping short of explicitly marking its position (Melkumian and Kalantarian 2004). With hopes for a settlement ignited in 2006 (Danielyan 2006c), the USA, as its Minsk Group counterparts, has kept calling for a conflict resolution "only by peaceful means" (Clinton in RFE/RL 2011a).

However, the “real window of opportunity” (Associated Press 2006) did not turn 2006 into the “year for a deal” (Mann in RFE/RL 2006) keeping the US and other mediators “still hopeful” (Danielyan and Saghabalyan 2007) and insisting on removing the snipers from the Line of Contact (Byrza in RFE/RL 2011c).

Although the rhetorical commitment of the USA to conflict resolution has not been supported by a tangible progress, it has been supported by close attention to the improvement of living conditions of those affected by the conflict. Unlike the EU, which has not been involved in any activities within the territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, the US Congress appropriated USD 12.5 million for victims of the conflict in November 1997, under PL 105-118. In FY 1998, USAID have allocated USD 8.3 million for health, shelter, and economic aid for programs in Nagorno-Karabakh. The aid packages started in 1998 has continued and totalled to USD 35.77 million for 1998-2010 ([Table 24](#)). The research of the Armenian National Committee of America shows that Congress intended to allocate a total of more than USD 70 million instead of the spent USD 35.77 million (ANCA 2010).

Table 24. US Humanitarian Assistance to Nagorno-Karabakh

Fiscal Year	Obligated (million USD)
1998	8.3
1999	3.5
2000	2.0
2001	4.0
2002	2.0
2003	1.987
2004	2.0
2005	2.0
2006	1.98
2007	2.0
2008	2.0
2009	2.003
2010	2.0
Total	35.77

Source: Nichol 2010: 44

US attention to the South Caucasus has coincided with similar interests of the EU. The transatlantic relations between the USA and the EU have long defined the course of international affairs. The US involvement in European affairs has started with the Marshall Plan and oversaw the creation of the European Community. After the end of the Cold War, the Bush Senior Administration has seen the European Community as playing a special role in the stabilisation of the Eastern Europe (Treverton 1992; Smith and Woolcock 1993). Thus, not only the EU sought a global role for itself but it was also encouraged by the USA. Then Secretary of State Baker has called for an imminent enlargement of the EC/EU to the East (Smith 2008), which would have encouraged transformation to democracy and contained Russia's ambitions of "re-winning" the Eastern Europe. Clinton's policy of "engagement and enlargement" had assigned a key role to the EU (Smith 2008), which however disappointed Washington preferring its long process of accession through harmonisation to the US-advocated mass enlargement. However, the promise of the enlargement or the so-called "rhetorical entrapment" (Schimmelfennig 2001) of Europe was a guarantee of the eventual accession of the CEE, keeping US plans in force.

However, apart from the EU's activating plans on having a security policy and heavy emphasis on environmental issues, more important tensions appeared after 9/11 attacks and US decision to intervene in Iraq. Although selected European member states supported the USA's decision on Iraq, the EU as a political entity was largely overlooked. The "warrior" USA did not have time or willingness to wait for the "civilian power" Europe's (Bull 1982; Smith 2004) long and consensus-requiring deliberations. Though strong neo-conservative stance of the first Bush administration had highlighted the differences with the EU advocating for a multilateral approach, the relationship seemed to improve after 2005 (Andrews 2005, Zaborowski 2006). In addition, not only the EU but also the USA can be classified as a normative power, because they both "try to project a particular identity in their foreign policy relations" (Risse 2009: 249). Despite some tensions and differences in world view, which became starker in the first years of the new millennium, the EU and the USA has maintained cooperative and even friendly relations.

The same level of friendliness can hardly be applied to the relations with Russia, which was the darling of the Clinton Administration, but the adversary of the Bush Administration. The initial treatment of Russia by the USA as a defeated Cold War enemy was substituted with the Bill and Boris relationship, which personified Russia with seemingly reformist Yeltsin and marked US hopes for Russia's rapid democratization. The controversial re-election of Boris Yeltsin amidst the ongoing war in Chechnya did not seem to trouble the USA as he was regarded a better choice than a potential communist victory (Rutland and Dubinsky 2008). Regardless the presidential friendship, Russia was worried by the US plans of NATO enlargement to the extent that Yeltsin (1994) warned that the process would led to a "cold peace". The imminent enlargement was followed by Russia's rejection of the START II treaty and the aggravation of relations due to the Kosovo crisis. However, the real chill in

friendly relations came with NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia despite strong Russian opposition: then Russia's prime minister Leonid Primakov who was on the way to the USA seeking "money and understanding" (Gazeta.Ru 1999), have turned his plane back to Russia while over the Atlantic Ocean after learning of the commenced bombing (RIA News 2011). Mutual disillusionment further aggravated due to Russia's poor economy and new fighting in Chechnya.

After the succession in presidency by Vladimir Putin, his sweeping elections, and his promises to kill Chechen terrorists in the toilets,⁴⁶ Washington understood that it could hardly influence politics in Russia. While the major part of the 20th century was spent in arms and space race between the USA and the Soviet Union, the beginning of the 21st century has been spent in an often covert race for world power position with often changing attitudes. President Bush claimed that he "looked the man [Putin] in the eye" and "was able to get a sense of his soul" (Bush in Wyatt 2001); however even Bush's psychological manoeuvres did not help the deteriorating relations. Russia heavily criticised US operations in Iraq and even called it a threat to a multipolar world. In a 2001 interview to Le Figaro Former Secretary of State Rice called Russia "a threat to the West in general and to our European allies in particular". The US support of the wave of "colour revolutions" was seen as a direct threat to Russia and *inter alia* was followed by a crackdown on political opposition and the 2006 law on NGOs, which restricted access to foreign funding. US plans to place missiles in Poland and a radar station in the Czech Republic, its support of Georgia's NATO aspirations, Russia's possible financial support to Iran's nuclear program, the 2008 conflict in Georgia, and Russia's military cooperation with Venezuela have all negatively influenced US-Russia relations.

⁴⁶ After his appointment as prime minister, Putin announced unapologetic fight against terrorism and his call of "killing [terrorists] in the toilet" [мочить в сортире] of 24 September 1999 made media headlines. See http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_PdYRZSW-I

However, the much-discussed reset in relations occurred after G20 summit in London in 2009, when two new presidents Obama and Medvedev promised a fresh start (Cooper 2009). and called upon Iran to allow foreign inspectors in the country (RIA 2010). Pressing a symbolic “reset” button the US State Secretary Hillary Clinton and Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (Shuster 2010) paved the way for a new nuclear arms reduction treaty (New START) in 2010. The reset was not reverted even by the discovery of ten sleeping Russian spies (BBC 2010), which were swapped with their Russian counterparts in 2010.⁴⁷ Whether this thaw in US-Russia relations is likely to last will be evident after 2012 elections in both countries, as Putin is certain to return to presidency from prime minister’s position and realise his Eurasian Union plan. The post-Cold War history shows that US highly personifies its relations with Russia but enjoys greater autonomy when dealing with it than does the EU. Unlike the EU, that has preferred to encourage Russia’s involvement in some aspects of international politics and “seeks friendship”, the USA has been more straightforward in its intentions of interfering in Russia’s backyard.

5.3 Conclusion

The analysis of democracy promotion strategies of the EU and the USA has always been closely connected with their own images as a civilian/soft and military/hard powers respectively. However, their adherence to specific strategies often changes depending upon the target region. In addition, although strategic and motivational differences between the EU and the USA endure, those are more superficial than traditionally conceived. The EU’s conditionality and meritocratic approach is not applied similarly to candidate and non-candidate countries. In addition, the USA’s scolding of autocratic regimes often depends upon strategic interests. While the EU grants membership to countries that already comply with its

⁴⁷Reportedly, Russian espionage under Putin has reached Cold War levels. See <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article1813562.ece>

criteria, it does not pursue the same exclusive strategy when including partners in its policies ([Table 25](#)). While the ENP and the EaP presume nominal conditionality, the EU often strays away from its strict criterion and extends policy coverage to countries that do not show democratic progress (Babayan 2009, 2011). The USA's structural inability to grant membership, the outspoken commitment to promote democracy worldwide regardless of domestic consent, and often pragmatic relations with autocratic regimes make its strategy intermediate. On the other hand, the launch of the MCC underlines an attempt, though inconsistent, to move to an exclusive approach of granting aid and assistance based on democratic criteria.

Though both promoters utilise all channels of democracy promotion, the EU's primary partners have been governmental structures and the USA's transnational and societal organisations. Often, the USA has preferred to distance itself from the government and work only with civil society representatives (Parsadanyan 2010), while the EU has considered working with civil society as interference into internal affairs. However, the USA does not limit itself in the choice of instruments, using material and social reinforcement, additional support and punishment, with the EU's primary choice being material reinforcement by reward for EU candidates, but additional support with non-candidates. Whether these instruments are used equally and in accordance with provided guidelines is further elaborated in the following chapters. If such division of democratization had been made according to comparative advantages of the promoters, it might have achieved positive results. However, positive results would be possible only in case promoters cooperated across sectors, which is not the case as demonstrated in the following chapter.

Table 25. EU and US democracy promotion strategies

	EU	USA
Inclusiveness	Exclusive (for membership) Intermediate (ENP and EaP)	Intermediate
Instrument	Material reinforcement by reward	Material and social reinforcement
		Additional support
	Additional support (even for non-complying partner countries; ENP and EaP)	Additional punishment
Channel	Primarily intergovernmental, secondarily transnational	Primarily transnational, rarely intergovernmental

Source: author's own compilation

The international positioning of both actors corresponds to the general perception of them as two strategically different powers. However, as Magen et al (2010) show the gap between “Mars and Venus” is closing and this chapter shows that the difference is not due to strategy of democracy promotion, but rather due to the development mechanism that produces a democracy promotion strategy. The “stateness” of the USA has allowed for a smooth foreign policy decision-making process. Even if foreign policy undergoes often heated debates in Congress, it is defined and implemented by the executive branch. On the other hand, the mixed intergovernmental and supranational structure of the EU does not create sufficient conditions for a similarly uncomplicated foreign policy making. The prioritisation of the result by Americans and the preference of the process over the result by Europeans (Smith 2009) have a direct implication on democracy promotion as a part of foreign policy strategy. The USA has created its toolbox and checklist for democracy promotion in the early 1990s and has since applied it to its target countries with minimal modifications. For the last

two decades the EU has been creating new policies to deal with its neighbours based on the changing interests of its influential member states. Neighbourhood policies have been based on the enlargement mechanism as if ignoring the fact that no other policy offers the most appealing incentive of membership. Policy-making process in the EU has been often compromised by the lack of coordination between its institutions and sometimes outright competition (Babayan 2010b), and often over-eagerness or reluctance of member states to promote democracy.

One of the aims in these sections was to show the proclaimed commitment of the EU and the USA to democracy and their legitimacies in promoting democracy. Both the EU and the USA have faced criticisms over the quality of democracy within their territories. While the EU has often been accused of democratic deficit due to over-bureaucratic nature of its institutions, the USA has been under regular attack by human rights groups due to its handling of detainees and friendly relations with certain autocratic regimes due to strategic interests. Nevertheless, both within EU member states and in the USA, elections have been free and fair with well-organised political parties and free media over the whole course of democracy promotion in Armenia ([Table 26](#)). High level of their democratic performance in elections and conducive conditions for free media are the main criterion for EU and US legitimacies in democracy promotion, because this study's main focus is on strategies and projects on elections, parties, and the media. Thus, the legitimacies of the EU and the USA have been positive and should not have been an obstacle to the achievement of a behavioural democratic transformation.

Table 26. Domestic conditions of democracy promotion in Armenia.

	Legitimacy			Involvement	
		EU	US	EU	US
1995-1996	Elections	positive	positive	low	moderate
	Parties	positive	positive		
	Media	positive	positive		
1998	Elections	positive	positive	low	moderate
	Parties	positive	positive		
	Media	positive	positive		
2003	Elections	positive	positive	moderate	moderate
	Parties	positive	positive		
	Media	positive	positive		
2007-2008	Elections	positive	positive	moderate	moderate
	Parties	positive	positive		
	Media	positive	positive		

Source: author's own compilation

The picture is more varied in terms of their individual involvements in Armenia's national priority issues. The EU's involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict was low until the prospects of creating the ENP and the subsequent inclusion of the South Caucasus states. Although EU member France has been co-chairing the OSCE Minsk Group, the EU's contribution to conflict resolution as a separate political entity was minimal being limited to occasional speeches calling for peaceful conflict resolution. The launch of the ENP and later the EaP upgraded the EU's involvement to moderate due to its rhetorical efforts in regional cooperation. However, if unchanged the EU's framework of conflict resolution within the ENP and the EaP is unlikely to achieve positive results (Babayan 2012). On the other hand, US involvement in Armenia has ranged from moderate to positive in the course of all elections cycles. Nevertheless, also the USA's involvement in the Nagorno Karabakh issue has subdued since the election of Barack Obama, giving the lead to Russia's president Medvedev. However, before and shortly after 2008, the USA has demonstrated more firm position on the peaceful resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and more activeness in

its efforts, even if so far futile. Given the imminent comeback of Vladimir Putin to Russian presidency, the EU and the USA receive an opportunity for greater involvement into the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh issue, as Putin's approach was to preserve the status quo.

It is understandable that the involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict will require substantial decisiveness from both the EU and the USA. Deciding on the approach to conflict resolution may be especially difficult for the EU not only due to the intergovernmental nature of its foreign policy decision-making but also due to its interest in Azerbaijan's energy resources. On the other hand, neither promoter would be interested in instigating Russia's negative reaction to more active involvement in regional affairs. However, since the Nagorno Karabakh problem is currently hindering the implementation of not only democracy promotion but also other policies, it requires an increased attention from international actors. Even though due to strategic reasons, a decisive involvement may be difficult to achieve, progress and visible EU and US involvement in negotiations are likely to draw both Armenia and Azerbaijan to the West, creating more favourable conditions for democracy and for intra-regional projects.

PART III. THE OUTCOME OF SECTORAL DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND DEMOCRATIC TRANSFORMATION

As argued in previous chapters, Russia's long stated ambitions and its political and energy dominance over the South Caucasus should have signalled to international democracy promoters the need to cooperation. On the other hand, the interconnectedness of different sectors and their dependence upon incumbent authorities should have prompted democracy promoters to integrate local stakeholders in the development and implementation of programs and to integrate different sectors in their projects. In addition, the unresolved issue of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict and its negative influence on political and economic life of Armenia has called for an increased involvement of democracy promoters. However, the reality is quite different.

Demonstrating the multifaceted interaction of international and domestic conditions, this part of the dissertation identifies a combination of variables that has led to a specific type of democratic transformation, which is yet to transform into a behavioural one. In separate sections, it analyses the extent of Armenia's democratic transformation by studying elections, party politics, and the media with corresponding democracy promotion projects, and strategies by the EU and the USA. Bearing in mind the importance of elections for democracy, special attention is paid to the events during elections cycles in 1991-2008. To give coherence to the analysis of each section, the discussion is structured around parliamentary and presidential elections, as free and fair conduct of elections is the ultimate goal and a benchmark of democracy promoters. The period covered by this part spans over the start of targeted democracy promotion throughout the latest general elections of 2008. To evaluate the status

of the dependent variable of democratic transformation, the chapters proceed with the examination of the behavioural patterns in all three target-sectors. The subsequent sections analyse democracy promotion projects of the EU and the USA tracing the development of their strategies and registering possible changes in international and domestic conditions. To illustrate further developments in strategies and conditions events and projects after 2008 and in the wake of 2012 parliamentary and 2013 presidential elections are discussed.

As argued, EU and US democracy promotions were set on a rather fertile ground of Armenian democratization, with different layers of society highly identifying with democratic principles and democracy promoters but with low resonance of promoted democratic rules. Tracing the developments within elections, party politics, and media development, this part shows how despite low resonance and low utility of adaptation of democratic principles, they have been legally adopted. Nevertheless, the initial pace of Armenian democratization halted with elections regularly receiving negative evaluations from international observers, political freedoms being gradually curtailed, and political parties acting as mere puppets of the executive. This stagnation demonstrates a range of difficulties in achieving a behavioural democratic transformation. On a theoretical level, it demonstrates that while positive values of constructivist variables and strategies are likely to achieve formal democratic transformation, behavioural outcome of democracy promotion largely depends upon geopolitical and strategic reasoning of both promoters and their target countries.

Chapter 6. Elections in Armenia: A Potemkin Village rather than a Solid Construction

The Constitution of the Republic of Armenia provides that presidential elections are held every five years. The President is elected by an absolute majority in a single country-wide constituency. In case none of the candidates receives an absolute majority of votes, a second election round is held in fourteen days after the first round between the first and second placed candidates. Notwithstanding the continuous improvement of electoral legislature under the recommendations and observations of international actors, violations were reported both by local and international observers during the 1996, 1998 (extraordinary), 2003, 2008 presidential and 1995, 1999, 2003, and 2007 parliamentary elections. However, the criticisms to any of Armenian elections were voiced only by the OSCE and other western missions, with the Russia-backed CIS mission fully supporting the “democratic conduct”. Such support prompted the Central Elections Commission (CEC) Chairmen to claim that the fledging Armenian democracy does not have to comply with all international standards (CSCE 2003). In this chapter particular attention is paid to all presidential elections as due to the Constitutional provisions presidency in Armenia has far greater powers than legislature making potential utility of democratic adaptation lower for the executive. In addition, as can be seen from the monitoring reports of different international observers, improvements in the conduct of parliamentary elections were never echoed by improvements in the conduct of presidential elections despite very short intervals between the two. Kocharyan’s June 2002 remark that parliamentarian’s disrupting sessions and asking for his impeachment would be grabbed by the ears and taken to a police station (RFE/RL 2002; Zakarian 2002) further demonstrates the perceived supremacy of the presidency. Thus, this chapter on free and fair

elections focuses on presidential ones, while parliamentary elections are discussed in the chapter on party politics.

The virtue of elections as the ultimate criterion of democratization has lost its appeal due to numerous and undemocratic elections conducted in recent 20 years not only in Armenia but also all over the world. The disappointment in the possibility of power change through elections has forced some observers in Armenia to call it a dictatorship, where voting would not change anything and call upon others to boycott general elections of 2012 (Khzmalyan in Danielyan 2011). The call to boycott comes after a number of local and general elections and three nominal power changes in Armenia since its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Close attention of democracy promoters to elections has not been conducive to improve the distorted outlook on the conduct of elections. Despite rhetorical commitment of the authorities to free and fair elections, neither electoral campaigns nor voting procedure have been evaluated as democratic since the first general elections of 1991. The praiseworthy fairness of the 1991 presidential elections amidst the emerging Nagorno-Karabakh conflict was regarded as a token of Armenia's transformation to democracy. Given that the only experience of elections in Armenia dated back to 1919 parliamentary elections with the sweeping victory of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), the conduct of the 1991 elections was commendable. However, as the conduct of the subsequent elections showed, the jubilations were premature.

Leading the Armenian National Movement (ANM)⁴⁸ newly created on the patriotic sentiments of Armenians feeding from the events in Nagorno Karabakh, Levon Ter-Petrosyan received 83 % of votes ahead of other six candidates. Pressing “well-known emotional

⁴⁸ Hayots Hamazgayin Sharzhum (Հայոց Համազգային Շարժում). This English translation of the party name is taken from its official website <http://www.anm.am/index.php> , other translations include Pan-Armenian National Movement and All-Armenian National Movement.

buttons” (Malkhasian 1996: 37), Ter-Petrosyan managed to unite Armenians subordinating “other issues and conflicts within Armenia” (Way 2009: 110) to a single cause of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Ter-Petrosyan’s electoral campaign was based on: “the development of a market economy; democratization; a realistic foreign policy unburdened by the weight of the past (particularly the legacy of the Armenian genocide and Armenia’s traditional dependence upon Russia); and the resolution of the Karabagh conflict” (Astourian 2000: 2). As shown previously, with democratic compliance lagging behind, the conflict persisting, and the Russian involvement increasing, only the objective of market economy can be regarded as realised. Nevertheless, with the help of military success in the war with Azerbaijan, the newly elected regime established a stable rule that further led to the organisational power of autocratic stability in Armenia (Way 2009). Both Western policy makers (Astourian 2000) and the Armenian population regarded the Armenian regime and its ruler as the best choice especially in comparison to other former Soviet states that had practically inherited their communist leaders.

However, the enchantment with Ter-Petrosyan’s regime started to wane, when the Nagorno Karabakh war, though ending in success of the Armenian military, resulted in thousands of deaths, double blockade from Azerbaijan and Turkey, and in “*mut ev curt tariner*” (dark and cold years) lacking electricity, hot water, and gas. As Astourian (2000) mentions the disappointment of those chanting “Levon, Levon” in downtown Yerevan in the early 1990s came from the shock therapy and rapid privatisation of economy that benefited a few and resulted in wide-spread oligarchic corruption (Stefes 2008). The ideological disgrace of Ter-Petrosian’s regime came from his rejection of the notion of national ideology or national consensus (*azgayin hamadzaynutyun*) (Astourian 2000). According to the majority of Armenian intellectuals, Ter-Petrosian would prefer to substitute national consensus with state

ideology (*petakan gaghaparakhosutyun*) (Khurshudian 1999 in Astourian 2000). The disagreement with the Diaspora on the issue of double citizenship based on potential grave consequences on the Armenian army and the “pragmatic authoritarianism” (Astourian 2000: 43) of the regime coupled with politically motivated killings and trials and pressures on the press influenced the increasing ignominy of the regime. Second presidential elections in Armenia of 1996 were being conducted in the environment of a powerful presidency, weak judiciary and legislature, and personalised party system (Astourian 2000).

6.1 Presidential Election of 1996

The elections of 22 September 1996 were the first presidential election to be conducted under the observation of the OSCE international mission and “raised a wave of indignation in all sectors of the population” (UNDP 2001: 39). Upon the invitation of the Armenia’s CEC, the representatives of the OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) undertook a needs assessment mission in early August of 1996. According to the ODIHR final report, the legal framework for elections consisting of the 1996 Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Elections of the President of the Republic of Armenia and the 1996 Law of the Republic of Armenia on the Elections of Local Self Governing Bodies was “a clear improvement on previous electoral legislation” (Osborn 1996: 2). New legislation provided for improved transparency, with deadlines set to present preliminary and final results, the right for candidates' proxies to receive copies of the protocols and validate ballot papers. The presidential law also forbade absentee voting, the use of mobile ballot boxes and mobile polling stations. The OSCE observation mission head concluded though some of the changes restricted the right to vote, those were necessary to increase the confidence of the voters

(Osborn 1996). He also mentioned that the election of Khatchtour Bezirjian as Chairman of the CEC, who enjoyed the confidence of the incumbent and the opposition, added to the credibility of the voting process.

However, the elections were not free of irregularities during the voting procedure and the vote count, and were preceded by an electoral campaign marred by notable irregularities. Television was the main medium for the 1996 electoral campaign with lesser appeal of radio and print media. The CEC allocated each presidential candidate 120 free minutes of Channel 1's prime-time (Grigoryan 1997). Due to the extensive reporting on Ter-Petrosyan's activities as an incumbent, he received thrice more coverage than the other candidates combined (Grigoryan 1997). The predominance of Ter-Petrosyan on the state-run Channel 1⁴⁹ was as evident as on the radio (Osborn 1996). According to the presidential law, each candidate was to be allocated 90 minutes of free air time, however some of the appearances of the oppositional candidates were broadcast 15 minutes earlier of the previously announced time (Grigoryan 1997) and substantially curtailed the viewership. Ter-Petrosyan received 1050 minutes, Vazgen Manoukian received only 65 minutes, Ashot Manoucharian 48 minutes, and Sergei Badalian 37.5 minutes of editorial coverage on State TV Channel 1 (Osborn 1996). In addition, the State TV denied Vazgen Manoukian and Ashot Manoucharian, the remainder of their 180 minutes paid time. The decision was justified by the supposedly late applications of the candidates (Osborn 1996), though the candidates denied being late by demonstrating the required documentation (Grigoryan 1997). In addition, Ter-Petrosyan was publicly supported by then Minister of Defence Vazgen Sargsyan and then Minister of Interior Vano Siradegyan, even if law-enforcement authorities were forbidden from electoral campaigning by Article 19 of the 1996 presidential elections law.

⁴⁹ Currently the public television channel H1.

These changes and events showed a formal improvement in the electoral process in Armenia. However, they did not subsequently result in a behavioural change that would allow classifying these elections as free and fair, and while “the election process in the whole of the country ... [was] encouraging” several irregularities were observed. An opinion poll conducted in Yerevan in May 1996 showed that 51.9 % of the respondents were in favour of Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s re-election, 33.8 % were against, and 14.3 % were undecided (Grigoryan 1997). With a turnout of 60.3 %, the incumbent Levon Ter-Petrosyan received 51.3% of the vote, ahead of Vazgen Manukyan with 41%, Sergei Badalian with 6.3 %, and Ashot Manucharyan with 0.6 %. The number of votes received by Ter-Petrosyan was enough to secure his victory in the first round of voting. While the voting process was conducted “correctly” in 53 % of the visited polling stations, in 3.5 % it was conducted “very badly” (Osborn 1996: 7). In addition, several breaches of law were observed during the voting process by the OSCE observers. The observers were “disturbed” (Osborn 1996: 7) by the cases of open voting in 6 % of the visited polling stations and the cases of irregular vote casting in 11,3 %, and while content with the number of candidates’ proxies in each of the visited polling stations, they were disturbed by the number of unauthorised persons present. “Very few observers witnessed any intimidation of voters at the polling station (4.1 %), signs of campaigning (2.5 %), agitation (3.3 %) or campaign material for one of the candidates (5.7%)” (Osborn 1996: 7). However, cases of military voting with pressure to vote for Ter-Petrosyan were multiple in 40 % of the visited polling stations.

The relatively law-compliant voting process was followed by “substantial and serious breaches of the presidential election law ... in numerous polling stations during the count” (Osborn 1996: 9). Observers mentioned that in many cases the Chairpersons of Precinct

Electoral Commissions (PEC) attempted to delay the vote count “in the hope that the international observers would leave” (Osborn 1996: 9). The breaches in vote counting included: invalidation of ballots cast for Vazgen Manukyan, ballot stuffing in at least one of the precincts in the presence of a police officer and representatives of the Ministry of Interior, and literal theft of the ballot boxes, with no arrests following. Overall in eight polling stations out of 37 observed, the count was not conducted according to the law, and in five of them was conducted very badly. In six out of 13 of the Community Electoral Commissions (CoEC) visited by OSCE observers the number of voter coupons did not match the number of signatures on the voters list, and in one of the CoECs the members of the commission were drunk. The observation mission concluded that “a thorough review of the relevant section of the presidential election law on the count process, with the context, perhaps, of the adoption of a universal election code needs to take place ... [and] this review should also look at the structure, composition, and training needs of the CoECs” (Osborn 1996: 11).

The final report of the OSCE observation mission has produced a number of recommendations to improve the conduct of elections in Armenia. Reflecting on the irregularities during the election process: 1) the observation mission stated that unauthorised persons like the representatives of the Ministry of Interior could not be present in polling station; 2) pressure on the military personal to vote for a particular candidate cannot be exercised and the responsibilities of the military during elections should be clearly defined; 3) the elections commissions should have a clear legal guide; 4) trainings should be organised; 5) the CEC should adopt regulations on the legal responsibilities of the chairman and the secretary of the Regional Electoral Commissions; 6) the Voter List needs to be updated; 7) the invalidation of ballots should be done according to a consistent criteria. These recommendations show that though Armenia had carried out some legislative improvements

to its electoral law resulting in formal democratic transformation, those were not enforced and the incumbent relied on anti-democratic measures to be re-elected. The preferential treatment of the incumbent and his virtually unlimited resources underlined that 1996 presidential elections allowed contestation but limited its fairness. At the same time, public opinion polls show that the incumbent would still have high chances of re-election, though without a victory guaranteed in the first round of elections. Ter-Petrosyan chose to build his victory with the help of security forces and consequently lost public confidence (ICG 2004). Adhering to fully democratic conduct of elections would entail moderate utility of adaptation for the incumbent, especially taking into account absence of united, strong, and outspoken opposition.

6.2 Extraordinary presidential Elections of 1998

The Western shock over President Ter-Petrosian's resignation, who "began as a democrat and gradually lost his way" (Washington Post 1998) was emphasised by the strongman images of then prime minister and president-to-be Robert Kocharyan. Ter-Petrosyan was also called "the most spectacular victim" of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, since "he dared to suggest that Armenia should be more flexible over Karabakh" (Economist 1998b). Ter-Petrosyan's resignation was described as a "velvet coup" (Economist 1998b) and occurred without any popular uprising or resistance from the ruling party (Astourian 2000). Notwithstanding the reasons of Ter-Petrosyan's resignation, the ousting of the president led to extraordinary presidential elections on 16 March with the second round on 30 March 1998. Though not void of violations, for some observers these elections made a "significant progress" (UNDP 2001: 39) and proved Armenians to be the "Soviet nation most immune to communism" (Economist 1998a).

Though a comprehensive elections reform was underway in Armenia, the extraordinary presidential elections were held before the new Electoral Code could have been adopted (OSCE 1998). Thus, the extraordinary elections were administered under the election law that was criticised by the OSCE mission after the 1996 elections. Nevertheless, before the elections two alternative draft laws had been submitted to the ODIHR for comments. However, due to shortage of time between Ter-Petrosyan's resignation and the date of the extraordinary elections, the new law was impossible to pass. While rhetorically taking into consideration the international perspective on domestic elections, the Government of Armenia invited OSCE observation mission, but the Parliament refused the accreditation of domestic non-partisan observers. The denial of accreditation to thousands of Armenians specifically trained for election observation breached Paragraph 8 of the Copenhagen Document.⁵⁰ The OSCE report stated that the extraordinary election had not met the OSCE standards, despite Armenia's commitment to them. Though the 1998 election showed signs of improvement in comparison to the 1996 election, the latter was not an appropriate standard and the elections were marred by "serious irregularities and sufficient evidence of vote fraud to require further investigation and possible criminal charges" (OSCE 1998: 3).

Twelve individuals gathered the required 25000 signatures to run for presidency, among them the acting president Kocharyan and former communist leader Karen Demirchyan, who moved to the second round as none of the candidates won the majority of votes. The first round of elections witnessed illegal campaigning such as distribution of kerosene outside of Kocharyan's headquarters or distribution of his electoral pamphlets on the incoming flights by Armenian Airlines. Though improvements were observed in media coverage of the elections (OSCE 1998), the European Institute for the Media reported that

⁵⁰ <http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/14304>

Kocharyan received more news coverage on Channel 1 and four times more editorial coverage in “Hayastani Hanrapetutyun” newspaper before the first round of elections. During the second round Kocharyan received 45.15 % of the editorial coverage of Channel 1 as compared to 16.65 % of Demirchyan. In addition, state controlled media, which had the largest coverage and reach, referred more positively to Kocharyan than Demirchyan, who, however, refused the opportunity of public debate on Channel 1 (OSCE 1998). Following the campaign and with “only the approximate numbers of ballots [are] written in the receipts” (OSCE 1998: 6) in some PECs, in the first round Kocharyan received 38.5 %, Demirchyan 30.5 %, Vazgen Manukyan 12.2 %, Sergey Badalyan, 10 %, and Paruyr Hayrikyan 5.4 % of the 63.5 % turnout. Other candidates received less than 1 % of the votes. On 30 March Kocharyan won the second round with 58.9% as compared to Demirchyan’s 40.1 % with the turnout of 68.1 %.

The OSCE general assessment was “bad” or “very bad” in 16 % of polling stations, while the “good” assessment of the other 84 % do not result in a positive assessment of the overall elections. In 53 visited polling stations cases of intimidation were observed, with international observers denied entrance, other candidates’ observers intimidated by Kocharyan’s proxies, and voters intimidated throughout the country (OSCE 1998). As in case of the 1996 election and despite statements by state officials, unauthorised persons such as police and military officers were present in polling stations throughout the country. Agitation and unrest was observed in 106 polling stations with the military largely voting under the pressure of commanding officers. The OSCE observers also noticed “widespread occurrences of ballot and coupon box stuffing in both rounds of the election” (OSCE 1998: 9) and “bad” vote count in 1 out of 4 and 1 out of 3 polling stations during the first and second rounds respectively with PEC member not understanding the counting process in one out of 6 polling

stations. In addition, unusual increase in turnout and reversal of the vote ratio in favour of Kocharyan in the second round of elections raised the suspicions of the observers on the legitimacy of the results (OSCE 1998).

Though the elections were commended by the OSCE mission for being organised in such a short timeframe, serious flaws were revealed leading to even longer list of recommendations than after the 1996 elections. The 1998 recommendations reiterated a number of those from 1996 and included: taking into account the OSCE comments for the new electoral code; sanctioning of authorities not administering the law correctly; review and clarification of the vote count, verification, and aggregation; partisanship of electoral commissions; undue influence of candidates' proxies; accreditation of non-partisan observers; depolarisation of state media; urgent update of the Voters List; addressing military voting; and undertaking a full investigation of blatant violations of the election law. The undemocratic nature of the 1996 elections carried to 1998 with the anticipated formal improvements but without visible behavioural changes. Seemingly unequivocal presidential bid of Kocharyan also backed by the re-legalised Dashnak Party, was challenged by the candidacy of Karen Demirchyan, who had the potential of reminding especially older voters of the times of general employment. Given high unemployment, post-war devastation, and disillusionment with Ter-Petrosyan's democracy, the voters might have preferred the rebirth of safe Soviet times projected by Demirchyan. Without running the risks of moderately high costs to his newly-gained power, Kocharyan opted for several electoral violations, yet again allowing an unfair competition

6.3 Presidential Elections of 2003

Kocharyan's non-partisanship was referred by him as his belonging to the people of Armenia and his greater ability to democratize the country, ensure human rights, and fight against corruption. However, under Kocharyan Armenia rather showed trends of turning into a police state (Halliday 2008) with a proper dictator than a democratizing country (Danielyan 2004a). Nevertheless, with the help of the Diaspora, international funding, and swap deals with Russia, Armenia's economy started to show the promised growth. However, the progress of democracy has not lived up to the advancement of economy. The democratic progress was largely limited to the 1999 adoption of the new electoral law on presidential, parliamentary, and local elections, which however lacked transparency and provisions on protection of human rights. The European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) made a number of suggestions on the amendments to the law after a visit to Yerevan in November 2000 (Owen 2000) and the amended version of the law was adopted in 2002. In 2000-2001 limitations were imposed on the right of holding peaceful demonstrations (UNDP 2001).

The first year of Kocharyan's presidential term had witnessed a staged attempt of a coup d'état (Danielyan 2001a) and a persisting reshuffle of the government. In October 1999, six men armed with Kalashnikov rifles managed entered the Parliament building during a Q&A session and killed among others the prime minister Vazgen Sargsyan and Parliament Speaker and former presidential candidate Karen Demirchyan. Holding 40 people hostage in the Parliament building, the gunmen stated that their goal was to punish those responsible for the rampant corruption that hindered Armenia's prosperity (CBS 1999). After the promise of free and fair trial by President Kocharyan, the hostages were released and the gunmen were

sentenced to life in prison. Though Sargsyan had been appointed prime minister earlier in June by Kocharyan himself, the oppositional groups voiced concerns that the killings were orchestrated by the president fearing the growing power of Sargsyan and the popularity of his party ally Demirchyan (Danielyan 2001a; Kalantarian and Danielyan 2001). Another assassination before the presidential elections added to the political atmosphere of “fear and in trepidation, felt by candidates and the public” (IYC 2003: 1). The opposition and pro-government groups started immediately blaming each other for the assassination of the head of Public H1 TV,⁵¹ Tigran Naghdalyan. One of the presidential candidates even quit the race citing the atmosphere of fear as the reason (IYC 2003).

Before the election campaign kick-off, the OSCE had voiced its hopes that elections would comply with Armenia’s democratic and international commitments (Danielyan 2003a), since according to the CoE further integration in the European community will depend upon clean polls (Zakarian 2003a). Hoping that Armenia would further progress on democracy, the OSCE mission to Yerevan had also reminded that the reactions of the EU and the USA largely depended upon the assessment by the OSCE (Danielyan 2003a). As acknowledged by the OSCE, the Electoral Code of 1999 complied with the international standards for the conduct of elections; however its implementation was insufficient to meet OSCE commitments (OSCE 2003b). A positive development from the previous presidential elections was the presence of domestic observers. Nevertheless, also the improved law had several shortcomings, including lack of transparency in publication of preliminary results, lack of specification of procedures challenging a decision of an election commission, inconsistency with the Constitution of time-frames set in the Electoral Code of appeals resulting in invalidation of elections results. In addition, while the Constitutional Court, described as “Kocharyan’s stooge” (Aravot in

⁵¹ Successor of the State Channel

Sarkisian 2003) was still considering an appeal on the first round, the second round of elections proceeded, and Kocharyan was sworn as president (Danielyan et al 2003), while Court was hearing an appeal on the second round. However, the 2003 presidential election did not meet international standards not due to technical or procedural lapses, but due to a “lack of sufficient political determination by the authorities to ensure a fair and honest process” (OSCE 2003b: 2).

With the opposition unable to propose a single candidate, 15 persons announced their presidential bids, but only nine, including the incumbent Robert Kocharyan, actually participated in the voting. Despite such a variety of candidates providing voters with a “genuine choice”, the political ambience was disfigured by “intimidation, isolated disruption of campaign events, and one serious violent incident” as well as “public resources were widely used in support of the incumbent” (OSCE 2003b: 1). Public TV and state-funded newspapers showed heavy bias towards the incumbent, with a slightly positive improvement in the second round due to the first ever television debate between the candidates. In direct breach of the paragraph 7.7 of the Copenhagen Document, the campaign also involved dismissals of opposition supporters, intimidation of shop owners displaying posters other than the incumbent’s, threats of withdrawal of utilities by village and town heads, and passport acquisition to impersonate voters. OSCE monitoring of five TV stations and six newspapers revealed heavy bias towards the incumbent, with more than 60 % of primetime news coverage on three private channels and 47 % on public TV dedicated to positive overview of the incumbent’s actions as a candidate rather than current president. Print media provided various views on the candidates. An objective opinion could have been formed only if reading several publications at time, because of heavy bias towards one or the other candidate (OSCE 2003b).

Despite opinion polls predicting first round win for Kocharyan none of the candidates received the majority of votes, and a second round of voting was held (first round: Robert Kocharyan 49.48 %, Stepan Demirchyan 28.22%, Artashes Geghamyan 17, 66 %, Aram Karapetyan 2.95 %, others less than 1 %; second round: Robert Kocharyan 67.45 %, Stepan Demirchyan 32.55 %). OSCE reported “significant irregularities” during the voting process in 10% (first round) and 13 % (second round) of the visited polling stations, “which is a disturbingly high proportion” (OSCE 2003b: 19). The irregularities included, ballot box stuffing, carousel voting, military voting, voting on behalf of absent or deceased persons, as well as intimidation of proxies. The voter turnout in some polling stations was recorded as over 100 %. The vote count was negatively assessed in 20 % (first round) and “many” (OSCE 2003b: 21) of the visited poling stations due to ballot box stuffing, physical intimidation of proxies, presence of unauthorised persons, as well as deliberate falsification of results (OSCE 2003b). On average, electoral fraud has increased in the second round of voting as compared to the first round, undermining the supposedly democratic achievement of Armenia marking the first time a CIS country incumbent is not re-elected in the first round. On the other hand the opposition stated that second round was permitted to avoid heavier violations and consequently worse evaluations from the international monitors (RFE/RL 2003b).

The lack of confidence in the voting results was boosted by politically imbalanced commissions, failure by the CEC to publish the detailed breakdown of the preliminary results, and still problematic voters lists. The opposition and the supporters of Stepan Demirchyan called for the annulment of the elections results (Danielyan 2003b), followed by statements from the president and government official that any illegal activities would be punished. Without waiting long for the opposition to act, police detained at least 200 opposition proxies. Thousands of Demirchyan’s supporters rallied in Yerevan after the first round surrounding the

CEC building and claiming that “these elections were even more disgraceful” than the ones of 1998 (Avoyan 2003). Similar rallies followed the second round of elections (Danielyan et al 2003). An opposition leader Albert Bazeyan hoped that the Constitutional Court would scrap the elections results “and would not become an accomplice in illegal seizure of power” (Melkumian and Kalantarian 2003). Notwithstanding the negative evaluation of international monitoring and widespread opposition to the elections result, the Constitutional Court did not annul results, instead suggesting that a year later a referendum might be held as a kind of vote of confidence for Kocharyan. However, no referendum was held (Sarkisian 2004a).

Taking into consideration that parliamentary elections were soon to follow in May 2003, the OSCE considered non-advisable to amend the electoral procedures once an election process is underway. Nevertheless, it suggested a list of recommendations to be immediately implemented before the parliamentary elections that included: hold criminally responsible people accountable for electoral fraud, dismiss PEC members responsible of irregularities, make a complete and detailed breakdown of elections results publicly available, and allow all observers and proxies sufficient freedom of movement. It also stressed that the authorities should emphasise that electoral fraud is not permissible, abolish provisions of the Administrative Code on administrative detention, and sanction state-funded newspaper *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* for bias treatment of candidates. In addition, the OSCE put forward recommendations for longer-term action which included: amendments to the Electoral Code; improvements of voter lists; presence of unauthorised persons in polling stations, balanced membership on National Commission for Television and Radio to ensure the impartiality of public media outlets; no further state interference in the activities of media personnel. Boasting some legislative progress after the adoption of new elections law, Armenian authorities, however, preferred not to rely on democratic processes to avoid possible defeat in

elections. Given lack of progress in Nagorno Karabakh conflict and persisting criminal allegations against the incumbent regime, the possibility of Kocharyan's defeat was not groundless and made the utility of holding free and fair elections low for the incumbent.

The protests against the incumbent regime however did not cease after the elections and rolled over to 2004, the year when Armenia was recognised to be worthy of the inclusion into the ENP. Several rallies were held by the opposition in different parts of Armenia and subsequently disrupted by the arrests of the activists (Danielyan 2004b). Despite regular negative assessments by Amnesty International and CoE of police brutality (Danielyan 2001b; 2004b), repeated incidents of detaining and beating oppositional politicians (Khachatrian et al 2004) did not cease. The anti-government protests (Kalantarian and Avoyan) as well as the use of the OSCE-criticised Soviet-era Administrative Code allowing detention continued through spring of 2004. Detention of opposition participants persisted despite the criticism of the EU envoy (Kalantarian et al 2004), the calls to end the practice of detentions not to face sanctions by PACE (Kalantarian and Danielyan 2004), which would “reconsider the credentials of the Armenian delegation” (PACE 2004). Ironically, controversial arrests took place also in May (Sarkisian 2004c) and June (Kalantarian and Stepanian 2004; Danielyan 2004b), without PACE's follow-up on its initial threats (Babayan 2010a) and amidst calls from international think-tanks (Crisis Group) and NGOs (Human Rights Watch) on the international community to exercise stronger pressure on Armenian authorities. What the Armenian authorities did partially improve in 2005 under the pressure from the Venice Commission and the OSCE was the controversial law on demonstrations guaranteeing the freedom of assembly (Zakarian 2005), a specific freedom to be often cited after the 2008 presidential elections.

6.4 Presidential Election of 2008

With anti-government protests, opposition's boycotts of the parliamentary sessions, and arrests continuing in 2005 (Bedevian 2005b), Kocharyan's regime managed to win a referendum on constitutional amendments, supported by the West (Khachatrian and Kalantarian 2005). Barred by the Constitution from the third consecutive presidential term, Kocharyan had been expected to emulate his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in handpicking his successor and moving to the position of prime-minister. Kocharyan had refuted the possibility of the third term regarding new constitution as the re-start of his tenure if the referendum passed and such a possibility was later disregarded by the president-elect Sargsyan. The referendum sparked new domestic claims of electoral fraud with observers mentioning empty polling stations on the contrary to the official turnout of 66 % (IYC 2005; Khachatrian 2005; [Table 27](#)) but was not condemned by the Western actors (Danielyan 2005a; Freizer 2005) and was not monitored by the OSCE due to "a lack of a formal invitation from official Yerevan" (Danielyan and Stepanian 2005). The question of Kocharyan's possible successor received its answer when Serzh Sargsyan was appointed prime-minister after his predecessor Andranik Markarian's sudden death caused by heart attack. The Defence Minister, belonging to the same Karabakh clan, with similar extensive connections in Armenia's oligopolic politics, seemed to be the ultimate choice to be endorsed by the incumbent, who did not waste the opportunity to declare his support. With Kocharyan and oligarchy's backing Sargsyan's candidacy had seemed the winning bid until largely unexpected self-nomination of the former president Levon Ter-Petrosyan came later in 2007.

The pre-election atmosphere was dominated by public disbelief in free and fair elections in Armenia and the continued disappointment in the efforts of the authorities to improve the state of democracy. Nevertheless, the general willingness to vote was rather high

(see Table 19). Though Chapter 31 of the 1999 Electoral Code prohibits promising money, goods or service to citizens in exchange for votes, a number of such cases were reported to and investigated by the OSCE. The Electoral Code governing 2008 presidential elections and first adopted in 1999 was frequently amended and the amendments most recent to the elections were added in November and December 2007. Though the amendments included some of the OSCE recommendations made after 2003 presidential (Khachatrian 2004) and 2007 parliamentary elections, a number of recommendations were still to be addressed. However, the Law on Television and Radio Broadcasting was amended in 2007 to provide further clarity to campaigning procedures. Thus, as in the case of the 2003 presidential elections, the legal framework though with certain shortcomings, provided for sound ground to conduct free and fair elections. However, yet again the “lack of will to implement the provisions effectively and impartially” (OSCE 2008b: 4) caused the elections to fall short of the committed standards and to result in numerous infringements (Bedevian 2008a). The conduct of the elections and the dramatic aftermath defied the former optimism of the OSCE that Armenia’s “government is now ready to prevent widespread vote rigging in the future” (Danielyan 2003a) and is “to hold its first-ever national election judged free and fair by the international community” (Kalantarian 2007).

Table 27. The Armenian population and elections.

	Do you believe 2007 parliamentary elections were free and fair?	Will 2008 presidential elections be fair?	Will you vote in presidential elections?
2008	Free and fair 29%	Yes 39%	Definitely yes 50%
	Not free and fair 58%	No 46%	Probably yes 31%
			Probably no 8%
	No opinion 13%	No opinion 15%	Definitely no 2%
Don't know 9%			

Source: Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, January 2008.

After two potential candidates had been rejected for not having the certificates proving 10-year residence in Armenia, the total of nine individuals registered their candidacies with the CEC. The electoral campaign was fiercer than had ever happened in Armenia, with candidates often blaming each other for Armenia's economic and political maladies (Bedevian 2008a) and in some cases for buying votes for USD 16 (PFA 2008: 19). Often acrimonious rhetoric of some candidates, especially of Ter-Petrosyan towards Sargsyan and outgoing president Kocharyan, sometimes turned derogatory (OSCE 2008b). Sargsyan's campaign outshone the other candidates by its visibility and by the number of state and local self-government officials campaigning for him in violation of Article 22.1 of the Electoral Code (OSCE 2008b). Sargsyan also enjoyed preferential coverage and treatment especially in broadcast media, where his status as a presidential candidate and incumbent prime minister merged and received either positive or neutral assessments. Public TV and Radio allocated equal coverage to all candidates, with private TV stations and print media overtly supporting one of the candidates. While other candidates received mainly neutral coverage in broadcast media, Ter-Petrosyan's coverage was predominately negative, mainly due to regular criticisms from the other eight candidates. However, as before the media proved to be reluctant in publishing criticism of the incumbents (OSCE 2008b).

The OSCE's criticism of 2003 presidential elections made Armenian authorities question the former's impartiality and reluctantly extend another invitation for monitoring for 2007 parliamentary elections (Meloyan 2007) demanding objective monitoring (Danielyan and Tamrazian 2007). However, after the parliamentary elections were viewed as largely positive and democratic (Danielyan 2007a, 2007b), the OSCE mission was yet again invited to monitor the 2008 presidential elections. Sargsyan's victory on 19 February, 2008 with 52.82 % of the votes from 70 % turnout over Ter-Petrosyan's 21.50 %, Arthur Baghdasarian's 17.70 %, Vahan Hovhannisian's 6.2 % and Vazgen Manukyan's 1.3 % was considered to be "administered mostly in line with OSCE and Council of Europe commitments and standards" by the OSCE statement of 20 February 2008 (OSCE 2008a: 1). Two days later, the EU through its Slovenian presidency joined the OSCE and congratulated "the Armenian people for the conduct of a competitive presidential election in Armenia" noting that "further improvements are necessary" and that the authorities should "ensure the complaints are adequately investigated" (EU Presidency 2008). The US State Department statement followed on 23 February and congratulated Armenian people "on the active and competitive Presidential election" and, while praising urged Armenia's government to "investigate all allegations of irregularities, and implement steps to improve future elections" and "all political forces to continue observing the rule of law and to work peacefully and responsively for a democratic Armenia".⁵²

However, the congratulated Armenian people mobilised by the mentioned political forces were protesting against the results of elections and claiming widespread electoral fraud. The events following the election induced the OSCE to review its broadly positive assessment of the elections in its interim report noting that the final assessment depends upon "the

⁵² <http://armenia.usembassy.gov/news022208.html>

conduct of the remaining stages of the election process, including the tabulation and announcement of final results and the handling of possible post-election day complaints or appeals” (OSCE 2008a: 1). The OSCE final report mentioned that while the OSCE commitments were “mostly met” in the pre-election and voting period, “serious challenges to some commitments did emerge, especially after election day”, that “devalued the overall election process” (OSCE 2008b: 1). The vote count was assessed as “bad” or “very bad” in 16% of the visited polling stations (OSCE 2008b: 2). As before, the restriction of the rights of observers and media in some precincts, attempts of violence, cases of scuffling and mutual offences, pressure on PEC members, proxies and the media, illegal influence on the free will of voters, deliberate ignoring of certain procedures, and unallowable presence of police and other unauthorised people at the polling stations were observed during the elections (IYC 2008: 5). In addition to its previous recommendations that were not yet implemented OSCE made a number of other recommendations on suffrage rights, election administration, voter registration, election campaigning, campaign financing, media, election day procedures, recount of results, and complaints and appeals. The pervasive issue of voter list and other administrative issues seemed to be partially solved during these elections (IYC 2008). However, violations and inaccuracies yet again were acknowledged to stem not from weak administrative capacity of electoral officials but weak political willingness and seeming impunity of previous violators.

Feeding on public’s disappointment with elections and large audience during his public speeches, Ter-Petrosyan even before the voting day called on his supporters to gather at the Liberty Square in Yerevan to celebrate the victory or to protest the fraud (Danielyan and Bedevian 2008). Notwithstanding friendly relations between Kocharyan-Sargsyan and Russian president Vladimir Putin and the latter’s endorsement of Sargsyan, Ter-Petrosyan

claimed that he had secured Russia's support for his candidacy (Danielyan and Bedevian 2008). The rhetoric of the candidate that did not even allow the possibility of free and fair elections, and the subsequent voting day events gathered large numbers of protesters, who announced a continuous sitting protest in Yerevan without the possibility of "retreat" until the election results are reversed (Shoghikian et al 2008). While other candidates also questioned the legitimacy of elections, their rhetoric was not as unapologetic as Ter-Petrosyan's. Commenting on the possibility of protests, President Kocharyan stated that demonstrations would be permitted if they are peaceful, otherwise "the state machine will counter them with all its power" (Danielyan and Bedevian 2008).

Largely peaceful sitting protests and marches lasted from 20 February to 1 March. Protesters occupied the Liberty Square and marched through Yerevan despite Kocharyan's initial pleas to accept election results turned threats to disperse the protests by force or put Ter-Petrosyan and his allies in jail if they try to seize government buildings (Kalantarian 2008). Kocharyan kept his promise of arresting Ter-Petrosyan's supporters, though without attempts by the latter to physically seize government buildings (Kalantarian et al 2008; Khachatryan et al 2008). More of Ter-Petrosyan's allies were arrested (RFE/RL 2008h; Danielyan 2008j) after sleeping protesters were forcefully dispersed from the Liberty Square by police and security forces on the information that explosives had been found in some of the tents (Khachatryan et al 2008). Dispersal was followed by an outbreak of violence and clashes between the protesters and police in proximity of the Yerevan Municipality building and French and Italian Embassies. Firing of automatic weapons, setting vehicles alight, detonation of explosives and sporadic looting left at least eight dead (RFE/RL 2008f) and resulted in a 20-day state of emergency in Yerevan declared by the outgoing President Kocharyan. The CoE criticised state of emergency, which *inter alia* imposed a ban on rallies and gatherings

and *de facto* media censorship (OSCE 2008b). Whether the following violence was caused by the protesters, or provoked by the police itself, or was even a kind of conspiracy theory advanced by the foreign forces as claimed by Armenian Prosecutor-General (EurasiaNet 2008) is unclear as the sides claimed different reasons.

The electoral process in Armenia has not improved since the first general elections in 1991, despite regular amendments and improvements to the elections law ([Table 28](#)) and repeated international calls for (Bedevian and Hovhannisyan 2011) and government's assurances of free and fair elections (Bedevian 2011). Widespread corruption, regular electoral fraud, and violent crackdowns of the opposition have caused the apathy of the public towards the power-change capacity of elections to the extent that some mention elections as their greatest fear (IRI 2008). The amended electoral code signed into law by President Sargsyan in July 2011 is yet to be implemented during 2012 elections. However, though Electoral Code and other relevant rules have regularly been adopted and updated at request of international observers, elections are yet to be free and fair. Thus, while formal democratic transformation is clearly noticeable, behavioural transformation is yet to happen.

The incumbents' utility of adaptation to democracy through 1991-2008 has varied from moderate to low—the chances that an incumbent would lose power as a result of democratic elections have ranged from moderate to high. Low resonance of elections and absence of prior democratic legacies have also negatively contributed to the conduct of elections, which has not improved despite high rhetorical identification of both the incumbents and the opposition with democracy. In addition, the oppositional rhetoric has never provided a chance for free and fair elections, and the opposition cried fraud even before it was committed. The fragmentation of the opposition and its suspicious attitude towards

each other and the incumbent not only weakened public trust but also allowed the incumbent to manoeuvre and win over the opposition by sharing stakes in power as can be observed from the defection of several oppositional groups after the 2008 elections. Oppositional fragmentation is especially visible in the background of coalitional, even if forced, unity, as in the case of the recent alignment of parties in the ruling coalition pledging not to compete against each other in the 2012 parliamentary elections and endorse Sargsyan’s re-election bid.

Table 28. Freedom House evaluation of electoral process in Armenia.

1997	1998	1999-2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
5,50 ⁵³	5,75	5,25	5,50	5,50	5,50	5,75	5,75	5,75	5,75	5,50	5,75	5,75

Source: Freedom House Nations in Transit

6.5 Supporting Free and Fair Elections in Armenia: Ticking Boxes, Changing Laws

The USA’s involvement in democracy promotion through elections started with the establishment of the Armenia office of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) in 1995. The non-for-profit IFES “promotes democratic stability by providing technical assistance and applying field-based research to the electoral cycle worldwide to enhance citizen participation and strengthen civil societies, governance and transparency” (IFES 2011). IFES mentions political neutrality as one of its main strengths as it endeavours to avoid association with government or political tendencies. Although focusing on electoral assistance, at least in its mission statement, IFES acknowledges the importance of strong parliaments, political parties, the rule of law, and effective civil society for democracy. Describing its activities as “elections plus” IFES usually engages *inter alia* in electoral law

⁵³ The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest.

design, political finance reform, party and candidate registration, civic and voter education, results tabulations, and training of commission and poll workers (IFES 2011). Although, IFES receives occasional funding also from the UN and the EU, its main donor is the US government.

IFES has commenced its activities in Armenia starting with the 1995 parliamentary elections, when an expert-team was sent to Armenia under the funding of USAID to evaluate Armenia's administrative systems, identify feasible areas for short-term technical assistance, and recommend longer-term improvements to Armenia's election process (Edgeworth and Lancell 1996). According to the expert team, due to an environment that precluded meaningful debate and competition between political parties and candidates, voter education appeared to be of "paramount" necessity (Edgeworth and Lansell 1996: 3). In addition, despite previous IFES recommendations the CEC had not conducted training for poll workers and had failed to prepare training materials. IFES suggested the CEC to fill this gap by preparing a handbook for precinct officials. However, the offer had been initially rejected by the CEC. Nevertheless, "IFES pursued its course, the CEC acquiesced and agreed to accept and review" the handbook (Edgeworth and Lansell 1996: 66) and eventually 300 copies of it were printed. Based on the expert team's visit, IFES recommended several steps for future technical assistance to Armenia, specifically in preparation for the 1996 presidential elections:

- Survey of election officials to identify misunderstood laws and regulation, strengths and weaknesses of the existing system, locally proposed improvements, and potentially most helpful training mechanisms;
- Task force strategies for problem resolution for the nomination and registration of candidates, preparation and maintenance of voter lists, processing of voters, and counting and reporting elections results;

- Development of institutionalised training strategies and instructional materials to propose appropriate amendments to laws, develop procedures to ensure efficiency and transparency, enhance the skills of officials, develop training strategy for poll workers, and ascertain equipment needs beyond the financial resources of the CEC (Edgeworth and Lansell 1996: 87-90).

The project implemented as a follow-up to the 1995 IFES Technical Assistance Mission was initiated after February 1996 request from the Chairman of Armenia's National Assembly to the US Ambassador to Armenia to "seek for assistance in the preparation of the election laws governing the presidential and municipal elections scheduled Fall 1996" (Gardner et al 1996: 5). Thus, the IFES/Armenia Mission was comprised of US experts and was to provide technical information, assistance to the National Assembly on election law development, specialised election administration assistance, to conduct voter education, and to strengthen NGOs. For these objectives, IFES developed and distributed a training manual for electoral commissions, conducted seminars for election officials, conducted voter education through approximately 40 000 posters and fliers, and produced a series of "Town Hall" TV forums, which featured CEC representatives explaining the Law on Elections for President of the Republic of Armenia. Besides activities targeting specifically 1996 elections, IFES was developing a universal electoral code and other projects targeting electoral reforms. According to the IFES report (Gardner et al 1996) these activities may have contributed to an improved conduct of municipal elections in comparison to the presidential ones. Nevertheless, there was an urgent necessity for the development and enforcement of the Universal Electoral Code and several other subsequent recommendations *inter alia* including:

- Making RECs strictly accountable to the CEC;

- Training in election administration and requiring certificates from all REC and CEC members;
- Banning all alcoholic beverages from polling places;
- Setting up clear regulations for removal of electoral commission members;
- Establishing written agreements on the distribution of television time;
- Prohibiting all political campaigning on governmental premises;
- Preparing computerised voting lists;
- Sanctioning election administrators for knowingly violating the law.

Despite negative reports and recorded fraud during and after the 1996 presidential election, IFES claimed that it had “greatly improved the electoral process and the level of transparency of the 1996 presidential elections” (Vickery 2002 et al: 1).

The initial on-site electoral assistance was followed by a USAID/IFES Cooperative Agreement beginning 21 September 1997 and ending on 30 September 2002. Under the Cooperative Agreement, IFES was tasked to provide consulting on the development of election legislation, to conduct studies on voter and election issues, and to support the CEC with overall electoral process reform, conduct of elections (Vickery 2002 et al). Though the 1998 presidential elections were seen as flawed, IFES completed its project in 2002 “with the satisfaction that the country had enjoyed a period of relative improvement in election administration” (Vickery et al 2002: 36). Positioning itself as an impartial but trusted and professional actor in elections, IFES has initially concentrated its efforts on the activities with and targeted at the CEC. However, by July 2000 “forward progress with the CEC ceased because of the commission’s continued resistance to reform” (Vickery et al: 2). Among the resistance points of the CEC was reluctance to “provide information on complaints or to advocate transparency of election complaints”, “requests for financial support falling outside

of the parameters of the MOU [Memorandum of Understanding]” between IFES and the CEC, and the CEC’s refusal to engage “in serious reform work” (Vickery et al 2002: 13, 22, 23). Thus, USAID’s support to the CEC was discontinued, showing a rare commitment of a democracy promoter to consistency in and credibility of its rhetoric, democratic requirements, and actions.

Within its lifespan the IFES project has implemented a large number of activities each grouped under six thematic groups:

- Universal electoral code: election law reform;
- Seminars and roundtables;
- Technical support of elections;
- Ongoing support and cooperative development work;
- NGO support and development;
- Resource centre development.

Through these thematic areas, IFES has partnered with the CEC as its main target for capacity-building and as a vehicle for broader reforms. Close IFES attention to the drafting and later amending the universal electoral code, resulted in a document that according to many observers had the potential to provide for genuinely democratic elections. The capacity-building activities aimed to transform the CEC into a functioning elections organisation and involved payment of monthly internet connection, daily mentoring and practical support, payment of membership fees in international organisations, translation of useful international documents (Vickery et al 2002). Through numerous seminars IFES also aimed to advance professional skills of elections officials. The involvement of NGOs in training activities and activities on popular awareness raising and voter education have signalled yet again a rare initiative on behalf of a democracy promoter to engage several levels of democracy promotion

into the framework of one project, with political parties being “in closer contact with IFES than ever before” during the development of the universal electoral code (Vickery et al 2002: 31). With an attempt of cross-sectoral democracy promotion, IFES brought together legislators, government officials, political party leaders, NGO leaders, and public policy advocates.

Nevertheless, these activities did not succeed in diminishing “the distinct lack of political will within the CEC [which] governed its actions and limited the possibilities of cooperation” (Vickery 2002 et al: 35). The incentives offered to the CEC officials were in the form of democratic electoral reforms and capacity-building activities to ensure the democratic performance of the CEC. “IFES directly educated election officials at all levels through election administration training” (Vickery 2002 et al: 1), seemingly flawlessly paving the way to more democratic parliamentary and presidential elections planned for 2003. However, there was virtually no cooperation with other USAID implementers working in other sectors, except a single attendance by IFES project manager of a roundtable organised by NDI⁵⁴ in June 2001 (Vickery et al 2002: 11). Yet, as the chairperson of the CEC is appointed by the President, and the CEC members by political parties in the parliament, cooperation with implementers in other sectors and more direct involvement of other sectors going beyond project presentation might have been more beneficial. The advancement of personal skills of CEC members is unlikely to result in free and fair elections given their direct dependence upon the executive and political parties, which are in fact running for re-/election. At the same time, USAID through the IFES seemed to show consistency with some of its democratic requirements and stopped support to the CEC based on the latter’s poor democratic performance, however did not stop further trainings. In addition, the US government pledged the same amount assistance to Armenia despite the lack of democratic progress (Danielyan 2002a).

⁵⁴ The analysis of NDI activities in party development is presented in the following section.

As can be seen from the analysis of other sectors, the EU has rarely been involved in direct democracy promotion in countries that have not associated with it by any agreement. In case of Armenia, the EU elections activities started in 1999, when it sent its observers under the framework of the OSCE to monitor the 1999 parliamentary elections (European Commission 2000). The EU acknowledges the observation of elections to be “an important component of the EU’s policy in promoting human rights and democratization”. The EU bases its decision to send an election observation team on minimum conditions such as universal franchise, political parties and candidates’ right to participate in elections and to have reasonable access to the media, and freedom of expression allowing for criticism of the incumbent. By applying these conditions, the EU wishes “to ascertain that its involvement in monitoring is likely to promote further democratisation” (European Commission 2000). Thus, the EU has attempted to serve as an example and a possible shaming tool for democratising countries and in its democracy promotion actions has often relied on the OSCE and the CoE through joint assessments and projects.

The European hopes for Armenia moving closer to democracy and democratic elections were boosted by Armenia’s strong commitment to the CoE membership and actual adoption of several corresponding laws. Then secretary-general of the CoE Schwimmer, however, lamented the fact that the Armenian government failed to address his grave concerns voiced on the eve of the presidential run-off. He indicated that a failure to hold a clean vote on May 25 could destabilise the political situation in Armenia and even prompt punitive action by the CoE (Zakarian 2003b). In addition, PACE urged the CoE to press Armenia on its commitments to the CoE rules (Zakarian 2003b). The US Ambassador John Ordway called on the Armenian authorities to “take effective steps to ensure that the election campaign takes place within the framework established by the laws of Armenia” (Ordway in Melkumian

2003b). The ambassador also emphasised that to “take its rightful place among the democracies of the world” Armenia had to ensure a clean vote.

After the presidential elections, the USA joined the European criticism, saying that it is “deeply disappointed” with the Armenian authorities’ handling of the vote (Danielyan et al 2003). However, even though the concerns of European organisations and the US calls for clean polls had not been taken into consideration, European diplomats and the US Ambassador attended Kocharyan’s inauguration extending their congratulations. In addition, the poor and heavily criticised conduct of election did not prevent the US House of Representatives from securing USD 30 million more for the US assistance to Armenia, despite the Bush Administration’s promise to cut the budget. However, even the budget cut sought by the Bush Administration was envisaged not due to Armenia’s poor democratic performance but due to the own economic troubles of the USA (Danielyan 2003c). The fraudulent conduct of the 2003 presidential and parliamentary elections prompted the OSCE and the Venice Commission in 2004 to prepare joint recommendations for the electoral law and electoral administration in Armenia. However, the threatened punitive action did not follow. In its own turn, the EU that initially left the South Caucasus countries out of the ENP due to geographical reasons (European Commission 2003), has included Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia in the ENP, after a number of recommendations from the European Parliament (Napoletano 2003).

With the CEC being irresponsive to IFES and USAID democracy promotion efforts, the projects were refocused to civil society and individual citizens. The project Citizens’ Awareness and Participation in Armenia (CAPA) started in the autumn of 2000 and was completed in 2004, thus spanning over 2003 and the initial part of the 2007-2008 elections cycles. The project aimed to “promote a more transparent, responsive and democratic

government by building the knowledge base and organizing capabilities of community members” (Abrahamyan 2010). The project endeavoured to reach its objectives through direct citizen engagement, public outreach, education, and advocacy and *intern alia* included organizing garbage collection, cleaning monuments, and public opinion surveys. Thus, IFES aimed to influence government democratization through the education of citizens, at the same time paying no attention to the authorities or not endeavouring to build a dialogue between the executive, political parties, and the civil society.

CAPA was followed by another three-year USAID-funded project Strengthening Electoral Processes and Administration in Armenia (SEPA), which started in October 2005 with a budget of USD 2 million. The project aimed to increase fulfilment of the international and national election commitments of the Armenian government through activities within the areas of voter registration, voter information, and election administration. As its stakeholders SEPA considered the CEC, police/passport and visa departments, as well as the government, the National Assembly, and civil society. Through technical support and efforts to increase civil society surveillance of government actions, IFES aimed to induce the authorities to hold democratic elections.

Besides democratic conditionality supposedly accompanying CoE membership, seemingly democratizing events in Georgia and Ukraine have injected a dose of enthusiasm into democracy promoters, feeding their expectations that also Armenia will move in a more democratic direction. In addition, the constitutional constraints preventing the incumbent Robert Kocharyan from running for presidency again potentially opened Armenian political scene to new contenders. These factors made the elections cycle of 2007-2008 more hopeful compared to the previous one. On the other hand regime change was not regarded as a prerequisite for Armenia’s democratization and then US Ambassador John Evans pledged to

work “very intensively” for free and fair elections (Danielyan 2005b). Ironically, despite the heavy criticism of the previous elections, Ambassador Evans stated that Armenia was on the right political track (Danielyan 2005b). Following the pledge of working “very intensively” on free and fair 2007 and 2008 elections, the USA approved USD 6 million to assist Armenia in holding democratic elections. The program, also consented to by the Armenian government, entailed training and educational programs for voters, proxies, grants for NGOs, and publication of election related documents (Saghabalian 2005b). Stressing that “the time for vote rigging [was] over”, Ambassador Evans emphasised that democratic conduct of 2007-2008 elections had “a particular importance for the country’s future” (Evans in Saghabalian 2005b). The largely criticised handling of the constitutional referendum, however, did not prevent the USA from considering Armenia eligible for USD 236 million under the MCC. The US economic assistance of USD 236 million through MCA was linked to proper conduct of the 2007 parliamentary and 2008 presidential elections, which was expected to be an improvement in comparison to the November 2005 constitutional referendum (Meloyan 2006).

The EU, however, seemed to be more pessimistic about the conduct of elections or any general polls, after the constitutional referendum of 2005 on amendments endorsed by the EU itself. In a statement released by the UK Embassy to Yerevan, the EU expressed its concerns over reports of ballots stuffing and manipulation of the turnout figures, stressing that “activities such as this call into question Armenia’s commitment to transparency and democracy” (Danielyan 2005c). In addition, following the criticised 2003 parliamentary and presidential elections, the EUSR to the South Caucasus, Peter Semneby mentioned that freedom and fairness of the next parliamentary elections would be crucially important for closer political and economic links with the EU (Semneby in Saghabalian 2006). In addition,

repeated electoral fraud would substantially endanger Armenia's position in the ENP (Saghabalian 2006).

The German Presidency of the EU noted "with satisfaction that the parliamentary elections held in Armenia on 12 May [2007] were, on the whole, conducted fairly, freely and largely in accordance with the international commitments which Armenia had entered into (EU Presidency 2007). The EU also welcomed "the fact that, compared to previous elections, significant progress has been made" (EU Presidency 2007). Shortly after the EU statement, the CoE joined with congratulatory remarks. In its evaluation of the elections, the USA appeared more reserved than the EU, and though elections were regarded as "a step ahead in the right direction", they "did not fully meet international standards" (Casey 2008). However, the slight improvement in the conduct of elections prompted then US charge d'affaires in Yerevan, Rudolf Perina, to declare the US hope that 2008 presidential elections would be the most democratic in Armenian history (Perina in Stepanian 2007).

The US initial evaluation of the 2008 presidential election stated that it was "far from perfect" but "active and competitive" (Danielyan 2008c). However, after large-scale demonstrations and arrests of the opposition representatives the USA turned to criticism (Danielyan 2005b). Few days later US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza commended Serzh Sargsyan as being a "special leader", who the USA wanted to succeed (Bryza in RFE/RL 2008j). At the same time, while condemning deadly clashes in Yerevan, Bryza did not criticise the use of force against demonstrators (RFE/RL 2008j). However, again several days later, the US heavily criticised the crackdown on demonstrators, and threatened to cut funding unless the state of emergency was lifted (RFE/RL 2008k). However, even though the state of emergency was not lifted before the announced expiration date and

political arrests continued with no releases, the MCA funds were not reduced up until 2009 (RFE/RL 2009b). In addition, in July 2008, the House of Representatives rejected a 60 % cut in financial assistance to Armenia. However, the cut was not motivated by poor democratic performance, but yet again by general decrease in US foreign assistance and particularly by Armenia's own economic growth (Danielyan 2008a).

On 22 February, 2008 the EU “congratulate[d] the Armenian people for the conduct of a competitive presidential election in Armenia” and welcomed “the genuine efforts that were made to address the shortcomings noted in previous elections” (EU Presidency 2008). On 1 March the EU Presidency expressed its concerns on “the use of force of Armenian authorities against the demonstrators” and later on 13 March it expressed concerns about state of emergency calling on the authorities to lift it (EU Presidency 2008). Prior to the 2007-2008 elections cycle, Semneby clarified that the position of Armenia within the ENP would depend upon its democratic performance in elections. However, despite poor democratic performance, the position of Armenia within the ENP was not only not compromised but even boosted through Armenia's inclusion into the EaP. The disparity between EU and US evaluations of the conduct of elections became more apparent after May 2009 Yerevan mayoral elections, which the EU endorsed as free and fair and the US criticised as undemocratic, even if both actors rely on OSCE assessment of elections.

Via its human rights reports (Department of State 2009; 2010) the USA has repeatedly criticised the handling of protests and the curtailing of media freedom and freedom of assembly. However, the USA continued assistance to the government with slight social shaming and did exercise any pressure on the Armenian authorities. The threatened MCC cut of USD 67 million in 2009 coincided with no changes in the usual budget of US assistance to Armenia (Danielyan 2010). However, a stronger attempt to keep credibility of the USA's

threats and promises came when in mid 2011 Armenia was announced ineligible for further MCC funds due to lack of democratic progress with its further qualification depending on the conduct of 2012 and 2013 elections (Harutyunyan 2011a). The EU's new National Indicative Program on Armenia, which sets out the objectives for 2011-2013, likewise makes clear that "sufficient progress" in the country's democratization is "one of the main preconditions for upgrading contractual relations under the Eastern Partnership", which *inter alia* "improved quality of the electoral process and administration in line with international standards." It appears that the conduct and the aftermath of 2008 elections might have prompted democracy promoters to revise their strategies. However, the question remains whether regular undermining of their own credibility may have left them with worse democratic conditions than they had encountered before.

Chapter 7. Parties in Armenia: Do They Really Matter?

With the exception of a brief independence in the early 20th century, with first ever parliamentary elections in 1919, the notion of multi-party politics was foreign to the newly independent Armenia. The very first Armenian political parties established at the end of the 19th century were formed outside of the territory of Armenia and after sovietisation functioned among Armenian Diasporas. Some of them also function nowadays. Despite slight differences in their programs, their overarching goal was the independence of Armenia. The oldest Social Democrat Hunchakian party (SDHP) was established in 1880 in Geneva, Switzerland by a group of students; Armenian Democratic Liberal Party (ADL/Ramkavar) was established in 1885 in Van, Turkey; and currently the most active one Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF/Dashnak) in 1890 in Tbilisi, Georgia. Despite their long history and due to a lack of any parliamentary competition, these parties did not add to Armenia's inexperience with party politics. Armenia's only experience with the single Communist party had made party politics centralised on the personal appeal of the party leader, without reflecting the interests of the society.⁵⁵ Party formation and development in the early 1990s in Armenia was prevailed by clientelist relationships in the society (UNDP 1996). Party leaders used their positions for their own enrichment, their establishment as the political elite, and advancement of their own business plans instead of channelling the interests of their voters to the government. Not much has changed since then.

Notwithstanding the inexperience with party politics, Armenians ventured on party formations with eagerness resulting in more than 50 parties in the mid-1990s as if fully utilizing Article 7 of the Constitution guaranteeing the recognition of “ideological pluralism and multiparty system”. However, despite such a large number of political parties the

⁵⁵ However, the Communist party has lost its appeal after the break-up of the Soviet Union and won considerable number of seats only in 1990 elections.

ideological division into right and left wing parties had been largely impossible in Armenia (Grigoryan 1997). Hasty formation of party blocs before the 1996 presidential election saw unions of former “seemingly irreconcilable rivals” (Grigoryan 1997). In the 1990s the major dividing line between party ideologies was the treatment of the genocide issue, while even the Communists agreed on the importance of private property and economic reforms. The ARF pursued the most radical stance and Levon Ter-Petrosyan’s ANM the most tolerant one, considering the concept of national ideology a “fascist anachronism” (Grigoryan 1997). However, the idea of national ideology demanding back lost lands from Turkey and feeding on the recent military prevalence over Azerbaijan was gaining more supporters in the wake of the 1995 parliamentary elections. However, Ter-Petrosyan’s solution to the increasing popularity of the ARF was to ban the party in December 1994 on the grounds of the Yerevan mayor’s assassination, 30 other unsolved cases of assassinations, and allegations of conspiracy to overthrow the government (Dudwick 1997). Although the ARF’s past involvement in terrorist acts was known, it was unlikely that the ARF was involved in those assassinations (Astourian 2000).

7.1 Party Politics within Parliamentary Elections of 1995

First parliamentary elections after declaring independence were held in Armenia on 5 July 1995 coinciding with the referendum on Armenia’s new Constitution. The elections were characterised as “free, but unfair” as nine opposition parties were refused registration by the CEC and the largest opposition party ARF was banned (Freedom House 1998: 1). The Supreme Council was renamed to the unicameral National Assembly with 190 parliament members, 150 of who were elected in majoritarian and 40 in proportional representation systems. The overall turnout of 54.3 % in both systems gave 43.9 % (88 seats) to the Republican bloc, consisting of separately running ANM, ADL, Christian Democratic Union,

and the Republican Party. Shamiram party received 17.4 % (8 seats), the Armenian Communist Party⁵⁶ (ACP) 12.4 % (10 seats), and National Union of Self-Determination 5.7 % (3 seats). The independent candidates won 72 seats, of which 31 created the “Amendments” and 17 the “Yerkrapah” parliamentary groups. While the elections marked a grand victory for Ter-Petrosyan’s party, they also marked heavy defeat of the Communist party, which lost 126 seats as compared to the 1990 convocation of the Supreme Council, making communist rhetoric and potential anti-western sentiments practically impossible.

The rather active first convocation of the National Assembly adopted 302 laws and faced an authority crisis leading to Ter-Petrosyan’s resignation, followed by the resignation of the Speaker of the National Assembly. The penetration of oligarchic politics pushing for their interests in law-making was noticeable already in this convocation ignoring the Constitutional ban on entrepreneurial activities of the members of parliament under Article 65. While leading the Amendments group, the president’s brother Thelman Ter-Petrosyan was in control of manufacturers and industrialists, a part of the local market of oil products, the construction business, and had income generated from transportation sector (Petrosyan 2000 in Astourian 2000). In addition, former interior minister Vano Siradeghyan was partly in control of bread production, woodwork and timber industry, market in oil products, and transport, controlling the so-called Timber Lobby in the parliament consisting of 23 members. Former defence minister Vazgen Sargsyan and future party leader and prime minister controlled the so-called Grain Lobby for the advancement of his interests in bread production, transport industry, and yet again oil products (Petrosyan 2000 in Astourian 2000).

The Republic bloc following the lead of the ANM opted for choosing non-alignment policy for Armenia, since a “third force”, be that Russia or the West, had long and negatively

⁵⁶ Հայաստանի կոմունիստական կուսակցություն, *Hayastani Komunistakan Kusaktsutyun*

dominated Armenia. ANM rhetoric against Russia resulted in Russian troops joining Azerbaijani troops in driving out the remaining Armenian population out of Azerbaijan in 1991 (Cox and Eibner 1993). However, non-alignment did not mean policies contradicting Western approaches, but rather keeping friendly relations with the West without completely succumbing to it. In addition, democratization and further consolidation of democracy in Armenia were viewed as the pre-conditions to Armenia's development. Strong opposition to the Communist Party and the ARF was notable in regard to the genocide issue and normalisation of relations with Turkey, to which the Communist Party and ARF were opposed (Astourian 2000). After Ter-Petrosyan was forced to resign, a number of parliamentarians quit the Republic bloc and many of them joined the Yerkrpah group. Before registering as a party in 1997, the Yerkrpah group of Nagorno Karabakh war veterans had a tumultuous past of suppressing protests and attacking international religious organisations. Their membership was based on already elected members of National Assembly.

The all-women Shamiram party, led by the wives of government officials (Freedom House 1998), supported the official rhetoric of the government and sought greater involvement of women in politics. Similarly, the National Union of Self-Determination, led by former Soviet dissident and once presidential adviser on human rights Paruir Hayrikian, did not promote return to communist policies or increased authoritarianism, rhetorically committing itself to democracy. Even the Communist Party did not follow a hard-line approach and based its programs on policies for Armenia's political and economic development without adhering to typically communist rhetoric. The National Democratic Union, led by Vazgen Manukian, also abided by policies advancing democracy. The liberal rhetoric of the National Assembly's first convocation and its support of new democratic constitution shows at least nominal adherence to democracy by the parliamentarians.

However, the oligarchic approach to politics demonstrated by the main parties undermines democratic rhetoric and the ability or even the willingness of the parties to represent their voters once they are elected.

7.2 Party Politics within Parliamentary Elections of 1999

The elections for the second convocation of the National Assembly of 131 members were held on 30 May 1999. These parliamentary elections were regarded as “a step towards compliance with OSCE commitments” (OSCE 1999: 1). The OSCE monitoring mission reported that freedom of assembly, freedom of association, and freedom of expression had been respected without any cases of political repression. Kocharyan’s re-legalisation of the ARF was also regarded as a positive step. In addition, no major violations were observed during pre-election period with state media largely complying with its obligations and providing adequate free time and neutral coverage to parties participating in the race. However, the OSCE observation mission remained cautious about truly democratic character of those developments and seemingly transparent manner of political parties’ functioning (OSCE 1999). Although 1999 parliamentary elections seemed to be an improvement compared to previous elections, they still fall short of the OSCE standards that set democratic compliance threshold for elections.

Almost all parties mentioned in their electoral platforms that they wanted to improve Armenia’s electoral systems. Though with very similar programs, some parties gained more votes and a parliamentary majority, while the others did not even pass the five-per cent threshold. Such a divergence in results was mainly based on the personification of parties with their leaders (OSCE 1999) as the voter was giving preference not to the party platform but to the charisma of the party leader. Leader-based choice of parties has not changed much since

1999 elections. The new alliance of the Republican Party of Armenia⁵⁷ under the leadership of the increasingly powerful Defence Minister Vazgen Sargsyan and the People's Party⁵⁸ under the leadership of the former Soviet leader Karen Demirchian was the overwhelming winner of the elections. Their Unity bloc won a total of 62 seats. It was followed by the Communist Party, which won the same 10 seats as in 1995 elections. The ARF won eight seats, with the new Right and Unity Bloc winning seven seats, and the new Rule of Law Party⁵⁹ and NDU six seats each. The ANM and its associated parties have lost all their seats in the National Assembly following the ousting of Ter-Petrosyan.

In total 20 parties participated in 1999 elections, giving the voters a variety of quantitative choice without much of a qualitative choice⁶⁰. With little possibility to differentiate between pro-government and opposition parties (OSCE 1999), the campaign mainly focused on socio-economic problems and corruption, without much attention to foreign policy. However, with Karabakh-native as the president, there was little doubt that Armenia would not follow the moderate policy line proposed by Ter-Petrosyan. Nevertheless, the OSCE distinguished four major types of parties participating in 1999 elections: traditional parties such as ARF and Ramkavar following largely nationalist ideology; splits from the original Communist Party of the Soviet Armenia such as the CPA, Union of Communist and Socialist Parties and others following the Marxist ideology; post-independence parties such as the ANM, Union of Self-Determination and others; and newly created parties and alliances

⁵⁷ Հայաստանի Հանրապետական Կուսակցություն, *Hayastani Hanrapetakan Kusaktsutyun*

⁵⁸ Ժողովրդական Կուսակցություն, *Hayastani Zhoghovrdakan Kusaktsutyun*

⁵⁹ Օրինաց երկիր, *Orinats Erkir*. The correct translation of the party name would be “the Country of Law”, however, the official website of the party opts for Rule of Law. See http://www.oek.am/main/free_text/home_page.php?lng=1

⁶⁰ Due to unavailability of first-hand materials on party programs for 1999 parliamentary elections, the following account is based on the Report prepared by the Staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) available at <http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000043074730;page=root;view=image;size=100;seq=1;num=i>

such as the Unity, Right and Unity, Rule of Law, Dignified Future and others basing their rhetoric on democratic and economic reforms and prosperity.

The alliance of Vazgen Sargsyan and Karen Demirchian seemed initially surprising as Demirchian had not accepted his defeat by Kocharyan in 1998, who had received full endorsement of Sargsyan. However, their alliance of convenience comfortably matched Demirchian's rising popularity, associated by the public with the unemployment-free Soviet times, with the increasing power of Sargsyan and his Yerkrpah party, which he earlier had annexed to the Republican Party. Two leaders explained their alliance as a result of the intention not to confuse the voters and to overcome Armenia's problems. With such confidence in elections they did not even need to resort to electoral fraud. Unity's program called for democratic society, rule of law, market economy, and decent living standards for all. Aiming to reduce dependence upon foreign aid, Unity called for integration into the international community. Holding the majority in the parliament and forming a ruling coalition, the Unity was supposed to advance its programs. Nevertheless, the genuine adherence of Sargsyan to democracy was highly doubted by observers given his remarks after 1996 presidential voting that "even had Vazgen Manukian won 100 % of the vote, we would not have let him become president" (CSCE 1999: 12). However, the assassinations of both Sargsyan and Demirchian in the parliament building five months after the elections had prevented more objective understanding of his intentions.

Appealing to the elderly population and their nostalgia of Soviet period, the ACP unlike in 1995 refused western-style market economy, arguing that it had impoverished the population. Though not advocating recreation of the USSR, the ACP also called for close ties with Russia, joining Russia-Belarus Union, and recognition of Nagorno Karabakh under

international law. Nagorno-Karabakh also featured in the program of the ARF, though in milder tones, calling for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Mainly concentrating on domestic economic issues through the rejection of “radical liberalism” (CSCE 1999: 7). Based on the backing of then Nagorno-Karabakh Defence Minister Samvel Babayan, Rights and Unity alliance advocated for uniting the breakaway region with Armenia and developing an “economic axis” with Russia, Georgia, Iran, and Arab countries. The growing power ambitions by Babayan were met with explicit “annoyance from various commentators in Yerevan” (CSCE 1999: 7) demonstrating infeasibility of such aspirations. Rhetorically democratic even from its title, the Rule of Law called for a stronger parliament and culture of cooperation, supporting Armenia’s further integration into the international community. The call for democracy was also supported by the NDU, which *inter alia* advocated for an independent judiciary, market reforms, and a resolution on Nagorno Karabakh under the auspices of the OSCE.

Six parliamentary factions and three parliamentary groups were created: “Unity” (46 members) “Communist Party of Armenia” (eight members) “Armenian Revolutionary Federation” (eight members, “Rights and Unity” (five members) “Rule of Law” (four members,) “Agrarian-Industrial People’s Unity” (11 members), “Armenia” (12 members) and “People’s Deputy” (16 members). The second convocation adopted 543 laws and ratified 243 international treaties.⁶¹ However, after the assassinations the factions restructured, leaving only Rule of Law and ARF intact (Freedom House 2001, 2002, 2003; OSCE 2003a). Parties comprising Rights and Unity ceased cooperating, the Communist Party split into two, and the NDU into four separate parties.

⁶¹ For more information see <http://www.parliament.am/parliament.php?id=parliament&lang=eng>

The assassinations of Sargsyan and Demirchyan also caused disintegration of the Unity bloc and further empowerment of the Republican party, a portion of which also seceded forming an oppositional Republic Party. The succeeding chairman of the Republican Party, Andranik Markarian, first critical of Kocharyan, insinuating the latter's orchestration of the assassinations, quit his allegations after being named prime-minister (Migdalovitz 2004) upon sacking of Aram Sargsyan (brother of Vazgen Sargsyan). Shrewd manipulation of personal ambitions of some parliamentarians and further fragmentation of the opposition ensured the majority support for Kocharyan's policies. The domination of the parliament by the influential Republican Party backed by its less influential but more populous People's Party ally, guaranteed reduced importance of other parties and possibilities of countering the initially stated program. The Communists were further silenced by Kocharyan giving them ministerial positions and for the first time creating a coalitional government in Armenia. Though ARF did not receive any ministerial portfolio it was believed to be sympathetic to the majority and Kocharian's vision (Freedom House 2001). Despite reshuffling the second convocation of the National Assembly did not lose its largely liberal rhetorical stance. The inclusion in the CoE and the WTO and the continued integration into the international community with the proclaimed objective of further democratization gave the party constellation in Armenia a liberal character. However, strong presidential authority had weakened Armenian parties, the role of which further decreased due to the prevailing majoritarian system.

7.3 Party Politics within Parliamentary Elections of 2003

The elections for the third convocation of the National Assembly were held on 25 May 2003, three months after the highly disputed presidential elections, which had won Kocharyan his second presidential term. The parliamentary elections were regarded as an improvement to the 2003 presidential elections, though still falling short of Armenia's commitments to democratic

elections. The improvements “mirrored a similar development” observed during 1998 presidential and 1999 parliamentary elections, with the authorities pledging free and fair elections but not punishing violators (OSCE 2003b: 1). Generally calm and quiet campaign covered a varied choice in the proportional race and virtually no competition in a number of majoritarian contests. While private media did not avoid bias, public media adhered to its obligations and provided equal coverage and conditions to the candidates. However, the conduct of elections was hampered once again by the general lack of professionalism and transparency. Once again demonstrating the inferiority of parliamentary elections to presidential ones and the general weakness of political parties, the official turnout of 52.71 % showed a significant drop from the 64.88 % of the second round of presidential elections.

The 2003 parliamentary elections were marked by a major realignment as compared to previous elections, resulting from the 1999 assassinations and the 2003 presidential elections. Nine parties that previously backed presidential candidacy of Stepan Demirchyan, including the People’s Party and the Republic Party, formed an electoral alliance Justice.⁶² The ruling coalition got involved in “back-biting” for the struggle over party lists, with Rule of Law accusing the Republican Party in serving oligarchs (CSCE 2003: 12). As in 1999 parliamentary elections the choice was quantitatively varied with 17 parties and four electoral coalitions running in the proportional system (Nelson and Katulis 2005; CSCE 2003). Based on proportional and majoritarian systems, the Republican Party of Armenia won 33 seats, Rule of Law 19 seats, Justice 14 seats, ARF 11 seats, National Unity 9 seats, United Labour Party 6 seats, All Armenian Labour Party 1 seat, and Republic 1 seat. Six parties passed the threshold of 5 %, three of them formed shortly before the elections: Justice, National Unity, and United Labour Party. These elections also marked the heavy defeat of the Communist

⁶² Արդարություն, *Ardarutyun*

Party, which failed to win a seat in either of the systems. Based on the seats distribution six factions and a parliamentary group were created, with 14 parliamentarians not included in any faction or a group: “Armenian Republican Party” (40 members) “Rule of Law” (20 members) “Justice” (14 members,) “Armenian Revolutionary Federation” (11 members,) “National Unity” (eight members) “United Labour Party” (six members) and a parliamentary group “People’s Parliament Member” (16 members). The third convocation adopted 980 laws and ratified 253 international treaties.

The volatility of party convictions and discrepancies between the rhetoric and actual support of certain principles had been visible after 1999 elections and surfaced yet again after 2003 elections. The victory of the Republican Party was challenged not only by opposition parties but also by those who less than in a month-period formed a coalitional government with the Republicans (Zakarian and Tamrazian 2003). In June 2003, the Republican Party, the nationalist ARF, and the centre-right Rule of Law agreed to form a coalition and divided ministerial portfolios. The ARF largely continued its socialist stance being one of the few leftist parties, though not opposing principles of democracy per se. Its strong commitment and unequivocally hard-line position to the genocide issue and annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh, though not directly in contrast with democratic principles, contained certain hindrance to external cooperation and democratization efforts. However, its alignment with the Republican Party alleviated these concerns. The Rule of Law party abided to general democracy-oriented statements, which *inter alia* called for the establishment of a democratic state, the harmonisation of the international and domestic legal systems, and the creation of an effective system of public development (Rule of Law N.D.)

The coalitional move had angered other parties in the National Assembly, with Justice Bloc and National Unity Party, preferring to occasionally boycott parliamentary sessions.

Calling itself a unity of democratic and patriotic powers, the National Unity Party in 2003 supported free market and creation of democratic society. Its foreign policy approach called for the unification with Nagorno-Karabakh, normalisation of relations with Turkey, good relations with Russia, Iran and South Caucasus countries, and continued cooperation with the USA and the EU (National Unity 2003). The Justice bloc called itself the major opposition party, from time to time threatening to boycott the sessions of the National Assembly. It did boycott the sessions and organised a series of anti-government protests, also advocating against West-backed constitutional amendments, claiming that the amendments are only cosmetic measures that would not alter president's power (Danielyan 2005a). Though also in this convocation, all parties rhetorically supported democracy, regular verbal attacks and accusations of each other of foul play, shows that the understanding of democracy is distorted not only among the population but also among the political parties that are supposed to channel the will of the population. Caught in a "zero-sum political game" (Nelson and Katulis 2005: vi), the government's objective had been to maintain power, and the opposition's to overthrow the government and capture power.

The distortion of the role of political parties and the concept of democracy is not surprising taking into consideration the increased involvement of politically untrained businessmen in party politics. As if emulating Russia's oligarchs to advance their own business interests, Armenian millionaires either joined political parties or founded their own parties. Even if having low interest in politics and moreover channelling the needs of the voters, election into the parliament directly serves the interests of businessmen involved in corrupt practices as it provides them with parliamentary immunity. Before 2007 election, however, the businessmen preferred to run for majoritarian seats, though still being affiliated to a party. Such candidates usually included oligarchs, who ran "calm and well-organised

campaign” and other businessmen trying to expand their business opportunities and more likely to engage in “more unprofessional types of vote-buying” (Nelson and Katulis 2005:19).

The period between 2003 and 2007 parliamentary elections was marked by two events, unequivocally directed at weakening of any possible party opposition, securing party support to the future presidential bid of then Defence Minister Serzh Sargsyan, and increasing the fusion of the executive and the legislature. In addition, the direct involvement and influence of businessmen in party politics became more outspoken. In April 2004, one of the most extravagant and closest to the authorities (Danielyan 2006a) oligarchs established his own party “Prosperous Armenia”, which has often been dubbed as the brainchild of President Kocharyan (RFE/RL 2006). The party leader Gagik Tsarukyan was already a Member of Parliament and enjoyed close relations and support of Kocharyan and to-be president Sargsyan. However, his relations with press and opposition parties have been tense, as they repeatedly accused him of orchestrating violence against critical reporters and peaceful demonstrators. Nevertheless, Tsarukyan’s party has gained considerable success among the electorate (Nichol 2007) with claimed membership of 12 % of the population, be it due to regular charity activities of its leader, straightforward vote buying, or even attractiveness of its platform. Sargsyan, on the other hand, joined the Republican Party and was elected its chairman after the untimely death from heart attack of late party leader and Prime-Minister Andranik Markaryan.

Alongside with the actions weakening the strength of parties and the parliament, other events seemed to be directed at the strengthening of the legislature. The constitutional amendments approved in November 2005 and criticised by the opposition as only cosmetic changes were supposed to strengthen the National Assembly. However, citing falsifications during the constitutional referendum, the Rule of Law quit the coalition in May 2006 and

aligned itself with the opposition. It gave the legislature responsibility in appointing some of judicial and media regulatory personnel (Nichol 2007). In addition, the amendments gave the parliament the power of voting over the candidacy of the prime-minister suggested by the president. The amended electoral law inter alia increased the term of the parliamentarians from four to five years. Nevertheless, as put by PACE, the constitutional and electoral law amendments would offer “a new foundation for developing the democratic functioning of Armenia’s institutions” if “effectively implemented”. However, due to the crucial interest of the regime in keeping parliament under control so the Kocharyan-Sargsyan handover would proceed without problems, the fair conduct of elections was put under doubt even before the voting day (Economist 2007).

7.4 Party Politics within Parliamentary Elections of 2007

The elections for the fourth convocation of the Armenian National Assembly were held on 12 May 2007, a month after the sudden death of prime minister Markarian, and Serzh Sargsyan’s transfer to the premiership and the chairmanship of the ruling Republican Party. Yet again, the elections were regarded as an improvement and “largely in accordance with OSCE commitments”, however, “the stated intention by the Armenian authorities to conduct an election in line with OSCE commitments and international standards was not fully realised” (OSCE 2003a: 1). While, the first-time computerisation of voter register under police control earned the approval of the observers, compilation of protocols, vote count, tabulation, and publication of results earned the OSCE’s disapproval. Once more the performance of election commissions and campaign regulation were criticised. Unlike in the case of presidential elections, public media complied with its legal commitments and provided largely equal and neutral coverage to all campaigning parties. Nevertheless, Heritage and Rule of Law joined

the Impeachment Bloc demanding recount of votes and the ANM, which dropped out of the campaign, claimed that the election was rigged by sophisticated methods (Nichol 200).

The list of parties participating in the race underlined the fluidity and volatility of Armenian party politics. The ruling coalition lost the Rule of Law Party, which was replaced by the United Labour Party. However, the three parties comprising the coalition did not run as an electoral bloc but separately. Similarly, the largest opposition alliance in the parliament, Justice Bloc, has failed to maintain its unity, and in 2007 its member-parties either ran separately or did not participate in the election. The emergence of two new parties⁶³ that quickly gained popularity, one more than the other, also emphasised the fluidity of population's preferences. Voting gave the major victory in proportional representation system to the Republican Party, which won 64 seats, Prosperous Armenia 18 seats, ARF 16 seats, and Heritage seven seats. People's Party and National Unity, though expected to pass the 5 % threshold according to preliminary polls (Populus 2007), did not win any seats. Five parliamentary factions were created in the National Assembly of the fourth convocation: "Armenian Republican Party" (65 members,) "Prosperous Armenia" (25 members,) "Armenian Revolutionary Federation" (16 members,) "Rule of Law" (eight members,) "Heritage" (seven members.). Eleven members of parliament remained unaffiliated.

As expected (Economist 2007) the Republican and Prosperous Armenia Parties did not clash for power but formed another ruling coalition, which included a cooperation agreement with the ARF, as the latter did not agree on a joint presidential candidate (Abrahamyan 2007). Shortly after the elections, Heritage and Rule of Law were the only opposition parties represented in the parliament. The self-defined national conservative Republican Party stressed the importance of state participation in the advancement of democracy, mentioning

⁶³ Prosperous Armenia and Heritage

that “the activity of the state must be aimed at the natural integration to the international community” (Republican Party 2007). Calling itself a “party of civil reconciliation” and positioning itself as a centrist political force, Prosperous Armenia has advanced its motto “beside a man, by means of a man and for a man”⁶⁴ to “assist to the strengthening of democracy and shaping of the civil society” (Prosperous Armenia 2007). Rhetorically democratic though vague manifesto of the Prosperous Armenia, however, is marred by its leader claiming that “only those people who have everything and don't need to make money should be involved in politics” (Titizian 2009). Nevertheless, Tsarukyan's extensive charitable activities have appealed to the disillusioned voters, who did not seem to question the low tax-reports of the wealthiest man in Armenia, placing his conglomerate only on the 45th position of corporate tax-payers (Danielyan 2008b). Led by a US-born Armenian expatriate Raffi Hovhannisyian Heritage stated its objectives to be “the development of Armenia as a democratic, lawful, and rights-based country that anchors its domestic and foreign policies in the nation's sovereign interest and ultimate EU accession” (Heritage 2002).

However, this coalitional composition did not last long due to power-desires of ones and differences of foreign policy perspectives of others. After Sargsyan's election as president in February 2008, and Rule of Law leader Arthur Baghdasaryan's defeat, the latter went from opposition to pro-government and signed new coalition pact with the leaders of the Republican Party, Prosperous Armenia, and ARF. The new coalition was formed upon the calls by the ARF to form “a national unity government” to overcome the political crisis of the 2008 presidential elections. However, the ARF's hard-line stance on Nagorno-Karabakh made it threaten to quit the coalition if any territorial concessions would have been made to Azerbaijan (Bedevian 2008a) and refute any suggestions that Armenian government is under

⁶⁴ Translated on the party's website from the original “Mardu koxqin, mardu mijocov ev mardu hamar” «Մարդու կողքին, մարդու միջոցով և մարդու համար»

pressure by the international community to find a solution to the conflict (Bedevian 2008b). Citing “insurmountable fundamental disagreements with President Serzh Sarkisian over his conciliatory policy toward Turkey”, the ARF eventually quit the coalition, gave up all its ministerial portfolios in April 2009 (Danielyan and Martorisyan 2009), and joined Heritage in opposition. Nevertheless, the opposition has remained fragmented as shown by election of the parliament speaker, with Heritage accusing the ARF of secretly collaborating with the coalition and blocking opposition candidates (Danielyan 2011d).

In the wake of 2012 parliamentary elections, the coalition has remained unchanged and the opposition in and out of parliament is as divided and undecided as it has always been. After the 2007 elections, Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his ANM have formed a larger alliance called Armenian National Congress (ANC) with 12 other parties (ANC 2011), though failing to recruit Heritage (Melkumian 2008) and not even trying to recruit the ARF, previously banned by Ter-Petrosyan. The ANC states that it is concerned “that power in Armenia is still usurped by [a] criminal regime” and the ANC is united by the idea of “restoring Constitutional order, building a free, democratic, law based and prosperous state” (ANC 2011). However Ter-Petrosyan did not comment whether his own regime in the 1990s had been in compliance with democracy. Presumably inspired by the spill-over revolutions in MENA Ter-Petrosian broke his 3-year silence and yet again organised rallies in 2011 setting deadlines for the government to quit (Danielyan 2011a, 2011b). On the other hand, the Republican Party, read President Sargsyan, dominates the National Assembly by securing the agreement of coalition partners to support Sargsyan’s presidential bid for 2013 election (Stepanian 2011f) and possibly run as an electoral alliance (Shoghikian 2011). The agreement between three parties to support Sargsyan was negatively met by Heritage (Stepanian 2011e), which walked out of the parliamentary session (Bedevian and Martirosyan 2011), threatened

to surrender its parliamentary seats, with the leader Hovhannissyan going on a 15-day hunger strike on the Liberty Square (Stepanian 2011a). The opportunity to unite the opposition was ignored by Ter-Petrosyan (Stepanian 2011g), who failed to greet striking Hovhannissyan when passing to his own rally at the same square (Stepanian 2011c, 2001d). Ter-Petrosyan's snub prompted Heritage to suggest a secret deal between Sargsyan and Ter-Petrosyan.

Apart from weak party structures and often flawed organisation and campaigning, the constant floor-crossing of Armenian parties, not only make them unreliable partners in democratization but also fail to win the trust of the population ([Table 29](#)). Caught in a vicious circle of flawed party formation and management, parties are created to back certain individuals and the majority of the population chooses a party based on its leader instead of its program. In addition, only 24 % of the population considered the 2003 parliamentary elections to be free and fair (IFES 2004), while only 19 % considered 2007 parliamentary elections to be free and fair (IRI 2007). When asked in 2007, which party would best perform in the resolution of Nagorno-Karabakh issue, genocide recognition, security and socio-political issues, the average of 40 % of respondents regularly gave the “none” answer with 52 % being sceptical of the parties' abilities to deal with corruption (Populus 2007). Although usual rhetoric of Armenian party constellations has been liberal, with all parties mentioning the importance of democracy and elections, arguably, the actual performance and constant manipulation by the executive has characterised all four convocations as mixed. The functions and capacities of the Armenian parties have been largely distorted and misinterpreted at the will of politicians; making the multi-party system an accessory required by the democratic vogue.

Table 29. Armenian political parties from the Armenian population’s perspective

	When considering a party to vote for	Confidence in political parties
2006 ⁶⁵	Leader is more important 64%	Favourable 26%
	Party is more important 28%	Unfavourable 71%
	None 5%	No opinion 3%
	Don't Know 2%	
2007 ⁶⁶	Leader is more important 60%	Favourable 34%
	Party is more important 31%	
	None 6%	Unfavourable 63%
	Don't Know 3%	No opinion 3%

Source: IRI/Gallup Voter Study 2006-2007

The 2005 USAID assessment shows that most political parties in Armenia lack coherent ideologies or policy programs. The dividing lines between party platforms are so vague that even experts have difficulties in distinguishing them. In addition, most of the parties follow strict top-down approach. Political parties mushroomed after the independence of 1991 and had first been created to advance certain causes. However, parties were subsequently created not to advance certain ideological programs but to advance the leader’s political and power ambitions. Besides not having the capacity to perform their control functions, the Armenian political parties have often been unwilling to do so. With most of the parties identifying as either pro-government or opposition, there has been a high level of intolerance to those who think differently, labelling others as “enemies rather than as

⁶⁵Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, May 2006.

⁶⁶Based on Armenian National Voter Study by IRI, the Gallup Organisation, and American Sociological Association, with funding from USAID, July 2007.

democratic competitors or a loyal opposition” (Nelson and Katulis 2005:15). In addition, instead of building solid voter support, political parties prefer to resort to electoral fraud to gain control of the flawed elections system and enter into parliament. Regardless of the party constellation and the rhetorical commitment of parties to democracy, the positive influence of external support to political parties in such a system is highly debatable. Thus, greater attention should be paid on increasing the confidence of voters in parties and ensuring increased powers of the legislature vis-à-vis the executive.

7.5 Party Development: Campaigning, Recruiting, but not Controlling

Party development has always been a more sensitive issue for democracy promoters than monitoring elections or assisting media development. Possible accusations in partisanship and interference in domestic politics make democracy promoters involved in party development more discreet in their actions and statements. Nevertheless, some democracy promoters and their implementing partners engage in party development. Among the ones with US/USAID funding are the NDI and the IRI. Maintaining “loose affiliation with the US Democratic Party” (NDI 2011a), the NDI positions itself as a “nonprofit, nonpartisan, nongovernmental organisation working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide” (NDI 2011a). NDI has been active in Armenia since 1995 and “has assisted Armenia’s main political parties on long-term organisational development” (NDI 2011b). Without officially promoting particular ideologies, NDI works on methods of political party building, including candidate selection, polling, platform development and public outreach. The mission of IRI, which as NDI receives its funding from USAID, is to advance freedom and democracy worldwide by *inter alia* developing political parties (IRI 2009). However, IRI’s involvement in Armenia has been short-lived and limited to conducting of public opinion surveys within 2006-2008. Despite having an in-country representative in Armenia, IRI has not otherwise

been active and does not have programmatic initiatives planned for the nearest future (Kosyan 2011).

USAID began its party development activities in 1996 within “a full-scale citizen participation program” to “build the institutions necessary for democracy” (USAID 1999c). Within its USAID-funded activities, NDI worked with over a dozen political parties and blocs to assist them in contesting and monitoring elections. NDI has worked through consultations, multiparty training, training designed for individual parties upon their request, and election monitoring missions. NDI primarily focused on Armenian People’s Party (APP), the Self-Determination Union (SDU), and the National Democratic Union (NDU), but also pledged assistance to the Republican Party of Armenia and other evolving coalitions. However, none of these parties, with the exception of the executive-endorsed Republican Party, were successful in garnering majority of votes or even passing the threshold in successive elections. Nevertheless, one of the main achievements of NDI was the establishment of “It’s Your Choice” coalition of NGOs, which has since provided voter education and monitored all elections in Armenia starting from 1996. Since then, NDI has cooperated with IYC in its activities. However, the direct involvement of NDI in the establishment of the IYC, undermines the level of ownership in this case.

NDI’s activities within the 1999 elections cycle “mainly focused on addressing internal party development and long-term planning while continuing to develop party programs” (NDI 2001: 1). These activities corresponded to USAID strategic objective of “more transparent, accountable, and responsive democratic governance” and had an aim “to promote stable, sustainable, nationwide, and democratic political parties” (NDI 2001: 1). As one of NDI (2001) reports argues, Armenia’s democratic parties struggled with the decision of whether to attempt the advancement of limited reforms or to cooperate with increasingly

authoritarian government. The results of political party conferences held by NDI to draw the attention to strategic planning were “uneven” (NDI 2001: 5) as while few parties became stronger, others split. NDU split into the National Democratic Party and the National Democratic Alliance, while a group of Republican Party members separated to form an oppositional Republic Party. While all these new groups and parties confirmed their intention for future cooperation with NDI, this cannot be counted as a positive result of NDI’s efforts to strengthen parties and increase citizen awareness and participation in political processes. NDI’s activities were marked by efforts to target simultaneously political parties and citizens in promoting multi-party principles. However, the involvement of the executive branch, often quoted as the obstrucater to party development was missing. NDI also mentions that local stakeholders are not involved in project development (Chobanyan 2011), reducing the factor of local ownership.

With 130 registered political parties, of which less than 30 active, party politics resembled Armenian civil society with numerous, though seldom active NGOs. In its 2004-2008 strategy, USAID acknowledged that although it had provided assistance for political party strengthening, “the very nature of the system has hindered party development” (USAID 2004: 31). Citing lack of progress and the environment, USAID decided to limit its political party development efforts and concentrate on encouraging women’s participation in politics (USAID 2004). Thus, USAID envisaged a change of strategy due to the lack of progress in party development, however at the same time not following-up on its limited but reported achievements. Although, the effort of empowering women is praiseworthy, the efficiency and effectiveness of such strategy in a male-dominated and generally underdeveloped sector is dubious. The reasonable doubt stems from the potential capacity of one underrepresented and loosely organised group to influence a democratic turn in Armenian party politics.

The subsequent projects within the 2007-2008 elections cycle received funding within a USAID cooperative agreement of the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening (CEPPS), which NDI along with IRI and IFES is a member of. Given the already mentioned seemingly optimistic context of 2007-2008 elections cycle, NDI initiated activities in 2005-2008 to:

- Address targeted weaknesses in Armenian political parties and improve their ability to participate in parliamentary and presidential elections;
- Strengthen political culture by engaging voters, particularly young people, in the political process both as individuals and through NGOs;
- Promote a fairer and more transparent electoral process through voter education and monitoring and reporting by domestic and international organisations (NDI 2005: 2).

Thus, NDI expanded the range of its activities from party development to improving electoral processes through initiatives targeting youth and women. In addition, NDI assisted parties in strengthening their abilities in competing in and monitoring of elections. Unlike during the previous elections cycle, within 2007-2008 NDI tried to focus on both opposition and government parties, prioritizing larger parties and those that were cooperating in alliances. Through targeted and party-tailored trainings, NDI endeavoured to improve parties' communication and use of media, youth recruitment, poll-watching capacities, and public opinion research.

The “disappointing” political party development has often been blamed on the unwillingness of parties and their leaders to broaden their reach beyond Yerevan or engage women and youth (NDI 2005: 3). NDI representatives also acknowledge that training are not helpful often due to a lack of receptiveness from the older generation of party cadres, who are caught in between a “mixture of Soviet and contemporary mentality” (Chobanyan 2011). In

addition, they have operated in a “disadvantageous environment” (NDI 2005: 3), where parliament had virtually become subordinated to the executive power. However, what should have been paid greater attention to is not only including women and youth in party’s reach but also building a trustworthy relationship with the executive branch. Regardless of a party’s reach and inclusiveness, elections often controlled by the executive may be rigged. In such an environment, efforts of democracy promoters should be concerted to achieve results. Though not implementing joint projects, NDI has initiated limited cooperation with the Counterpart International, IFES, UK Embassy and the UNDP such as discussion of issues and occasional joint events (Chobanyan 2011).

Before the parliamentary elections of 2003, the National Assembly adopted the Law on Political Parties on 3 July 2002. The Venice Commission raised several concerns over the Law, and “a large number of the suggestions” (Venice Commission 2003: 1) were incorporated into the law by amending it on 4 December 2002. The amendments lifted obstacles for foreigners to participate in political parties and the requirement for submitting consolidated accounts with financial reports. However, “two provisions of key importance for the free activity of political parties remain[ed] unsatisfactory” (Venice Commission 2003: 1). Those provisions concerned the registration and dissolution of political parties. The Law provided that while a political party may be denied registration if its Charter contradicts the Constitution and laws (Article 14.2), others may be dissolved if they do not participate in two recent parliamentary elections or if they do not receive more than one per cent of votes in either of the two recent elections (Article 31.2). In the latter case, according to the law the property of the party is to be transferred to the state (Article 31.4). However, a party should not be denied registration if it may aim for a peaceful change of constitution, nor should its property be transferred to the state unless defined so by the party conference (Venice

Commission 2003). Thus it seems that Armenian authorities applied only those modifications that would not influence the power of executive over political parties. In its own turn, Venice Commission though voiced a portion of criticism, did not follow up with the inclusion of further amendments, considering the possibility of a possible revision by the upcoming May 2003 parliamentary convocation “sufficient” (Venice Commission 2003: 2).

European organisations have warned Armenian authorities that 2003 parliamentary “elections must be free, fair and transparent” (Schwimmer in Zakarian 2003b). Then secretary-general of the CoE, Walter Schwimmer stated that “it would be a disaster for the country if the parliamentary elections will not take place under very proper circumstances and in accordance with European standards” (Schwimmer in Zakarian 2003b). The importance of clean parliamentary elections was stressed especially after fraudulent 2003 presidential elections. However despite “some progress...especially regarding technical preparations”, “the overall elections process did not meet the international standards in a number of key aspects” (EU Presidency 2003). The EU was especially concerned with “the reoccurrence of falsification of vote counts, the unbalanced representation in the election commissions, the intimidation of proxies and the lack of transparency in the publishing of the elections results” (EU Presidency 2003), despite repeated pledges of the Armenian authorities to abide by democratic standards. However, this poor performance in elections and concerns raised by the EU and other European organisations, no negative changes had been introduced into the financial assistance for Armenia, quite the opposite, several months later Armenia was included in the ENP.

Following the inclusion of Armenia into the ENP, its Action Plan proposed “strengthening political pluralism by encouraging co-operation between Armenian and EU political parties and legislative bodies” and “establish clear and transparent rule on party financing” (European Commission 2006b: 11). The integration of political parties into

European political parties system started with the establishment of the EU-Armenia Parliamentary Cooperation Committee (PCC) in 2004, which “exert[s] parliamentary control over the implementation of the agreements and act[s] as an open forum for debate on issues of common interest” (European Parliament N.D.). Meeting twice a year, the PCC reflects on the ongoing EU-Armenia cooperation and produces recommendations on further implementation of the ENP covering areas such as internal policies, economic policies, rule of law, and the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. However, the EU had not implemented projects targeting directly the development of political parties until March 2011. The Armenian-European Policy and Legal Advice Centre organised a seminar in cooperation with the EU Advisory Group to Armenia discussing opportunities to “implement successful reform of national parties and to increase party cohesion” (ArmTown 2011). However, the evaluation of this project falls out of this study’s time-frame.

The OSCE, the CoE and the EU initially appeared inclined to accept the outcome of 2007 parliamentary elections electoral outcome and sufficiently bolster the assistance and other ties to Armenia (Nichol 2009). In a Council Presidency Statement, the EU even noted that “on the whole, conducted fairly, freely and largely in accordance with the international commitments which Armenia had entered into,” and that the Presidency was “very much in favour of intensifying cooperation with Armenia. This would breathe new life into the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Action Plan agreed under it” (EU Presidency 2007). Glossing over issues that may challenge smooth implementation of its policies, the EU has paid little direct attention to party development. On the other hand, the USA, though actively involved in party development restored to training parties in campaigning and member recruitment, while not paying attention to the executive-dominated political system and not developing the control-function of the Armenian political parties.

Chapter 8. Media in Armenia: The Watchdog that Rarely Barks and Never Bites

Article 50 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution guaranteed all Soviet citizens freedom of speech and press freedom, even if the choice of media outlets was extremely limited. No matter how democratic the Soviet constitution might have sounded, the media was placed behind the Iron Curtain of Communist Party censorship, and those trying to exercise their constitutional right to the fullest were put under the radar of the KGB and sent into internal exile. The one sided reporting and the channelling of the Communist Party's vision by the two main newspapers in the Soviet Union, *Pravda* (truth) and *Izvestia* (news) produced the joke that there was no truth in Pravda and there was no news in Izvestia. The censorship of the Communist Party weakened its grip after Gorbachev's *glasnost* policy, which *inter alia* was understood to provide for increased media freedom. After seven decades under Soviet censorship, Armenia created its own constitution legally embracing democratic principles. Though Armenia's Constitution does not guarantee "freedom of speech" as such, its Article 27 guarantees freedom of expression and freedom of mass media. Unlike the Soviet Union's media scene, Armenia's media environment is diverse and abundant with different types of print and broadcast outlets. Whether these outlets have taken the advantage of the promised freedom in reporting the "truth and news" is a different issue. This chapter analyzes media freedom in Armenia and media's ability to perform its watchdog functions especially during elections cycles given the political, economic, and social constraints.

Although press freedom is guaranteed by the Constitution, the media-related law has often been shrewdly used to curtail media's capacities. With a multiplicity of laws and amendments passed to regulate growing media sector, media personnel has kept adapting to

the changing working environment, heavily influenced by hard economic situation and incessant pressure from political forces. In the early 1990s media environment was also influenced by the ongoing Nagorno Karabakh conflict that posed substantial censorship issues to media freedom. The censorship, whether self- or externally-imposed, is not prohibited by Armenia's Constitution. However, the Annual report of the Yerevan Press Club (YPC 1996) considered the year of 1996 presidential elections to be a record year in terms of violations on the freedom of speech since Armenia's independence. Several cases of curtailing media freedom in 1996 were observed by the YPC, including detention and physical violence to journalists, who had been critical of the incumbent regime and supported then-banned ARF (YPC 1996). Although support of an opposition group does not constitute a legal ground for detention, the bias among the journalists was widespread and often constrained their own capacity to perform their watchdog functions.

8.1 Media Freedom and Development within 1995-1996(8) Elections Cycle

In the early 1990s, the notion of fully independent media, not being dictated the angle of news coverage by its financial patron had very low resonance among Armenian media personnel, who were not only used to Soviet-style reporting but also were constrained by the economic situation. Given the increasing discontent with Levon Ter-Petrosyan's policies and the economic situation in the country, the government has substantially curtailed press freedom prior to 1995 parliamentary and 1996 presidential elections, which was nominally protected by the Law on Press and Mass Media. Several opposition or independent newspapers, including eight newspapers affiliated with the ARF, were closed or forcibly assigned to pro-government factions by the Ministry of Justice (Freedom House 1998).

Taking advantage of criminalisation of libel rather than its inclusion into the civil code, government has fired several journalists for articles not in line with official government policy (YPC 1996), the editor of the government newspaper *Respublika Armenia* for the prank of one of his staff reporters, several other editors, and the head of the Armenian State Radio on the grounds of slandering the head of Yerevan bread factory (Freedom House 1998). The Soviet-era criminal code criminalizing libel was in use until the adoption of a new Criminal Code in April 2003, which however, did not decriminalise libel. Article 135 of the 2003 Criminal Code envisaged different types of libel to be punished by a fine in the amount from 50 to 200 minimal salaries, correctional labour for 1-2 years, or imprisonment for up to three years, depending how widely disseminated and public the act of libel was. The government pressure on media was also possible through media sponsors supporting governmental stance and at the same time meeting little, even ideological, resistance from media personnel.

In the 1995-1996 elections cycle Armenian media was characterised by high involvement of print media, despite low demand and high costs of newspaper publishing. The loss-making nature of newspaper business made newspapers closely tie with sponsors and funders (Grigoryan 1997), constraining themselves to a specific viewpoint dictated by the sponsor. The structural changes to the country's administrative division caused some newspapers to cease their operations and a few of them to become local administrative newspapers (Grigoryan 1997). In addition, virtually all governmental bodies and agencies, except the National Assembly had their own newspapers. One of those, *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* (Republic of Armenia), later became one the main print mediums of the incumbents' electoral campaigns. With a number of state run newspapers, the state has also enjoyed the control over the main television and radio channels. Despite the presence of several local television and radio channels and their local/provincial success, none of them

had the same coverage or reach as the state-run media (Grigoryan 1997). In addition, television was the main source of information for 81.4 % of respondents (Grigoryan 1997) and was actively used by Levon Ter-Petrosyan and his ANM while campaigning in 1995 and 1996 elections.

Media coverage of the 1995 and 1996 elections was considered highly bias, with state-run media showing overt preference to the incumbent candidate. However, media observation during 1996 presidential elections was very low, and media representatives were noticed only in 7 % of polling stations visited by the OSCE Observers (Osborn 1996). The coverage of the extraordinary presidential elections on 1998 was considered as “significantly improved” (OSCE 1998: 5) in comparison to previous elections, taking into account that both print and broadcast media attempted to improve the coverage of the second round. Nevertheless, the unchanging positive coverage by state run media of the acting president Kocharyan went in sharp contrast to largely negative coverage of his rival Demirchyan. However, as the YPC 1998 report shows, also *Hayastani Hanrapetutyun* had little choice in its pluralism due to constant pressures from the National Assembly, whose speaker appointed and dismissed Editors-in-Chief without consultation with the newspapers staff and often on the grounds that the newspaper published articles criticizing the parliament (YPC 1998). Other newspapers were subject to pressures from the distribution monopolist *Haymamul* and printing house monopolist *Tigran Mets*. Thus, still developing Armenian media was under a high level of pressure in the 1990s and regardless of the level of professionalism and willingness to perform its functions, was harshly constrained by governmental structures.

8.2 Media Freedom and Development within 2003 Elections Cycle

Armenia's accession into the CoE raised the hopes of experts on improved media environment in the country (MSI 2001, Freedom House 2002), as the membership had come with a body of case law on free speech. However, CoE legal provisions on freedom of speech would have to be balanced with often vague legal provisions of the Armenian law. The 1991 Law on Press and Mass Media (Supreme Council of the RA 1991) treats print media as separate and distinct from broadcast media, guarantees the right of free speech stating "public mass media are free and shall not be subject to censorship" (Article 2). At the same time, the law prohibits publication of "state secrets", "false and unverified news reports", "news that advocates war, violence, ethnic and religious hostility, prostitution, drug abuse or other criminal act" and "details of the private life of citizens" (Article 6). However, none of the prohibited types of information are clearly defined, thus leaving their interpretation to government officials. The same officials has often benefited from the previously criminalised nature of libel (until 2010), allowing prosecution of journalists if reports "do not correspond with the truth," or if they "offend the honour and dignity of a person," or "violate the legal rights and interests of organisations or citizens" (Article 30). The law was frequently applied to the newspaper *Hayakakan Zhamanak*, which had often been critical of the government (MSI 2001). Thus, any criticism of government officials or publication of democracy related issues was considered "too risky" (ARD 2002: vii).

The quality of journalism has also been dubious in Armenia due to a range of reasons. Low income of journalists has often forced them to publish pre-ordered material. Most newspapers have been sponsored by business entrepreneurs or political parties and often published pleasing but rarely objective information (MSI 2001, 2002, 2003). Fearing

economic, though not as often physical retaliation⁶⁷, journalists have often practiced self-censorship and carefully chosen covered issues, not to offend their newspaper's benefactor. A lack of fact-based reporting, and the fusion of news coverage and commentaries have underlined the bias reporting of the Armenian media. The situation was exacerbated by the division of print media into oppositional and governmental, with often radically opposing views on the same event (MSI 2003). However, Freedom House experts (2002: 68) considered the abundance of "variety of opinions, including harsh attacks on the authorities and President Kocharyan in particular" as providing "some hope about the future of democratization". Nevertheless, the Soviet-style reporting and the resistance to change in the 1990s and the first half of the 2000s were often quoted by media observers as the fundamental reasons for Armenia to fall short of international standards (MSI 2003; Freedom House 2002).

Prior to the 2003 elections, the National Assembly continued to delay new media law, instead passing a piece of legislation, regulating broadcast media, through a national commission appointed by the president and "empowered to issue or revoke broadcasting license" (Freedom House 2002: 69). Following the adoption of the new Law on Broadcasting, in January 2000 President Kocharyan appointed all nine members of the newly established National Commission on Television and Radio (NCTR). The first decision of the commission was to award the frequency of the popular but oppositional TV channel *AI+* known for its news coverage to an entertainment channel known for its links to Kocharyan (Freedom House 2003). This move was internationally regarded as Kocharyan's intention to silence the opposition prior to the 2003 parliamentary elections (Melkumian 2003a). As put by the Committee to Protect Journalists (2002) the government was "blatantly abusing the frequency

⁶⁷ Since 1991, the Committee to Protect Journalists reports only one killing of a journalist, Tigran Naghdalian, in Armenia, which may be associated with his professional activities. This is a comparatively positive result comparing to other South Caucasus countries. Nine reporters were killed in Georgia and four in Azerbaijan.

licensing system in an attempt to silence a critical media voice”. Despite the assurances by the Commission of holding another tender prior to elections, the biddings were regularly postponed, leaving two independent channels, *A1+* and *Noyan Tapan*, off the air.

The EU envoy, meanwhile voiced the EU’s hopes for pluralism in Armenia but stopped short of criticising the Commission’s decision saying that the EU is still “in the process of collecting factual information” (Clemente in Danielyan and Melkumian 2003). In addition, the OSCE called for “a more liberal attitude towards freedom of expression” (Danielyan and Melkumian 2003). Among European organisation, only the CoE took a harsher stance on this matter and “accused the Armenian authorities of failing to honour their pledge to reopen A1+” (Danielyan and Melkumian 2003). Then US ambassador John Ordway expressed his disappointment with the outcome of the tender arguing that “A1+ submitted an extremely good proposal” (Danielyan and Melkumian 2003). Other media outlets interpreted the suspension of A1+ license as a signal of the authorities’ determination to take broadcast media under full control. While media and human rights organisations were protesting the Commission’s decision, 17 media outlets have released a declaration stating that freedom of speech in Armenia was not endangered (Vardanian 2006). Despite 14 applications for license and in-favour ruling of the European Court of Human Rights, the A1+ has remained off air.

In addition to the suspension of broadcasting licenses of two private TV outlets, the Armenia media environment was negatively affected by the grenade attack in October 2002 on a reporter, and the December 2003 assassination of the head of public TV council (MSI 2003; OSCE 2003a). Similarly, several regional broadcasters were prohibited from functioning by the local government authorities. Lost licenses along with incidents of intimidation by public authorities aggravated media environment and forced some journalists

and outlets to resort to self-censorship. These events had substantially curtailed the freedom of media, leaving Public TV (the renamed Channel 1) to dominate the elections rhetoric through its unchallenged country-wide coverage. Taking advantage of loopholes in legislation and financial difficulties of media outlets, the authorities have used the media to advance their positions throughout the elections. Although complying with its legal obligation to provide free advertising time to candidates, Public TV and Radio failed to provide voters with impartial and unbiased information (OSCE 2003a). Attempts to objectively cover all candidates were effectively prevented, with journalists being dismissed on these grounds (IYC 2003). The coverage of post-elections protests was also abridged by the authorities, as journalists were beaten, while covering April 2004 protests (Danielyan 2004d). The attacks on journalists were often considered to be carried out by bodyguards of government associated tycoons (Kalantarian and Danielyan 2004; Avoyan and Danielyan 2004)

Nevertheless, the much-awaited adoption of the Law on Freedom of Information in December 2003 and the possibility of fining state officials obstructing information gathering were regarded as a positive development on the generally gloomy background (Freedom House 2004). In addition, the new Law on Mass Media has removed the obligation from the journalists to disclose their sources of information, unless ordered by a judge hearing relevant criminal cases. Nevertheless, despite the improvements in legislation, as in other areas, there has been a general lack of proper implementation and law enforcement, with arbitrary interpretations by the state officials, making investigative reporting a difficult endeavour. In 2005, the National Press Club declared Armenia's state system as the Enemy of the Press, because it assured "the outside world of its commitment to democracy but in reality hampers the development of independent media" (Atshemian and Kalantarian 2005). Amid the concerns by the journalist community that pressure would increase prior to 2007

parliamentary elections, several cases of assault against journalists were registered in 2005-2007 (Freedom House 2006, 2007). However, even if sporadic assaults against journalists continued, these were not related to the 2007 elections (Freedom House 2008) and the pluralism of print media was not questioned.

8.3 Media Freedom and Development within 2007-2008 Elections Cycle

The government attempted to further curtail the pluralism of broadcast media through restrictions on retransmitting foreign broadcasters. These attempts were mainly targeted against the radio broadcasts of the US-funded Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), which enjoyed a nationwide coverage through its retransmission by the Public Radio (Khachatrian and Kalantarian 2007). However, due to lack of parliamentary quorum, the bill failed to pass in the second reading, supposedly due to the lobbying by media associations and NGOs (Khachatrian and Bedevian 2007). Nevertheless, RFE/RL eventually lost its nationwide coverage because Armenia's Public Radio had not renewed its contract with RFE/RL, largely viewed as the most objective while covering elections (OSCE 2007; Freedom House 2008). On the other hand, broadcasting was supposed to receive more freedom, following the 2005 constitutional amendments and the changes in the broadcasting law in 2007 and 2008 (Richter 2009). The legislative changes gave the National Assembly the power to appoint four members of the NCTR while the president would still appoint the other four. However, the implementation of the changes was postponed until 2011 and the added value of these changes is conspicuous given almost full control of the executive over the parliament.

The coverage of the 2007 parliamentary elections was marked by a lack of regulation for campaigning in the period before the start of the official campaign, thus having at least three TV channels airing promotional messages of several political parties (OSCE 2007). Many of the media outlets, monitored by the OSCE, endeavoured to comply with the requirements of providing equal conditions for the candidates; however most of the TV channels, both public and private, allocated the largest portion of their coverage to the government associated parties (OSCE 2007). Unlike broadcast media, print media demonstrated greater diversity of opinions, however, completely failed in balancing those, often praising ones and chastising the others. Radio stations were the only mass media during the 2007 parliamentary elections campaign to regularly voice opinions and critiques of almost all the contestants (OSCE 2007). Media coverage of the 2008 presidential campaign largely followed the same path as the parliamentary one. Though all the candidates were given equal coverage by Public TV and Radio, the tone of coverage ranged from neutral to very positive in case of prime minister Sargsyan and neutral to very negative in case of his main rival Ter-Petrosyan. The footage of Sargsyan's rallies was consistently broadcast with delays allowing time for additional editing (OSCE 2008b).

Although the presidential election campaign was regarded as rather balanced, giving slim grounds to speak of alleviated pressure on media, the aftermath of the elections voiced new concerns not only on the freedom of expression but also the entire future of democracy in Armenia. The post-election protests and their subsequent violent crackdown by the police were followed by a 20-day state of emergency imposed by the outgoing President Kocharyan. The emergency decree imposed a blackout on independent media and allowed broadcasting or publishing only government sanctioned news (RFE/RL 2008b). Inter alia, the state of emergency marked the first ever attempt in Armenia to control Internet as several websites,

including A1+, RFE/RL and YouTube, where footage of 1 March events had been posted, were blocked. More than a dozen independent and opposition publications were forced to suspend their publication (RFE/RL 2008b). After 12 days of the state of emergency, Kocharyan promised to alleviate the media ban and instead of telling the media what it can do, tell the media what it cannot do, including publish “obviously false or destabilizing information” (Kocharyan in RFE/RL 2008b). The vagueness of the changes in media ban, resulted in confusion among the newspapers, and prohibition of publication of seven newspapers based on the judgments of National Security Service censors (RFE/RL 2008b). Though the state of emergency was lifted after the expiry of the 20-day term, the media remained cautious about their actions preferring to stay out of government’s radar. Thus, the year 2008 was “unprecedented not only for the number of cases of violation of the rights of journalists and mass media, but also for the facts of censorship applied towards mass media” (Committee to Protect Freedom of Expression 2008: 1).

While the control over broadcast media has been tightening, the print media and radio have been able to enjoy a degree of pluralism. However, this is mostly due to the low circulation of newspapers and mainly entertaining rather than informative programming of radio stations. As shown by the reports of international observers (OSCE, Freedom House), television has remained the main source of information for voters throughout the elections in the period of 1995-2008. Over 95 % of survey respondents also mention television as the main source of political information before elections (IRI 2006, 2007, 2008). Given the wide coverage and high popularity of television, regular attempts by the authorities to control it are not surprising. The control is often easily exercised as all TV stations, with the exception of the public H1, are owned by individuals or companies, many of whom are closely associated with the government. TV stations that openly declare themselves oppositional are often either

denied broadcasting license as in the case of A1+, are artificially and selectively subjected to tax laws as in the case of Gala TV (RFE/RL 2008d), or lose their advertisers as those are discouraged by the authorities to advertise on a particular channel. Stations, which do not openly announce their pro-government stance, exercise self-censorship to avoid full official control and the government's potential retaliation.

Unlike broadcast media, print media has largely managed to avoid the governmental control and maintain the plurality of opinions but often due to financial sponsorship failed to maintain balance between critical opinions. However, the cost of plurality comes at the price of very low readership and circulation of newspapers, thus giving the authorities almost no reason to control print media. Similarly, low penetration of the Internet, but recent reduction in its costs, has resulted in voicing of different opinions and emergence of several online publications. However, the reporters still need to be careful when writing about governmental officials or their cronies. Media and human rights organisations reported a total of 65 criminally punishable acts in 2007-2009, aimed to prevent the professional activity of journalists (Freedom House 2010). In addition, long-awaited and Western-encouraged (Thompson 2010) decriminalisation of libel resulted in a new controversial media law that drastically increased penalties for cases of libel (Chilingarian 2011; Aslanian 2011). Interestingly one of the authors of the new law, Karen Andreasian, had previously participated in USAID organised media trainings (Sargsyan 2010). Since the decriminalisation of libel in April 2010, a number of newspapers were sued by the members of parliament and the family of former president Kocharyan (Meloyan 2011).

Characterised as in “difficult situation” by the Reporters Without Borders (RSF), media freedom in Armenia has also been mentioned by other independent media rankings

([Tables 30](#) and [31](#)). The RSF Index of Press Freedom shows substantial fluctuations of Armenia’s position, 83rd place out of 167 in 2004 going down to 102 in 2005, to 111 in 2009, and 101 in 2011. As with other areas of democratization different indices praise the legislative improvements ([Tables 23](#) and [24](#)), which however do not seem to translate into actual improvements. Freedom House though did not improve the category of not free for media in Armenia in 2010 ([Table 30](#)), it did slightly improve its numerical score. Freedom House downgraded Armenia’s media freedom from partly free to not free in 2002 following the assassination of the Council on Public Radio and Television head Tigran Naghdalyan in 2001, and has not changed it since. The 2008 media blackout also negatively affected Armenia’s score. However, the emergence of online publications and the increased activity of the blogosphere, have slightly improved the plurality of media.

Table 30. Freedom House evaluation of independent media in Armenia.

2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
60, PF	65, NF	64, NF	64, NF	64, NF	64, NF	66, NF	68, NF	66, NF

Source: Author’s own compilation based on Freedom House Freedom of Press reports 2002-2010.

In its evaluation of Armenian media based on the freedom of speech, professionalism of journalists, plurality of sources, business management, and supporting institutions since 2001, IREX Media Sustainability Index (MSI) shows 27 % positive change in 2011 ([Table 31](#)). The 27 % have indicated Armenia’s move from the category of “unsustainable mixed system” to “near sustainable system” for the first time in ten years⁶⁸. In an unsustainable mixed system, a country minimally meets objectives due to unfavourable segments of legal system and government, where increase in free-press advocacy and professional journalism,

⁶⁸ The IREX MSI is calculated from the average of scores received in each five category: “unsustainable, anti-free press” (0-1); “unsustainable mixed system” (1-2); “near sustainability” (2-3); “sustainable” (3-4).

and new media businesses may not be sufficient for the system's sustainability. In the case of a near sustainability system, a country shows progress in multiple objectives with progress having survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. With free speech seeing a slight progress in 2000-2002, pressures on media during 2003 parliamentary and presidential elections caused a setback in free speech, which has only slightly recovered, going back to its 2001 score, however, staying in the "unsustainable category". The 2003 events negatively influenced rankings of business management and supporting institutions, which include professional and trade associations, media supporting NGOs, and non-monopolised channels of distribution. The subsequent four years did not see either substantial progress or regress in media environment, adding to the overall stagnation of Armenia's democratization process.

The aftermath of the 2008 election and the halt in licensing process of broadcast media imposed by the National Commission of Radio and Television negatively affected freedom of speech. According to the MSI panelists several prominent reporters were assaulted due to their professional activities after repeated "warnings" and "threats" (MSI 2009: 117). While the plurality of sources indicator has improved over time mainly due to the emergence of blogs and online publications (MSI 2011), broadcast and print media have remained partisan (MSI 2008-11) and "serve the public interest only when those interests correspond to the interests of the political party that supports the particular media outlet" (MSI 2009: 120). Overall all indicators have improved compared to the first MSI assessment. Business management moved up in 2011 by 0.65 points from the lowest score among all indicators in 2001, with supporting institutions improving by 0.64 points. However, these improvements are more of technical than substantive character and cannot count for improved media

freedom, which is still lagging behind with restricted freedom of speech and plural but partisan sources.

Table 31. Media Sustainability Index for Armenia.

	Free Speech	Professional Journalism	Plurality of News Sources	Business Management	Supporting Institutions	Overall Country Average
2001 ⁶⁹	1.77	1.78	2.00	1.20	1.51	1.65
2002	1.82	1.89	2.10	1.16	1.60	1.71
2003	2.15	1.68	2.30	1.40	1.92	1.89
2004	1.54	1.95	1.57	1.34	1.94	1.66
2005	1.93	1.66	1.69	1.50	1.49	1.65
2006-7	1.88	1.80	1.81	1.34	1.16	1.60
2008	1.93	1.71	1.89	1.31	2.23	1.81
2009	1.82	1.90	1.96	1.74	1.88	1.86
2010	1.72	1.65	2.21	1.95	1.72	1.85
2011	2.32	1.93	2.30	1.85	2.05	2.09

Source: Author's own compilation based on MSI reports 2001-2011.

Given the regress of media freedom in 2010 also in established democracies (Freedom House 2011) and members of the EU, this chapter does not argue that limited media freedom in Armenia is directly responsible for its slow democratization also in other areas. The chapter rather places the constraints and opportunities for media freedom in the larger picture of Armenia's democratization. There have been increasingly limited legal constraints to professional journalism and investigative reporting. Legacies of Soviet style reporting were still active in the 1990s and have partially transferred to 2000s, making partisanship of media outlet a norm rather than exception. Coupled with inexperienced business management, low salaries, expensive broadcasting and printing equipment, media outlets have resorted to

⁶⁹ The year indicates the release date of the report which usually covers the preceding calendar year.

reliance on sponsorship of oligarchs or political parties. Though rhetorically endeavouring high professionalism and admitting the importance of free speech, the economic constraints and political pressure hit their peak during elections and restrain media from performing its watchdog function. Instead of performing its watchdog function, the Armenian media has been itself watched over by the authorities and kept on a short leash. Democratic transformation in media development has been only formal during all elections cycles, as due to a number of aforementioned reasons media outlets do not fulfil their watchdog function. Given the domestic constraints to media, democracy promotion projects should inter alia involve the state and political society. Mere professional training would not increase chances of free media, if the aforementioned constraints persist.

8.4 Developing Media: Can Knowledge Help to Watchdog?

“The development and long-term viability of democracy“ is the main reason for USAID support for independent media, which “can ensure that citizens have access to a variety of important sources of news and that information is not controlled exclusively by the state or political-economic interests” (USAID 2008: 1). Similarly the EU emphasises that “a free, independent and pluralistic media becomes even more important and is needed to ensure democracy” (European Union 2011). The US Government credits itself with contributing “significant resources by developing a vibrant civil society and independent media” (USAID 2009: 4) and naming USAID as “a lead donor in supporting the formation and development of independent media in Armenia”. Although the input of the US Government in the development of Armenian media cannot be denied, the claim on the independence of the latter is overstretched, given limited progress in media freedom and inability to perform its watchdog function. However, what seems to be confused when discussing media, is its actual freedom from external pressure and professional skills of journalists. Lack of financial

viability and a lack of willingness from the political society to allow media freedom have been the main obstacles for the emergence of a truly independent and pluralistic media.

The US Government activities in media development started in 1995 and were later joined by the EU's initiatives. Supporting print and broadcast media to foster autonomy and independent journalism, "particularly where D/G [democracy and governance] issues and elections are concerned" (ARD 2002: viii) has been the priority for US media development in Armenia. The opportunity of discussing D/G topics as media chooses has been seen as an indispensable prerequisite for an informed choice of voters about policies, political programs, elections, and legal changes. Thus, while understanding that media alone cannot bring democracy, the USA in its media development initiatives has underlined that "without an independent, aggressive media system, reforms and improvements will be much more difficult to achieve" (ARD 2002: viii). The EU has also recognised freedom of expression as of "pivotal importance" and has acknowledged independent media to be "a crucial element of democracy building" (European Commission 2001: 28). Within its approach, the EU adopts a broad understanding of media, which includes entertainment programs, debates, and print press.

Within the initial elections cycles, USAID claimed to be the lead donor in providing assistance to media, while the involvement of other donors such as the EU/TACIS, Open Society Institute, the UNDP, and the USIS was limited (USAID 1999b). However, media was targeted not so much as the main recipient of the assistance or as the target for development but as a vehicle for increased citizen participation in politics. Media was seen as a vehicle to promote awareness of gender, environmental, and corruption issues, however, initially little attention was paid to the actual media freedom. USAID project through Eurasia Foundation provided financing for exactly such a project that would increase the distribution of the newspapers, as it financed an

independent printing press as an alternative to the state-operated facility (ARD 2002). In 1997 Eurasia Foundation “purchased a high-tech printing press for the independent GIND Printing House” to “help GIND compete with the monopolist, state-owned Tigran Mets Printing House” (Eurasia Foundation N.D.). Projects of Internews and the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) implemented within the next 1999-2003 elections cycle targeted the development of independent media, both to improve the quality of their news, and to strengthen their financial management.

In its media development and freedom of expression activities, the EU has traditionally relied on its cooperation with the CoE and the OSCE. However, the EU has supported freedom of expression and independent media through the EIDHR, with the objectives that “the media are enabled to operate in accordance with international standards, i.e. in carrying out a watchdog role” and “quality and coverage of human rights issues in the media [is] improved” (European Commission 2001: 7). The EU-Armenia PCA stipulated the parties on supporting “the development of modern methods of information handling”, with priority given to “programs aimed at providing the general public with basic information about the Community and the Republic of Armenia” (Article 63).

One of the main media development vehicles of USAID in Armenia has been IREX, a US-based non-profit organisation that *inter alia* implements projects in the sectors of education, civil society strengthening, conflict resolution, technology, and media development. Winning USAID bid for its media development initiative, IREX implemented ProMedia II project in 1999-2003. Initially operating under USAID strategic objective of “increased, better-informed citizen participation in community, political, and economic decision-making”, it later operated under a revised objective of “more transparent, accountable, and responsive democratic governance”. The main intermediate results, in IREX

and USAID parlance, for the project were “publishers effectively manage media enterprises” and “journalists provide citizens with objective, fact-based, and useful information” (Trail 2003: 5). Surprisingly, despite USAID’s own research, showing that population largely refers to television as a source of information, IREX/ProMedia II targeted exclusively print media, which had very little role in Armenia’s information sharing. Although, a focused attention on the underdogs that may have the potential to grow is praiseworthy, the rationale for ignoring broadcast media and undermining efficiency is not clear.

Among others IREX/ProMedia II mentions as its key accomplishments business and management training, professional journalism development, student journalism instruction, formation of an independent advertising cooperative, special newspaper supplements, publication of textbooks, and creation of searchable database. Within its four year-span ProMedia II organised a number of consultations, seminars, study tours and internships, and provided small grants. A special focus was paid to investigative journalism, one of the features of journalism that was lacking due to still reigning Soviet legacies. In the variety of trainings and seminars offered by ProMedia II, media representatives were offered skills in basic reporting, research, writing, and photography. As one of its main achievements, IREX/ProMedia II mentioned the depoliticisation of newspapers (Trail 2003: 2). In addition, the general willingness to move away from the sponsorship mechanism of print media to a business-like model is attributed to the range of initiatives implemented by the program.

In January 2003, ProMedia II cooperated with World Vision Armenia and the National AIDS prevention centre in conducting a workshop on HIV/AIDS coverage in the press. ProMedia also encouraged regional cooperation between journalists through study tours and roundtables, however, there were no initiatives of including political parties or government officials, despite the acknowledgement that “the news media will continue to

flounder and function as the tools of powerful political parties and personalities”, which is “especially true of small and under-developed countries such as Armenia” (Trail 2003: 21). Interestingly, the ProMedia II final report does not mention that its activities resulted in more independent media. They rather resulted in journalists and editors “familiar with most aspects of western-style, fact based journalism” and “while they may not always employ these principles, journalists are more aware of the need to base stories on facts” (Trail 2003: 22). However, as the OSCE reports on elections coverage and annual MSI reports show, this awareness did not translate into actual behaviour according to those principles.

Based on ProMedia II results IREX made the following recommendations for future media development projects:

- Provide a targeted program geared toward making Armenian media outlets as financially independent as possible, given the economic situation in the country.
- Continue an aggressive program of journalism training for reporters, editors, commercial managers and advertising sales following the western model and which building on the successes achieved by IRENProMedia II. Continue an aggressive program of journalism training in schools, universities and other educational institutions.
- Provide direct or indirect financial support in the form of loans and/or loan guarantees for print media outlets that actively adopt the western model. This requires a comprehensive overhaul of the newspaper, including internal organisation, news writing and design, and traditional way of doing business.
- Focus efforts to support a newspaper operating on the western model. The success of this model, which would generate income from advertising, would forever change the existing newspaper market. The idea is to establish a newspaper, based on a sound

business plan, much like the USAID sponsored the Gind printing plant in Yerevan. This would be done through a competitive bid process that would provide start-up capital to sustain a western-style, fact-based, general interest daily or weekly newspaper to produce for a one- to two-year period. The objective would be a self-sustaining newspaper at the end of the period. The newspaper would be a working laboratory and training facility for Armenian journalists, managers, distributors and advertising sales and marketing personnel who would work closely with visiting trainers and consultants (Trail 2003: 22-23).

Another media project funded by USAID that covered 2003 elections cycle was the Broadcast Media Strengthening Program (BMSP). Filling the gap for broadcast media, it was implemented by Internews within USAID strategic objective 2.1. “more transparent, accountable and responsive governance”. The project ran from September 2000 through January 2005, with the help of which “local broadcasters improved their self-sustainability, shared news, and information programming, and fought for changes to misguided media legislation” (Canter 2005: 3). Throughout its lifespan, the BMSP conducted 173 trainings for broadcast media, initiated production and programming, provided legal advice to media outlets, published a number of handbooks, and conducted media research. The target list of Internews broadcast outlets included both Yerevan and regional, public and private stations. Among its key accomplishments the Internews project states:

- The beginning of true programming competition between broadcasters that may inevitably lead to better production quality and more advertising revenue.
- The stabilisation of a growing radio industry.
- The emergence of a larger pool of professionals who have an increased possibility of applying their skills.

- An increased understanding and early elements of mastering the techniques of marketing-driven sales campaigns on behalf of many broadcasters.
- A heightened desire to develop and produce local programming.
- A renewed interest by regional TV companies towards unification (unwired syndicates) as a survival tool.
- A marked increase in the volume of the advertising market in 2004 (taking into account its relatively small size as compared to similar countries) (Canter 2005: 4-5).

Within the cycle of the BMSP, in 2000 the Armenian National Assembly adopted the law on Television and Radio. Together with media representatives and civil society organisations, Internews initiated a series of meetings with the NTRC and the National Assembly to communicate the criticism on the law to legislators and fuse “civil society and related industry efforts aimed at amending the Law” (Canter 2005: 18). Though the National Assembly did not accept all proposed changes, it still amended the law in 2001 and removed “most harmful and contradictory provisions, such as the limitation on the licensing of television and radio production” (Canter 2005: 18). Similar efforts of Internews legal team and CoE criticism (Kalantarian 2002) managed to amend draft Media law proposed by the Armenian government in 2002, turning it into “one of the most liberal media laws in the NIS [Newly Independent States]” (Canter 2005: 18). Before the amendments the draft media law had also been criticised by the CoE as posing a threat to freedom of press (Kalantarian 2002). Combined efforts of Internews and the OSCE mission in Armenia resulted in further amendments of the Television and Radio Law. Although, these efforts did not prevent putting A1+ off the air and did not result in greater freedom of media, they nevertheless showed that democracy promoters might have greater impact when bringing together different but still

interconnected levels of democracy promotion. In addition, cooperation with other democracy promoters in the field helps in giving weight to the activities and arguments and using the comparative advantage of each promoter, thus increasing the potential of a positive democratic transformation.

While the few projects on media development were in progress, having covered 1995-1996 and 1998 elections cycles, the 2002 USAID commissioned assessment argues that “neither print nor broadcast media in contemporary Armenia can be considered autonomous” (ARD 2002: 12). The exceptions to this grave conclusion were two Gyumri-based papers. However, given their limited distribution it was likely that their criticism simply did not disturb the authorities. The IREX/Promedia adviser also confirmed the tendency of Armenian journalists of preferring opinion-based to fact based journalism (Eichstaedt in ARD 2002). This tendency was explained by the low financial sustainability of media and regular interventions of the government. Interestingly, the assessment team concluded that “USAID” can have the greatest impact in its next programming period (2004-2008) by...developing independent, autonomous media” (ARD 2002:2). Given the problems raised by implementing partners and the assessment team, the upcoming initiatives should have focused on improving the financial independence of the media possibly leading to greater autonomy, on building a bridge of understanding between the media and the political society, and on improving the reporting skills of Armenian journalists.

After ProMedia II was completed in 2003, the year of parliamentary and presidential elections, USAID put its media development projects on almost a two-year halt. ProMedia II established the ground for the CMSPA, also implemented by IREX. As its final report claims “as a result of ProMedia II editors are now keenly aware of the need of their newspapers to

grow as independent business” (Trail 2003: 1).⁷⁰ The CMSPA was a four-year extended to the fifth year project that aimed to “foster self-sustainability in Armenian media sector”.⁷¹ Internews final report (Canter 2005) argued to have fulfilled its mission of substantially contributing to the self-sustainability of Armenian broadcasters. One of the CMSPA’s missions was to improve self-sustainability of broadcaster’s through improved marketing and programming. This move shows that although changing the implementers, USAID attempted to build on its experience and follow-up on previous project results. Following its own recommendations based on ProMedia II, IREX Washington DC office designed the program in response to USAID bid announced for a media development program. The CMSPA was designed solely by IREX DC office without consultations with local stakeholders or experts (Parsadanayan 2011). Whether intentionally or not, the CMSPA also attempted to follow-up and be consistent on the accomplishments of the Internews project, while working with its broadcast outlets.

The main difference of the project from other USAID or other donor media projects was the loan component, which instead of traditional grants to media outlets provided loans that were later supposed to be repaid. Unlike ProMedia II and Internews, which targeted specific sectors within media, the CMSPA targeted both print and broadcast media and halfway through its implementation substantially focused on internet journalism. The CMSPA fell under USAID strategic objective of improved democratic governance (Trail 2009) working towards four intermediate results:

1. Targeted media outlets receive loans and repay them according to a schedule;
2. Targeted media outlets use market research;

⁷⁰ Original italics

⁷¹ <http://irex.am/eng/programs/media/index.php?f=main1.html>

3. Targeted media outlets improve the professional quality of their product and provide diverse programming and information relevant to the public's interest;
4. Armenia's media market is consolidated through the formation and support of networks (Trail 2009: 7-8).

“Targeted media outlets” was the operative term for the CMSPA, which was a multistage project (Parsadanyan 2010) that was based on the selection of media outlets from the list of applicants, their inclusion in the developmental stage of the program, entailing training. In its five-year span, the CMSPA organised over 200 training sessions with the help of invited trainers covering topics including, writing stories, investigative reporting, photojournalism, print and broadcast media management, using market research, and finding new business opportunities. The training component also included two study tours to Ukraine and one to Hungary. Trainees applied the knowledge provided through the trainings into practice through publication of newspaper supplements that were distributed throughout Armenia with the help of the regional newspapers gathered in a CMSPA-encouraged network. Efforts to make Armenian media audience-based instead of sponsor-based were complemented by the introduction of TV ratings system, later turned to one of the leading companies in the field, AGB Nielsen. As per former CMSPA Deputy Chief of Party, this was a major development for Armenian media as the advertising market “quadrupled” (Parsadanyan 2011) over the course of the project.

The CMSPA partnered with other implementing organisations by conducting joint trainings, disseminating training products (e.g. newspaper supplements), while media representatives remaining the main targets of the project (Parsadanyan 2011). Thus, the framework of the program was "not mandated" (Parsadanyan 2011) with moving beyond the

assigned level of democracy promotion, once again underlining the limited freedom for manoeuvre of USAID implementing partners. Interestingly, journalists from public media (TV and radio) were rarely invited to CMSPA trainings unlike a number of small regional outlets with minimal reach. Region-oriented approach undoubtedly served the development of rural media outlets, which are financially disadvantaged, however excluding major sources of information is unlikely to serve the objective of developing free media, promoting democracy, and providing balanced elections coverage. While the CMSPA was mandated to initiate activities with both broadcast and print media, meeting the resistance and reluctance of the former to “open-up”, the CMSPA concentrated its efforts on mainly regional print media, bringing them under a network led by Yerevan-based online news magazine ArmeniaNow.

Through its supplements and partnership with ArmeniaNow, the CMSPA also focused on coverage of 2007 parliamentary, 2008 presidential, and 2009 Yerevan mayoral elections. Elections initiatives aimed “to provide comprehensive fair and balanced elections coverage” and “fostered...elections content, supported citizen journalism, and provided the media sector and civil society with important pre- and post-election research regarding voter attitudes” (Trail 2009: 10). Although, several elections supplements were published and distributed, those largely remained a CMSPA-produced content, without further guarantees that similarly balanced content would appear in media regardless of the CMSPA’s support. The coverage of these elections was reported as far from balanced (OSCE reports) and the state of emergency imposed by then president Kocharyan after the 2008 presidential elections substantially curtailed media freedom. However, the cooperation with ArmeniaNow, turned the CMSPA’s and USAID’s attentions to the growing online media, which unlike broadcast media was left out of the government’s control and unlike print media was not controlled by partisan

sponsors. Although Internet access was still a challenge outside Yerevan, online media was viewed as having “potential for greater impact” (Trail 2009: 52).

The multistage process of the CMSPA was designed to prepare the participating targeted outlets to take and then to repay loans, “a developmental tool [which] was a unique approach to media development” (Trail 2009: 52). Overcoming the grant mentality among Armenian civil society at large, fostered over years by international donors, and “locating media outlets, which demonstrated commitment to taking loans at commercial interests rates instead of opting for grants was a particular challenge” (Trail 2009: 52). Ironically, this grant mentality was not a CMSPA-prior phenomenon created by other donors, but was also supported by USAID itself over the course of the CMSPA. Under USAID funding, Eurasia Foundation launched the two-year Regional Print Media project in 2006, involving 28 regional print outlets. Six of these outlets received grants to do market research, create and maintain websites of their newspapers, establish distribution departments, and cover issues of local interests to be later included in Eurasia Foundation’s Print Media Distribution Network (Eurasia Foundation N.D.b). Interestingly, these goals completely coincided with the CMSPA’s intermediate results 1-3, however, initially there was no cooperation envisaged in Eurasia Foundation’s project description. In addition, simultaneous provision of interest-free grants that do not need to be returned, instead of commercial loans, has potentially undermined the attractiveness of loans strategy and thus the whole concept of the CMSPA at least for print media.

After the post-2008 elections state of emergency had curtailed traditional media’s opportunities, alternative media played an important role in providing information (Trail 2009). The USA, through State Secretary Clinton, and the EU (2010) have expressed their concerns over the continuing pressure of the government on traditional broadcast media

(Mohammed 2010). With growing and vibrant presence of the Internet community and increasing visibility of online media, social networking, and text messaging in Armenia, USAID picked up the initiative of internet media development and launched another bid for a project on alternative media. In late 2010 the Alternative Resources in Media (ARM) program was awarded for joint implementation by Internews, Eurasia Partnership Foundation, and Yerevan Press Club.⁷² The program aims to enhance and improve access to pluralistic and unbiased information in Armenia by targeting journalists, media managers and citizen journalists.

USAID lists media among “those institutions that effectively promote democracy” (USAID 2009: 11). Meanwhile, it acknowledges that the government of Armenia is unwilling “to loosen its grip on the levers of power... [and] to tolerate a genuinely independent and objective media that reflects diverse views” (USAID 2009: 11-12). Given the acknowledged power of the Armenian government over political, economic, and social lives, it is surprising that for its 2009-2013 strategy, USAID decided to “*opportunistically*”⁷³ focus greater attention on these institutions that effectively promote democracy and de-emphasise direct technical assistance to recalcitrant GOAM [government] entities” (USAID 2009: 12). Thus, even if previous engagement of USAID in democracy promotion in Armenia without cross-sector initiatives has not resulted in greater media freedom, the decision to yet again leave out government from its projects seems short-sighted. This approach however resembles the ENP approach of partial conditionality, when a non-complying state is denied assistance to its institutions, and the funds are transferred to civil society, regardless how weak or government-dependent it may be. However, USAID seems convinced that “this demand-driven assistance

⁷² ProMediaII and CMSPA implementer IREX and Academy for Educational development, also applied for the bid, however, were not selected.

⁷³ Italics added.

approach is the most effective way for achieving the USG goal of democracy in Armenia” (USAID 2009: 12). Whether, this approach is empirically effective is to be investigated in later studies.

While USAID implemented sole-funded projects, the EU has often joined efforts and funding with the CoE and has usually opted for conferences, roundtables, and occasional trainings, which included the following (Council of Europe and European Union N.D.):

1. Regional conference on transfrontier broadcasting for policy makers in the media field and media professionals, 28/03/2002;
2. Training seminar for judges and journalists: Court proceedings - the role of the media, 28/11/2003 - 29/11/2003 (aimed to familiarise the journalists with Article 10 of ECHR);
3. Conference on "Media and elections, the democratic responsibility of the media", 14/11/2007, participants were media professional and politicians;
4. Training seminar for managers and senior journalists "Organisation and management of the media election coverage", 16/11/2007 - 17/11/2007;
5. Training seminar for media professionals on reporting on elections, 20/11/2007 - 21/11/2007;
6. Training seminar for media professionals on reporting on elections, 23/11/2007 - 24/11/2007;
7. Training seminar for media professionals on reporting on elections, 20/12/2007 - 21/12/2007;

8. Participation of ten Armenian participants in the 1st (out of five) regional meetings for journalism trainers from the South Caucasus, 14/06/2008 - 15/06/2008
9. Conference on media diversity in Armenia, 07/07/2008
10. Written expertise on amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 01/09/2008
11. Expert meeting on amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 01/12/2008 - 03/12/2008
12. First (out of two) seminars for the police and the media, 05/12/2008 - 06/12/2008, participants were decision-makers from media and police responsible for the interaction of police and media;
13. Written expertise on amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 23/03/2009;
14. Expert meeting on revised amendments to the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Television and Radio Broadcasting, 09/04/2009;
15. Second (out of two) seminars for the police and the media, 08/05/2009 - 09/05/2009;

Within the EIDHR (Initiative and Instrument) framework, the EU funded 49.50 % of the 2-year project “Freedom of Expression and Information and Freedom of the Media in the South Caucasus and Moldova” (SC-MLD-Media). The EU’s contribution to the CoE of EUR 500 000 project aimed to “assist the country in developing the measures that allow the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of expression and access to information in the long term”, as well as “promoting media quality and diversity” (Council of Europe and European Union N.D.). To bring the legislative framework on defamation, broadcasting

regulations, and media diversity in line with CoE standards, enable public authorities to apply CoE norms, and improve the independence and quality of media, 17 activities were implemented during 2008-2009 (including the ones mentioned above). This project was implemented after a two-year hiatus in EU/CoE activities in media sector, which has seen no follow-up activities to the few ones implemented in 2002-2003. As can be seen from the training themes, substantial attention was paid to elections coverage, yet again underlining general focus of donors not only on elections in general but also the likelihood of their optimism, when there is an opportunity for power turnover.

Decriminalisation of defamation in Armenia in April 2010 was regarded by the EU as “a positive example” to be followed by others in the region (EU Presidency 2010). However, the attempts of democracy promoters have seemed to have marginal impact, after the National Assembly passed a bill in 2010, which has reduced the number of broadcast media operating in Armenia but increased obstacles for the emergence of new broadcasters (Kalantarian 2010). Despite the assurances of lawmakers that they had accepted the EU and OSCE criticisms of the bill (Kalantarian 2010), the bill ignored recommendations of “crucial importance” and failed “to promote broadcast pluralism in the digital era” (Mijatovic in RFE/RL 2010b).

EU/CoE cooperation on media proceeded with another project on “Local Self-Governance Club as Mass Media Assistance Tool implemented within 2009-2011, and targeting journalists and local self governance representative through meetings with an EU budget of 98 000—79.35 % of total (Delegation of the European Union to Armenia N.D.). However, closer to the parliamentary elections in 2012, another project in cooperation with the CoE was announced in January and launched in Armenia in June 2011. The two-year project “Promoting Freedom, Professionalism and Pluralism in Media in the South Caucasus

and Moldova”, or SC-MLD-Media II, has a budget of EUR 1.1 million and plans 57 activities in the South Caucasus and Moldova (Council of Europe and European Union 2011). The project aims to “support the development of legal and institutional guarantees for freedom of expression, higher quality journalism and a pluralistic media landscape in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Moldova, in line with the Council of Europe standards and as regards both ‘traditional’ and ‘new’ media” (Council of Europe and European Union 2011). SC-MLD-Media II will be implemented through courses, discussions, and conferences, endeavouring inter alia to improve media legislation.

The EU that initially distanced itself from civil society programs and implemented only short-term projects targeting media development indulged itself in media activities after 2008. On the other hand, USAID abandoned traditional media and launched projects on alternative media. With the 2011 events in MENA reportedly organised through social networks and alternative media, this strategy may have the potential to influence democratic transformation. However, within the years of media development USAID has continuously distanced itself from political society and has not ensured local ownership of the projects, which have largely been developed and implemented by foreign NGOs. Neither has it initiated joint large-scale projects with other democracy promoters. The EU, on the other hand, channelled its media development activities through its cooperation with the CoE and attempted to influence media law-making through occasional joint statements with the OSCE.

Conclusion to Part III

Democratization process in Armenia has failed to result in a behavioural democratic transformation within specific sectors, since elections, parties, and the media do not fulfil their respective democratic functions. At the macro level, the country has moved from post-communism to a competitive authoritarian regime. With a democratic constitution, a sound legislative framework, and a general willingness of the authorities to formally introduce democratic reforms, the democratization process in Armenia has been marred by a general unwillingness to comply with the reforms. OSCE and CoE recommendations were regularly taken into consideration and enacted after each elections cycle, thus resulting in a formal democratic transformation. However, none of general elections has so far met the international standards, with rampant electoral abuse, uneven electoral playing field, and regular intimidation of the opposition. On the other hand, this does not come as a surprise as the utility of adaptation to democratic elections has been from moderate to low, which indicates the possibility of losing elections in case they are free and fair ([Table 33](#)). However, the comparative freedom and fairness of parliamentary elections went into sharp contrast with the increasing pressure exercised by the authorities during presidential elections. This can be equally explained by the higher costs of losing the executive position due to higher constitutional powers of the president, the persistent fragmentation of the opposition, and the low level of public trust in political parties. In other words, as the parliament is controlled by the executive anyway, parliamentary elections do not matter as much as the presidential ones.

Despite its marginal importance, Armenian political society has availed itself of the favourable constitutional and legal frameworks of multi-party system and has been congested and varied. However, the fragmentation of the opposition and regular change of allegiance due to stakes in power distribution has turned political parties into the minions of the

executive. Although the rhetoric and often vague programs of political parties have been supporting democracy and its promoters, they will have little room for manoeuvre unless they genuinely adhere to their own proclaimed goals and exercise control over the government. Within 1998-1999 elections cycle, formal democratic transformation could be observed due to the independence from non-partisan president of the Unity Bloc and favourable legal framework. However, subsequent elections cycles, with the executive-linked Republican Party ruling the parliament, emergence of leader-based parties, and constant floor-crossing have led to unintended transformation, reducing the capability of parties to control the government even more. Armenian parties may fulfil their education, participatory and even to some extent their interest aggregation functions, however due to their domination by the executive and their weak party platforms they do not fulfil their control function. Political parties have failed to democratize and within all observed elections cycles, most of them gained seats through unfair elections and many of them through the usage of state resources. Thus, the functions that are fulfilled by Armenian political parties are mostly of technical character that do not require a genuine move to democracy and do not impact country's democratization.

In addition, the added value of more than 50 political parties has been dubious due to the often pugnacious atmosphere and mutual distrust among the parties, frequently instigated by the controlled media outlets. Official control and sponsorship of media outlets by business tycoons with close ties to the authorities, has added to slow if any democratic progress of Armenia and have hindered the fulfilment of the media's watchdog function and obstructed behavioural democratic transformation. Despite legal guarantees for the freedom of expression, broadcast and print outlets have often exercised self-censorship in fear of possible official retaliation as in the case of several imprisoned editors and closed TV stations. Regular

economic and sometimes physical pressure on media, coupled with tighter legal control over broadcast media have even resulted in setbacks in media freedom compared to the earlier years of independence ([Table 32](#)) and made media's utility of performing the watchdog function low ([Table 33](#)). These chapters confirm the earlier argument that due to the obvious interconnectedness of democracy promotion target-sectors, promoters should refrain from isolating their targets. For example, due to the intensive government control over the media, projects directed solely on improving writing skills of reporters will not encourage freedom of media, if watchdog reporting is followed by a potential loss of employment or even physical damage.

While most of the domestic conditions influencing Armenia's democratization slightly vary depending upon elections cycle ([Table 32](#)), the condition of democracy blocker has always been pervasive as argued in [Chapter 4](#). Moreover, local endorsement of authoritarian Russia's involvement in Armenia's internal and external affairs due to geopolitical reasons has exacerbated the negative effect of democracy blocker, further hindering Armenia's democratization. Relying on Russia's backing and effectively scapegoating the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the authorities shrewdly shun democracy promoters for marginal involvement in conflict resolution ([Chapter 5](#)) and effectively (sometimes indirectly) censor media.

Table 32. Democratic transformation in Armenia.

	Free and fair Elections	Functioning political parties	Free Media
1998-1999 (as compared to 1995-1996 elections cycle)	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>no changes in previously criticised electoral law due to lack of time before extraordinary elections/did not meet standards</i>	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>favourable legal framework/ independence from the non-partisan president, despite constitutionally strong executive</i>	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>legal framework guaranteeing freedom of expression/partly free media</i>
2003 (as compared to 1995-1999 elections cycle)	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>improved legal framework/lack of improvement in implementation/did not meet standards</i>	<u>Unintended transformation</u> <i>favourable legal framework, /increased dependence on the executive; no control function</i>	<u>Unintended Transformation (Mixed)</u> <i>legal framework guaranteeing freedom of expression but providing high level of state control/setback in media freedom and watchdog function</i>
2007-2008 (as compared to 2003 elections cycle)	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>improved legal framework/lack of improvement in implementation with specific setbacks/did not meet standards</i>	<u>Unintended transformation</u> <i>no changes in legal framework/increased manipulation by the executive/fragmented and marginal opposition without control function</i>	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>moderately improved legal framework/ no move to watchdog media</i>
2012-2013 (as compared to 2008 elections cycle)	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>“progressive legislative framework”</i>	<u>Unintended transformation</u> <i>no changes in legal framework/increased manipulation by the executive/fragmented and marginal opposition</i>	<u>Formal Democratic Transformation</u> <i>improved legal framework though no implementation yet/ no move to watchdog media</i>

Source: author’s own compilation

Given the state of democratic transformation, these chapters *inter alia* confirmed that mere ideational identification with democracy is not sufficient for full transfer of democratic principles, as identification is often outweighed by low utility of democratic adaptation. While in the early 1990s, the apathetic attitude of the electorate towards the authorities was not so high, the utility of adaptation to democracy was moderate. However, the main presidential candidates did not take chances leading to unfair elections in 1996 and 1998 ([Table 32](#)). Along with growing general discontent with the authorities, the utility of adaptation to democracy for the incumbent presidential candidate and political parties has lowered. Given tight governmental control over media and the potential of immediate retaliation in case of criticism, the utility of adaptation to watchdog function has always been low for Armenian media outlets. Despite moderate or low resonance of free and fair elections, multi-party system, and free media, the identification with democracy and its promoters of the actors in all three categories have always been positive at least on a declaratory level ([Table 33](#)). However, the fear for losing the status quo, be that the executive power, a parliamentary seat, or employment in a media outlet, has restrained all three levels to actually pursue the proclaimed democratic objectives. The incentives offered through democracy promotion have not been high enough to outweigh the low utility level.

Table 33. Domestic conditions of democracy promotion in Armenia.

	Utility of adaptation		Identification		Resonance		Party Constellation	Democracy blocker	Ownership	
1995-1996	Elections (incumbent)	moderate	Elections	positive	Elections	moderate	mixed	low (present with local support)	N/A	
	Parties	moderate	Parties	positive	Parties	moderate				
	Media	low	Media	positive	Media	low				
1998	Elections (incumbent)	moderate	Elections	positive	Elections	moderate	liberal	low (present with local support)	low	moderate
	Parties	moderate	Parties	positive	Parties	moderate			low	low
	Media	low	Media	positive	Media	moderate			low	low
2003	Elections (incumbent)	low	Elections	positive	Elections	moderate	liberal	low (present with local support)	low	low
	Parties	low	Parties	positive	Parties	moderate			low	low
	Media	low	Media	positive	Media	low			low	low
2007-2008	Elections (incumbent)	low	Elections	positive	Elections	moderate	liberal	low (present with local support)	low	low
	Parties	low	Parties	positive	Parties	moderate			low	low
	Media	low	Media	positive	Media	low			low	low

Source: author's own compilation

The state of democracy in Armenia does not derive solely from domestic conditions but is the result of interaction between specific domestic and international conditions. Foreign policy decision-making mechanisms of the EU downgrade the assertiveness of its policies and decelerate their implementation. Structurisation of foreign policy through decision-making and representation is reflected in the rhetoric and actions of democracy promoters. Apparently more consensual nature of EU decision-making prevents it from harsh US-style statements, however, at the end the EU's mild and the USA's harsh statements are accompanied by similar actions thus undermining the credibility of the promoter. Diverging evaluations of elections by promoters may confuse the target of democracy promotion and give the latter grounds for quoting the positive feedback of one promoter against the other's reprimand.

The analyses of democracy promotion within three different sectors—elections, parties, and the media—show no variations in the values of the analysed variables, demonstrating that democracy promoters follow the same strategy regardless of the sector. Even if the value of a variable has changed over the course of time, it has changed for all three sectors simultaneously. While credibility of both the EU and the USA was positive in the first decade of democracy promotion, it later decreased due to unrealised threats and promises ([Table 34](#)). Despite new policies and programs (especially in the case of the EU), moderate (often social or cognitive) incentives and low level of cooperation did not add to Armenia's democratization. Low involvement of the EU and lowered (in the 2000s) involvement of the USA in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict have overridden positive values of other variables. Schimmelfennig et al (2006) argued that material incentives are needed for successful norm transfer. This study argues that if incentives are not high enough and all the other conditions hold at least a moderate value, a democracy promoter should be positively involved in the resolution of a national issue and account for a democracy-blocking regional power.

Table 34. International conditions for democracy promotion in Armenia.

		Legitimacy		Credibility		Incentives		Cooperation		Consistency		Involvement	
		EU	US	EU	US	EU	US	EU	US	EU	US	EU	US
1995-1996	Elections	positive	positive	N/A	positive	N/A	moderate	N/A N/A	N/A	positive	low	positive	
	Parties	positive	positive		positive		moderate			positive			
	Media	positive	positive		positive		moderate			positive			
1998	Elections	positive	positive	positive	positive	moderate	moderate	low	N/A	positive	low	positive	
	Parties	positive	positive	positive	positive	moderate	moderate	low		positive			
	Media	positive	positive	positive	positive	moderate	moderate	low		positive			
2002-2003	Elections	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	moderate	moderate	moderate	
	Parties	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	moderate			
	Media	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	positive			
2007-2008	Elections	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	moderate	moderate	moderate	
	Parties	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	moderate			
	Media	positive	positive	low	low	moderate	moderate	low	positive	positive			

Source: author's own compilation.

Conclusion: Walking with a Flashlight

The puzzle of extensive and intensive democracy promotion resulting in limited democratic progress even in countries that welcome democracy promotion has inspired this research. Even those countries that have repeatedly pledged their loyalty to democratic principles have either fallen back into autocracy or stalled in a regime that is neither purely autocratic nor democratic. Moreover, this research has been timely and relevant as it has coincided with the growing appeal of the Chinese model of economic development without democracy and Russia's growing authoritarianism. Thus, this dissertation has posited an overarching question of *why despite numerous and extensive democracy promotion initiatives, has democracy not become "the only game in town" even in countries where these initiatives are welcome?* More specifically it has started with the aim of answering the question of *"under what conditions is democracy promotion more likely to result in democratic transformation?"* However, the course of the research and its cases have helped answering the question of *"under what conditions is democracy promotion likely to result in a formal democratic transformation but not behavioural one?"* Answering this question should enable identifying the conditions that would make democratic transformation more likely in the case of a country like Armenia. The framework and findings of this research are fully applicable to the countries that have consented to democracy promotion. Although, the framework is expected to be applicable to no-consent cases, e.g. after military interventions, the values of the variables would be different and lead to different outcomes.

To avoid falling into the trap of subjective and highly normative concepts of effectiveness and success, this study has focused on democratic transformation as its dependent variable and as the outcome of democracy promotion and democratization. This study has *inter alia* argued that the increased political and economic interdependence and

interconnectedness of different realms within a democratizing country has led to the merging of international democracy promotion and domestic democratization. Thus, this study has focused on the interaction of international and domestic conditions that have led to different democratic transformations. In addition, the variables investigated cover both macro and micro democracy promotions and demonstrate their interconnectedness.

This study has analysed democracy promotion by the most prominent democracy promoters—the EU and the USA—in Armenia. Thus, this dissertation has offered a two-fold contribution to democracy promotion studies. Its theoretical contribution has been to develop an analytical framework for democracy promotion studies, while its empirical contribution has been to compare democracy promotion policies in a country that has long been neglected by the academic literature. In addition, the analysis of three different target-sectors of democracy promotion—elections, parties, and the media—add to the innovative character of this research, as the latter simultaneously concentrates on democratic transformation at the macro level of a country and at the micro level of specific sectors. The last section synthesises theoretical and empirical findings, arguing that democracy can be achieved from the outside; however, the caveats are more serious than anticipated by promoters.

Theoretical Implications

The framework developed in this research is a useful reference for both academics and practitioners since it provides tools for researching the outcome of democracy and democratization and, depending upon conditions, prompts specific policy actions. Through the application of the framework, this dissertation argues that democracy promotion is not a lost cause of humanitarian idealists. Metaphorically, it is rather an orphaned policy left at the mercy of circumstances without proper care and upbringing, regularly bullied by mean teenagers. However, democracy promotion has the potential not only to produce numerous

academic and policy analyses but also to lead to a genuine democratic transformation, if promoters rationally choose their strategies and base them on existing domestic conditions.

This study has presented a theoretically and empirically synthetic approach to democracy promotion, which includes rationalist and constructivist elements, international democracy promotion and democratization, and democratic transformation on the levels of the target-country and specific target-sectors. When addressing the main puzzle, this study argues that democracy has not become the “only game in town” even in countries that welcome democracy promotion efforts because international conditions created by democracy promoters and domestic conditions “supplied” by democratizing countries are mismatched. More specifically, the chances of liberal democracy being exported from outside will increase provided the utility of domestic adaptation to democracy is at least moderate, promoters are actively involved in resolution of pressing national issues, and there is no regional actor that blocks democracy and receives support for its policies from the target country. While this dissertation has not aimed to confront rationalist and constructivist perspectives on international socialization, it has *inter alia* demonstrated that the two should be complemented and, paraphrasing previous arguments (Schimmelfennig et al 2006), reliance on constructivist conditions is unlikely to result in successful democracy promotion. Nevertheless, the findings corroborate a rationalist approach, arguing that despite its often normative character the process and especially the outcome of democracy promotion and democratization essentially derive from strategic reasoning and constitute a bargaining process.

These arguments are based on a careful consideration of the literature on democracy promotion and democratization and are supported by empirical evidence gathered from primary and secondary written sources and two rounds of semi-structured interviews in Yerevan, Armenia. The [first chapter](#) has defined the concept of democracy that can be applied

to democracy promotion studies and argued that previously separated democracy promotion and democratization should be viewed as interconnected and complementing processes. The [second chapter](#) has placed democracy promotion within foreign policy analysis and introduced the correlation between foreign policy decision-making and policy implementation. In its second part, the chapter presented the international socialization framework by analysing its variables ([legitimacy](#), [credibility](#), [incentives](#), [identification](#), [costs/utility of adaptation](#), and [resonance](#)) and arguments. The possibility of adding additional variables based on further empirical research is not excluded. The [third chapter](#) has expanded the adopted theoretical framework by introducing new independent variables ([cooperation](#), [consistency](#), [involvement](#), [party constellation](#), [ownership](#), and [democracy blocker](#)) and new cases, and discussed in detail the dissertation's research design.

The empirical chapters start with the analysis of Armenia's democratization process, outlining the extent of its democratic transformation at the macro level. [Chapter 4](#) introduces the Nagorno Karabakh conflict as a major obstacle for Armenia's democratization and a major area of potential promoter involvement. The chapter also argues that due to economic and geopolitical reasons, the presence of Russia as a regional democracy blocker is supported by Armenia's regime and population and negatively influences Armenia's democratization. [Chapter 5](#) analyses the development and implementation of EU and US democracy promotion policies, their legitimacy and credibility in promoting democracy. The chapter argues that though both actors have legitimacy for promoting democracy, their credibility often suffers from their unwillingness or indecisiveness to actively involve in conflict resolution, *inter alia* and perhaps unintentionally helping Russia in sustaining its status quo in the South Caucasus conflicts.

Chapters [6](#), [7](#), and [8](#) analyse democratic transformation in the target sectors of elections, parties, and the media respectively and connect all independent variables in sets of conditions grouping them according to elections cycles. These chapters argue that despite some favourable conditions democratic transformation has not gone beyond formal. Discovering scarce democratic transformation within sectors, the chapters argue that it is likely to be due to the dominance of the executive power. Nevertheless, as expected, transformation levels slightly vary within the three sectors. The recurring formal transformation within elections signals the importance of elections not only to promoters but also to domestic actors as the one influencing their international image. On the other hand, the unintended or even negative transformation within parties and the media points to their relative insignificance. This disparity should signal promoters that increased attention is needed beyond elections and that even if elections become free and fair, democracy would not function properly without viable political parties and civil society.

The findings are largely in line with the original argument of the international socialization framework (Schimmelfennig et al 2006). However, given the expanded number of the variables, this dissertation offers more nuanced explanation of the outcomes of democracy promotion and observes divergent importance of international and domestic conditions. Schimmelfennig et al (2006) argued that successful rule transfer is possible if there is a credible membership perspective and low domestic political costs of rule adoption (or high utility of adaptation). Going beyond the original dependent variable of compliance (vs. non-compliance), this study has argued that to account for the outcome of democracy promotion and democratization, the dependent variable of democratic transformation categorised as formal, behavioural, and unintended provides a better understanding of democracy promotion outcomes. Behavioural democratic transformation has been

operationalised as the fulfilment of sectoral functions ascribed by democratic rules, thus making it the ultimate goal of democracy promoters and domestic democratizees. The analysis has shown that democratic transformation could also be mixed as in the case of the media sector within the 2003 elections cycle ([Table 32](#)). Mixed transformation is a result of formal transformation and simultaneous setback in democracy. This demonstrates that mere adoption of a law or a code of conduct does not guarantee the establishment of democracy and democratic behaviour by domestic stakeholders. In addition, the adoption of a law does not prevent a setback in democracy. Consequently, to upgrade a formal democratic transformation into a behavioural one, democracy promoters need to guarantee consistency in their efforts and follow up on their activities, without assuming that a formally adopted rule or a completed project would assure rule-based behaviour.

This research has focused on Armenia, which during 20 years of democratization has developed into a competitive authoritarian regime, where competition is real but unfair even if legal means of contesting the incumbent regime exist. Whether contestation is easily permitted is a different question. The analysis of democracy promotion and the democratization process in Armenian elections, party politics, and media revealed that high identification with democracy and legitimacy of democracy promoters could not compensate for low utility of adaptation to democracy, which was not supported by credible and cooperative actions of democracy promoters. The variable of party constellation, which is important in the research of Schimmelfennig et al (2006), appeared to be a non-variable in the Armenian context, due to the parties' dependence upon the executive. This dependence has not been overcome by their pro-democratic proclamations. The executive-dominated Republican Party has created coalitional government and has dominated parliamentary convocations of 2003 and 2007 along with the oligarch-based Prosperous Armenia and the

floor-crossing Rule of Law. Political parties in Armenia fail in fulfilling their control functions, and their rhetorical democratic orientation is unlikely to influence democratization until they abandon their election rigging habits and adhere to clear party platforms.

The findings of this research can be also applied to a full authoritarian regime, “in which no viable channels exist for opposition to contest legally for executive power” (Levitsky and Way 2010). Due to closeness of such a regime, democracy promotion through consent would be unlikely and democratic transformation pursued through the state is unlikely to be even formal. Thus, in the cases of full authoritarian regimes, the incumbent regime should be offered incentives increasing the utility of adaptation and greater attention should be paid to the development of civil society that can challenge the regime from within. Although the analysed variables are expected to be applicable to other countries, regardless of regime, and other sectors of democracy promotion and democratization, the importance of each variable and its value would be different. Nevertheless, it is expected that within the same geographic region a number of variables will have the same value and result in the same level of democratic transformation.

The most important factor in Armenia’s democratization has been the presence of democracy-blocking Russia with local support coupled with low involvement by democracy promoters in the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. The combination of these factors has resulted in formal and unintended transformations: a number of democratic laws have been adopted but instead of democratic behaviour, democratic stagnation or setbacks have occurred. Post-conflict democratization has always been regarded as an ordeal. However, in the cases like Armenia, which is a party to a frozen conflict as a result of a war, which was not even on its own territory, a protracted conflict hinders democratization and justifies the anti-democratic tendencies of the regime. The persistence of the conflict has induced the incumbent regime to

support democracy-blocking activities of a powerful regional actor. In such cases democracy promoters need to broaden their mission and also to become involved in the national issues fuelling domestic support for a democracy-blocker. In cases of democracy promoters with lesser leverage and breadth of activities than the EU and the USA, cooperation with their counterparts would be more likely to produce positive results.

The inconsistency in pursuing specific democracy objectives and the low involvement of promoters in issues of domestic importance are aggravated by the low domestic utility of adaptation to democracy. In competitive authoritarian regimes, which are usually chosen as targets of democracy promotion, domestic actors have low utility of adaptation to democratic principles. Low utility of adaptation is closely linked to the fear of losing status quo. An incumbent president opposes free and fair elections, as the latter increases the possibility of losing the presidential position. Similarly, political parties do not perform their functions out of fear not being re-elected or even being suppressed by a dominating executive. Media does not watchdog out of fear for economic or physical damage. As in the case of Armenia, the interconnectedness of target-sectors in competitive authoritarian, and especially in full authoritarian regimes, is expected to be high, with obvious dominance by the executive. Thus, democracy promotion needs to be simultaneously cross-sectoral, offering material incentives for democratic transformation.

Cross-sectoral promotion can be achieved through cooperation between promoters regardless of their own leverage since it will also eliminate current competition occurring between promoters and among their implementers. Occasionally leaving the impression of two differently positioned actors, the EU and the USA follow approaches to democracy promotion that are characterised by shaky credibility, lackadaisical involvement in national issues, and general disinterest in cooperation with each other. What makes the EU and the

USA differ are their development mechanisms for democracy promotion. Effectiveness apart, the USA's stateness has provided it with an opportunity to polish its mechanisms, while the EU has been torn between the strategic interests of its member states, piling policies up instead of improving them. Even if the USA may also be sometimes understood as a divided actor, its different approaches to the same policy are often ascribed to its strategic interests rather than the incoherence of its policy-making as is the case with the EU. Another striking difference is the sector-encompassing and widely marketed approach of the USA in comparison to the EU's over-bureaucratic and low-profile image. While neither of the approaches boasts efficiency or effectiveness, the strictly normative pledge of the EU seems to have lost its appeal and influence, necessitating a more consistent and strategic approach, especially if democracy is promoted for the sake of another agenda.

Policy Recommendations for the EU and the USA in Armenia and the South Caucasus

Given the low level of democratic transformation on a global scale and notorious democratic backlashes, promotion of democracy seems to be an ungrateful task. However, international actors that have vowed to promote democracy and have launched their worldwide activities need sooner or later to show results not only to target countries but also to their own taxpayers, who sponsor these policies. Regular critiques that democracy promotion is merely pretence for the advancement of more mercantilist interests present no obstruction to improving democracy promotion. Even if democracy promotion is a tool for achieving other objectives such as neutralizing terrorist groups or exerting control over natural resources, democracy promoters need to show positive results; otherwise, their primary interests would also be compromised. With seemingly non-orchestrated revolutions sweeping

MENA and finding admirers in post-Soviet countries, more engaged and well-planned democracy promotion is both timely and promising. With rising international ambitions by authoritarian Russia and China supported not only by their veto powers in the UN, but also by their energy and trade advantages over democracy promoters, coherent and cooperative actions by promoters are necessary. It should be noted that these recommendations reflect the understanding that the establishment of democracy through democracy promotion is a common goal for the EU and the USA and recommendations are made from the perspective of making the policy of both actors effective. Nevertheless, the necessity of cooperation for a common goal arises if the EU and the USA genuinely aim to achieve the establishment of behavioural democracy. Thus, the recommendations provided below apply in case neither the EU nor the USA prefers to undercut the other actor for the establishment of its own dominance over the region.

The analysis of the Armenian case provides room for broader policy recommendations that would be useful for the case of Armenia and applicable to other cases of democracy promotion. The combinations of strategies and conditions that have so far been present in the Armenian context have successfully pursued gradual and regular adoption of democratic laws. However, these strategies and conditions have appeared insufficient in inducing democratic behaviour by local stakeholders. In addition, these strategies have not been sufficient to contain Russia's intrusive authoritarian power. Given consistently high levels of rhetorical identification with democracy and the high legitimacy of EU and US democracy promotion in Armenia, promoters need to build on the positive conditions at hand. Democracy promotion policies need rapid improvement in their design and implementation. For more efficient promotion with greater chances of success in behavioural democratic transformation, a promoter should carry out a targeted needs assessment and not simply transfer a project from

another country, cooperate with other promoters to utilise their comparative advantages and experience, simultaneously target several sectors within the same project, and further ensure adherence to the adopted rule.

Nevertheless, increased attention should be paid to the resolution of outstanding national issues that not only provide local authorities with justification of authoritarian actions but also feed imperialistic ambitions of a democracy blocker. In more specific terms, the outstanding conflict damages the multilateral platform of the EaP, forcing it to resort to bilateral agreements and abandon its plans for regional cooperation. Thus, in the case of Armenia and the South Caucasus, greater attention needs to be paid to the resolution of frozen conflicts. Decision on conflict resolution may sometimes be strategically inconvenient, yet, democracy promoters seem to have an opportunity for greater involvement in resolving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Putin's comeback to presidency is likely to decrease Russia's direct involvement in peace talks, which was boosted due to Western disinterest and President Medvedev's personal enthusiasm. Putin had previously showed that status quo of a frozen conflict is preferable for Russia's strategic interests as it helps to manipulate the region and shield it from Western projects. Through ENP review, the EU reiterated its rhetorical commitment to conflict resolution (Commission and HR 2011). To demonstrate its commitment, the EU should join the USA in conflict resolution efforts, which even if not immediately successful, would have the potential to create a framework for meaningful cooperation.

The EU and the USA currently cannot match the economic offers made by Russia to Armenia or the South Caucasus. However the possibility of the DCFTA and liberalisation of visa regime would boost the incentives. The increased involvement in the resolution of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict, possible economic investments, and energy supply diversification

are likely to increase local support for democracy and Western promoted policies not only rhetorically, but also behaviourally. In the cases of Armenia and the South Caucasus, the EU should better link its energy interests with values such as promotion of democracy, good governance, and regional cooperation; otherwise, its credibility as a normative player and contributor to sustainable development of these countries will be further damaged. The USA needs to comply with its own statements and transform the MCC conditionality from artificial to genuine. The cut in MCC funding came three years after the unfair 2008 elections and US threats. However, the Armenian government pledged to “do everything’ to address U.S. concerns over governance in Armenia” (Danielyan and Shoghikian 2011). To transform this pledge into concrete actions, the USA needs to demonstrate consistency and credibility in its policies. In addition, instead of cooperating, democracy promoters, and sometimes US project implementers, are engaged in a “success story boasting” competition, which prevents them from containing the omnipresent influence of the regional democracy blocker—Russia.

Future Research

This analysis of the Armenian context has paved a path for other comparative studies on democracy promotion and democratization. Belonging to the sphere of EU and US democracy promotion in the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Georgia present an opportunity for the most interesting and immediate comparison due to a shared number of conditions (including a conflict) but having different relations with democracy-blocker Russia. Divergent relations of Azerbaijan and Georgia with Russia and their different pools of domestic resources open an opportunity to investigate whether strategies of democracy promotion are also different. Within a larger comparative framework, involving more than two countries a variable of bargaining power can be introduced that would account for any geopolitical, economic, or natural resource advantage that may give leverage over a democracy blocker or even a

promoter. The suggested analytical framework can be further applied to other post-Soviet cases to account for the role of Russia and to cases where a democracy blocker is not present and other variables (conditions) may be more important. Eventually a QCA analysis would result in an important database on democracy promotion, providing more generalisable results.

This dissertation has pointed to other potentially interesting issues for investigation. First, the findings show that there is scope of research in the field of “democracy promotion management”. A strong correlation between foreign policy decision-making and democracy promotion implementation mechanisms is often overlooked by analysts. The evaluation of decision-making processes and implementation mechanisms separately risks overlooking the reasons leading to an unsuccessful democracy promotion strategy. Thus, closer attention should be paid to the developmental stage of democracy promotion and its gradual transition to the implementation stage.

Second, the fate of democratic governance or at least democratic progress are at stake given China’s economic liberalisation without democratization along with growing international ambitions, the financial struggles of the EU, the resistance of many authoritarian states to democratic protests, and the plans of Russia’s Putin to build its own Eurasian Union. Thus, this dissertation engages with a growing field of research on regimes that pose alternatives to or oppose democracy and adds to it by introducing the variable of democracy blocker. Further research is needed on foreign policy strategies of international non-democratic actors and most importantly on their bargaining powers vis-à-vis international democratic actors.

Third, this dissertation has raised the issue of the willingness to promote democracy for the sake of democracy or for the aim of remaining visible and competing with other

international actors. Following the fashion of promoting democracy, international actors hastily design policies and rush to locations previously unknown to their own representatives. However, to actors such as the EU, that are championing their normative image, outright promotion of strategic interests—such as fighting terrorism, energy diversification—may seem overly pushy and overly similar to the hard approach of the USA. This raises the question of whether ineffective democracy promotion policies boost the visibility of a promoter and assist it in achieving its other goals or, on the contrary, decrease its actorness. While the USA needs to rehabilitate its positive image as democracy champion, the EU needs to build on its democratic success of the Eastern enlargements and become more decisive. To maintain their vanguard roles within the international order without wandering in twilight, both actors need to become more responsible and credible in their foreign policies and specifically in democracy promotion.

Appendix A. Framework Interview Questions

1. When did you start operating in Armenia?
2. What prompted you to start operating in Armenia, any specific event?
3. What was the procedure of launching projects in Armenia? Did Armenia have to comply with certain conditions beforehand?
4. How would you evaluate the state of the are you are working in?
5. What are the specific obstacles of promoting democracy in Armenia/implementing your projects?
6. What are the specific opportunities for promoting democracy in Armenia/implementing your projects?
7. What are the projects/programs?
8. How projects are designed? (e.g. needs assessment, report to HQ, designing the projects in HQ, then transferring to the country OR going slightly adapting the project that was already implemented in another country OR the projects is designed at HQ and then foreign experts are sent)
9. Are local stakeholders involved in the design/development and implementation of the projects? If yes, how and to what extent? If no, why?
10. Do you cooperate with other actors implementing similar projects to yours? If yes, how? If no, why?
11. When targeting a specific group (e.g. media) are other potential stakeholders involved in the implementation of the project or also targeted (e.g. state officials, political parties)?
12. How do you choose your targets? (e.g. target all political parties or all possible media outlets OR only opposition OR through a competition etc).
13. What do you do if your target does not comply with project requirements?
14. How the projects are evaluated/assessed?
15. How would you evaluate each project implemented so far?
16. How do you assess your projects (in which terms, e.g. input, output, impact; effectiveness; efficiency? If possible give definitions of each.
17. Have you reconsidered your strategy or your projects after 2003/2007/2008 elections?

18. Have your projects improved the sector you are targeting? How? If no, why?
19. Have your projects had a broader impact on democracy in Armenia?
20. What are further steps? What should be done?

Additional for the EU:

1. What is the role/importance of the South Caucasus for the EU? What is the role/importance of Armenia for the EU?
2. What is the main mission of the EU in Armenia?
3. Shortly after the Commission evaluated the South Caucasus as non-compliant for the inclusion in European Neighbourhood Policy, all three countries signed their Action plans. This happened after the 2003 parliamentary and presidential elections in Armenia and Azerbaijan, which were regarded as a setback by the OSCE and the “Rose Revolution” in Georgia. Had the promise of Georgian transformation influence also the decisions on Armenia and Azerbaijan?
4. What was the decision to upgrade Armenia to the Eastern Partnership based on?
5. How will the termination of position of the Special Representative influence EU-Armenia relations?
6. Do you cooperate/coordinate/communicate with other delegations in the South Caucasus? How?
7. How will the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) influence EU-Armenia relations?
8. What has changed or will change after the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty and the creation of the EEAS?
9. How do you communicate with Brussels?

Appendix B. List of Interviewees

Ms. Oksanna Abrahamyan. IFES Deputy Head of Office (Yerevan, June 2010).

Mr. Artak Chobanyan. Civic Program Coordinator at NDI (Yerevan, June 2010 and April 2011).

Ms. Meri Kosyan. In-country Representative of IRI (Yerevan, June 2010).

Ms. Monika Papian. Project Manager at EU Delegation to Armenia (Yerevan, June 2010).

Mr. Artashes Parsadanyan. Deputy Chief of Party at Core Media Support Program for Armenia funded by USAID and implemented by IREX (Yerevan, June 2010 and April 2011).

Ms. Tatevik Sargsyan. Training Department Manager at Core Media Support Program for Armenia funded by USAID and implemented by IREX (Yerevan, June 2010).

Ms. Nouneh Sarkisyan. Director of Internews Armenia (Yerevan, April 2011).

Mr. George Zarycky. Director of USAID Armenia Democracy and Governance Office (Yerevan, June 2010).

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