

EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY IN ARMENIA: ON THE ROAD TO FAILURE OR SUCCESS?

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Abstract

Encouraged by its success with the enlargements of 2004 and 2007, the EU has developed its European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This paper aims to analyze in the case of Armenia the potential effectiveness of the ENP in democracy promotion in post-communist states and to further test the applicability of the international socialization framework to democracy promotion studies. The paper classifies the strategies of the ENP by analysing ENP documentation. To identify and classify the domestic conditions, this paper traces the domestic political and economic situation at the time of ENP enforcement and examines international reports for balanced assessment of the country's political situation. The findings indicate that the strategies of the ENP in Armenia do not correspond to the domestic conditions and are insufficient for successful democracy promotion. The paper shows that the theoretical framework can be applied to democracy promotion studies increasing their predictive value and opportunities for generalization.

1. Introduction

No matter how fuzzy and inconsistent the European Union's (EU) foreign policy may be, it achieved considerable success with its enlargements of 2004 and 2007¹. The attractiveness of the EU's

1 See Judith Kelley, "International Actors on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions," *International Organization* 58, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 425-457; Judith Kelley, "New Wine in Old Wineskins: Promoting Political Reforms through the New European Neighbourhood Policy*," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 44, no. 1 (2006): 29-55.

Frank Schimmelfennig and Hanno Scholtz, "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood: Political Conditionality, Economic Development and Transnational Exchange," *European Union Politics* 9, no. 2 (June 1, 2008): 187-215.

Karen Smith, *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World*, 2nd ed., (Polity Press, 2008).

incentives and the leverage of its political conditionality enabled the EU to promote democracy to the then candidate countries. Encouraged by this achievement, the EU developed a further norms promotion policy in the image of the enlargement one²; although it does not entail a membership incentive. The “newest democratization tool”³, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), targets the EU’s near and not-so-near neighbourhood and aims to promote specific economic, political and security-related policies in partner countries. The partner countries vary widely in geographic location and degree of democratization, and include countries as diverse as Israel, Ukraine, and Morocco. Despite this variety, the EU is optimistic about the ENP’s impact on the target countries⁴. The empirical purpose of this paper is to analyze the potential effectiveness of the ENP in democracy promotion in post-communist countries by focusing on the case of Armenia.

This paper examines two specific aspects of ENP democracy promotion: what the strategies of the ENP democracy promotion are; and whether these strategies correspond to current analytical frameworks of effective democracy promotion. The paper applies an innovative theoretical framework of international socialization developed by Schimmelfennig et al⁵. International socialization is defined as “a process that is directed toward a state’s internalization of the constitutive beliefs and practices institutionalized in its international environment”⁶. Given this definition, international socialization can be viewed as an approach to study democracy promotion, thus addressing the atheoretical character of democracy promotion studies⁷.

2 Kelley, “International Actors on the Domestic Scene”.

3 Benita Ferrero-Waldner, “Remarks on Democracy Promotion. Democracy Promotion: The European Way” (Conference organised by the European Parliament’s Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe, December 7, 2006): 3.

4 Ibid.

5 Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert, and Heiko Knobel, *International Socialization in Europe: European Organizations, Political Conditionality and Democratic Change* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

6 Frank Schimmelfennig, “International Socialization in the New Europe: Rational Action in an Institutional Environment,” *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 1 (March 1, 2000): 111.

7 Peter Burnell, “Does Democracy Promotion Work?,” in (presented at the Dt. Inst. für Entwicklungspolitik, Bonn, 2007),

[http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3_e.nsf/\(ynDK_contentByKey\)/ADMR-7BRF46/\\$FILE/BurnellPromotionWork.pdf](http://www.die-gdi.de/CMS-Homepage/openwebcms3_e.nsf/(ynDK_contentByKey)/ADMR-7BRF46/$FILE/BurnellPromotionWork.pdf). Peter Burnell, “From Evaluating Democracy Assistance to

Schimmelfennig and his collaborators have developed a theoretical framework that specifies potential outcomes of interaction of sets of international and domestic conditions. This paper analyzes the strategies of democracy promotion of the ENP— i.e., international conditions—and identifies domestic conditions to assess whether they are conducive to successful internalization of democratic norms. The theoretical purpose of this paper is to test the applicability of this framework to democracy promotion studies. While Schimmelfennig et al have conducted ex-post studies of democracy promotion, this paper examines an ex-ante case of democracy promotion case in order to assess the predictive power of the framework.

Armenia, which is a post-communist state, is going through a rapid economic development and provides control for the economic development variable⁸, which is often missing from democracy promotion studies⁹. It is a useful case because although it is a long-time target of extensive investment by democracy promoters, little research has been conducted on that matter. This paper adopts a qualitative research method and identifies the strategies of the ENP by analysing Strategy Papers, Country Reports, Commission Proposals, Action Plans, and Progress Reports and other documents of the EU. To identify the domestic conditions in Armenia and classify them according to the theoretical framework, the study traces the domestic political and economic situation at time of the ENP enforcement, analyzes statements by the state officials, and examines international reports for a balanced assessment of the country's political situation.

The empirical result of the study shows that ENP is unlikely to be effective in promoting democracy because it does not employ necessary strategies of democracy promotion given current domestic conditions of Armenia. The study also shows that the framework developed by Schimmelfennig and collaborators can

Appraising Democracy Promotion," *Political Studies* 56 (2008): 414-434. Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).

8 Saumya Mitra and et al, *The Caucasian Tiger : Sustaining Economic Growth in Armenia* (The World Bank, 2007).

9 Schimmelfennig and Scholtz, "EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood."

be successfully applied to democracy promotion studies. The paper is organized as follows. The next section presents the international socialization as a useful theoretical framework for democracy promotion studies. The subsequent section analyzes the role of the EU as a democracy promoter and the ENP's strategies. The final section examines Armenia's domestic conditions as an aspirant democracy. The paper concludes considering the effectiveness of the ENP given research results and suggests possible policy implications and areas for future research.

2. Promoting Democracy

Until recently, scholars of comparative politics believed that international factors and processes are of marginal, if any, importance to democratization. Proponents 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 as the strength of national economy, the institutional design¹⁰, the openness of political culture¹¹, and the elite behaviour¹² 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 change¹³. 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 democratization¹⁴. In the beginning of the 1990s scholars of democratization supposed that external governments and institutions may have a determinative impact on

10 Linz, Juan J. The Perils of Presidentialism. *Journal of Democracy*. 1, no 1 (1990): 51-70.

11 Diamod, Larry, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset. *Comparing Experiences with Democracy: Democracy in Developing Countries*. 2nd ed. (Boulder C.O: Lynne Rienner Pub, 2002).

12 Higley, John, and Michael G. Burton. 1989. The Elite Variable in Democratic Transitions and Breakdowns. *American Sociological Review*. 54 (1989): 17-32.

13 Schraeder, Peter J. *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric Vs. Reality*. (Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc. 2002).

14 See Pridham, Geoffrey, Eric Herring, and George Sanford. *Building Democracy: The International Dimension of Democratization in Eastern Europe*. (London: Routledge, 1994); Whitehead, Laurence. *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas*. (OUP Oxford, 1996).

democratization of a given country¹⁵. Others argue that in coming decades the significance of international institutions may prove pivotal for domestic political change¹⁶. In a revisit of his well-known 'requisites of democracy' article, Lipset¹⁷ concludes that domestic conditions "do shape the probabilities for democracy, but they do not determine their outcomes." Democracy is an "international cause".

Scholars of democracy promotion have repeatedly expressed concerns over the lack of an adequate theoretical framework wielding predictive value for democracy promotion studies¹⁸. The literature mainly relates to the practitioner¹⁹ and ex post²⁰ view of democracy promotion, which is overwhelmingly a narrative of democracy promotion efforts of the USA²¹ and the EU²², 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 are available. They have been developed by different foundations and development agencies: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit etc.; and heavily criticised by the academics²³. Carothers even claims, "democracy

15 Huntington, Samuel P. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

16 Milada Anna Vachudova, *Europe Undivided: Democracy, Leverage, and Integration After Communism*. (OUP Oxford, 2005).

17 Seymour Martin Lipset. The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited. *American Sociological Review*. 59 (1994): 17-16.

18 Burnell, "Does Democracy Promotion Work?".

19 See Carothers, Thomas. *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*. (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, December, 1999).

20 Peter Burnell, "Does Democracy Promotion Work?".

21 Carothers, *Aiding Democracy*.

22 See Gillespie, Richard. *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa*. 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2002); Youngs, Richard. *The European Union and the Promotion of Democracy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

23 See Crawford, Gordon. Promoting Democracy From Without, Part II Democratization. 10, no 1 (2003a): 77-98.

promoters treat political change in a pseudoscientific manner²⁴, thus their democracy promotion does not have a theoretical background.

To study the phenomenon of democracy promotion it is important to derive from a set definition of democracy: Democracy is a meaningful and extensive competition among individuals and organized 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 organizations²⁵.

In their original piece Schmitter and Brouwer²⁶ provide useful conceptualizations of the main terms in democracy promotion. Schmitter and Brouwer define democracy promotion as overt and voluntary activities adopted, supported, and (directly or indirectly) implemented by (public or private) foreign actors explicitly designed to contribute to the political liberalization of autocratic regimes and the subsequent democratization of autocratic regimes in specific recipient countries²⁷.

This definition does not include implicit actions of external actors, such as diplomatic and intelligence activities, health campaigns and alike, as well as it omits international factors, which do not require presence of a promoter. Besides, international actors do not always label some of their activities as democracy promotion regardless of the democratizing nature of those activities. However, this paper does not study the *raison d'être* of democracy promotion but rather aims to understand how the

Crawford, Gordon. 2003b. Promoting Democracy From Without, Part II. *Democratization*. 10, no 2 (2003b): 1-20.

24 Carroters, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*, 102.

25 Diamond, Larry, Linz, Juan, and Lipset, Seymour Martin (eds). Introduction. In *Democracy in Developing Countries: Africa*. (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1988): xvi.

26 Schmitter, Philippe C., and Imco Brouwer. Conceptualizing, Researching and Evaluating Democracy Promotion and Protection. EUI Working Paper. SPS 99/9, Florence (European University Institute), 1999.

27 Ibid, 12.

process of democracy promotion should be studied so the framework is empirically applicable and generalizable.

3. International Socialization as the Analytical Framework

Schimmelfennig et al²⁸ fill the theoretical lacuna by developing a robust and empirically testable theoretical framework based on the notion of international socialization. This paper adopts the framework developed by Schimmelfennig et al to examine the potential effectiveness of the ENP in Armenia. This section of the paper presents the framework in detail giving definitions of the important concepts, presenting the rationalist-constructivist debate, discussing the types of socialization and strategies, and identifying necessary international and domestic conditions of successful socialization.

International socialization is “a process in which states are induced to adopt the constitutive rules of an international community”²⁹. The state is considered successfully socialized when it adopts the rule creating domestic mechanisms and powerful institutional and political processes that guarantee compliance and discourage opposition to the rule. The theoretical framework is built on a synthetic approach of amalgamating current international relations approaches—rationalism and constructivism— and of analysing international socialization from a forward-looking perspective, “as a process directed at or potentially leading to rule adoption by the target states”³⁰. Another concern of scholars over democracy promotion studies has been insufficient focus on domestic political actors and processes³¹. This theoretical framework not only examines the international conditions of international socialization, and thus democracy promotion, but also gives significant credit to the domestic conditions.

28 Schimmelfennig et al., *International Socialization in Europe*.

29 Ibid., 2.

30 Ibid., 2

31 Philippe C. Schmitter and Imco. Brouwer, “Conceptualizing, Researching and Evaluating Democracy Promotion and Protection,” 1999, ScientificCommons, EUI SPS 1999/09.

Hans Peter Schmitz, “Domestic and Transnational Perspectives on Democratization” *International Studies Review* 6 (2004): 403-426.

The literature on international socialization defines two general approaches through which international organizations promote their rules and norms. These methods are strategic actions of incentives and coercion, and appropriate actions of persuasion and example. The first one is the logic of appropriateness advocated by constructivists and the second one is the logic of consequentiality advocated by rationalists, and each represent "opposing ideal-types"³². From the rationalist angle, states act in a 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 is aimed at changing the behaviour of the target but not its identity or interest³³. On the other hand the constructivist angle on international socialization argues that states act in a social environment and international socialization is based on the concept of appropriate action. Thus, the agency socializes the target states by social persuasion and benign example acting as a role model and changing the identity and interests of the socialized³⁴.

However, none of the ideal-types alone can provide plausible and empirically grounded explanation for the success or failure of international socialization. Though the international socializers or democracy promoters publicize the image of a socially constructed role model pursuing benign purpose, it is unlikely that these purposes do not derive from their material interests. Likewise, the domestic actors, nurtured in their domestic, yet non-socialized, environments, are unlikely to regard foreign rules

32 Schimmelfennig et al., *International Socialization in Europe*, 16.

33 See G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization* 44, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 283-315.

Joseph Jupille, James A. Caporaso, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Integrating Institutions: Rationalism, Constructivism, and the Study of the European Union," *Comparative Political Studies* 36, no. 1-2 (February 1, 2003): 7-40.

Frank Schimmelfennig, "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the CEE States-Conceptual and Theoretical Issues. ," in *Norms and Nannies: The Impact of International Organizations on the CEE States*, ed. Ronald Linden (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 1-32.

34 See Jeffrey T. Checkel, "Why Comply? Social Learning and European Identity Change," *International Organization* 55, no. 3 (Summer 2001): 553-588; Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

and norms as appropriate because of their mere internationality. Schimmelfennig and collaborators design an analytical framework, which regards socialization as a strategic action in a community environment³⁵ and views it as “a bargaining process with normative constraints”³⁶. Domestic actors are rational and risk-averse trying to maximize their utilities and the promoter is “a realist actor in normative clothes”³⁷. Thus, while they adopt the constructivist vision of cultural international environment and strong international organizations as socialization agents, they do not fully agree with the concept of the logic of appropriateness and turn to the assumptions of the rationalist logic of consequentiality. The rationalist argument is that domestic actor’s behaviour is shaped by self-interested preferences and it is unlikely to change and become appropriate as a consequence of interaction. Based on that, the main proposition of the framework states that successful socialization depends on the agency’s bargaining power, credible constraints and incentives, well-developed monitoring system, and the size of domestic adaptation costs.

The theoretical framework classifies socialization strategies as inclusive vs. exclusive and material reinforcement vs. social reinforcement or persuasion. In its turn the material reinforcement strategy is divided into reinforcement by reward, punishment and support. A socialization agency pursuing an inclusive strategy first grants states with membership then tries to socialize them from within, e.g. the Council of Europe, the OSCE, because the 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, e.g. the EU and NATO, making the membership conditional on compliance with the promoted rules and norms³⁸. The socializing agency can

35 Frank Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert, and Heiko Knobel, “Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003): 495-518.

36 Schimmelfennig et al. 2006, 25.

37 Peter Seeberg, “The EU - as a realist actor in normative clothes: EU - democracy promotion in Lebanon and the European Neighbourhood Policy,” *Democratization* 16, no. 1 (2009): 95.

38 Schimmelfennig, “Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations.”

also opt for different channels of socialization, i.e. intergovernmental, targeting the governments directly, and transnational, targeting non-governmental actors, e.g. social movements, interest groups or business actors³⁹.

Social reinforcement employs "socio-psychological"⁴⁰ instruments of reward (international recognition and public praise), punishment (shaming, shunning), and support (additional meetings with the agency, 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, which 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, more known as political conditionality⁴¹. This strategy supposes tangible awards, in case 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. However, the last two strategies due to their costly nature are used only if the political conditionality fails and, due to high interdependence, the socialization of the target state is higher than the actual costs of support or punishment⁴².

In choosing a socialization strategy, a rational socialization agency genuinely pursuing successful socialization should take into consideration not only its own preferences and capabilities but also the domestic conditions of the target state. As said 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 maximize their utilities and taking into consideration

39 Schimmelfennig, "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations."

40 Ibid., 33.

41 Frank Schimmelfennig and Ulrich Sedelmeier, *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe* (Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Cornell University Press, 2005).

42 Ibid.

“state-centric domestic structure and the electoral volatility [of post-communist states]”⁴³, it would be unlikely for the target states to comply with liberal norms threatening their current state of affairs if the domestic costs of adaptation are higher than the tangible awards. Therefore, the potential success of social reinforcement acting on its own in a non-compliant state is highly doubtful.

The dependent variable of Schimmelfennig and his collaborators’ study is compliance, which supposes analysis of how the state reacted to international conditions and under which conditions it complied or did not comply with the promoted norms. To test their hypothesis they use a set of rationalist and constructivist variables which can also be distinguished on the basis of international-domestic divide⁴⁴ and test them on nine European cases using the Qualitative Comparative Analysis⁴⁵. 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 case rule conformity does not threaten current distribution of power). The constructivist independent variables are legitimacy (which measures whether the socializing agency itself complies with the promoted norm and promotes it on constant basis, identification (the extent to which the target state identifies itself with the international community and promoted norms), and resonance (the extent to which domestic institutional design matches with the promoted norms)⁴⁶. The scholars argue: “credible membership perspective and low domestic political costs of rule adoption are both individually necessary and jointly sufficient conditions of successful socialization.”⁴⁷

This paper applies the described theoretical framework to the case of the ENP democracy promotion in Armenia and traces the evidence for the same independent variables in the ENP strategy and Armenia’s political situation to assess potential compliance.

43 Ibid., 53.

44 Ibid., 57-60.

45 Charles C. Ragin, *The Comparative Method* (University of California Press, 1989).

46 See Table 1, source Schimmelfennig et. al. 2006, 61.

47 Schimmelfennig et al. , “Costs, Commitment and Compliance”, 55.

The next section of the paper elaborates on the EU and ENP strategies of democracy promotion in correlation to the theoretical framework. Primarily, the priority areas of the ENP concerning the promotion of democracy and human rights and their implementation strategies are analyzed drawing comparison lines to the domestic conditions.

Table 1. Variables of International Socialization

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

4. European Union as a Democracy Promoter and Its European Neighbourhood Policy

The EU has the highest budget among Western community organizations⁴⁸ and 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 willing to have closer cooperation with the EU, to embody institutions that guarantee democracy, rule of law, and respect and protection of minority rights. Many adhere to the idea that the most important function of the EU is to serve as a democratic model⁴⁹. This can be also seen from the text of the

48 Schimmelfennig, "Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations."

49 Gorm, Rye Olsen, "The European Union: An Ad Hoc Policy with a Low Priority," in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. Peter Schraeder (Boulder, London : Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002), 137.

Maastricht Treaty which states 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)⁵⁰. 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"⁵¹. The EU 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, EMP and others. Therefore, "democratization is by no means a new departure for the EU"⁵². Nor is the ENP a new departure for the EU because it highly resembles the enlargement policy of the Commission, with the exception that it clearly does not offer membership to target countries. However, it introduces certain political conditionality in its relations with target countries and, in further development of Action Plans, follows its "meritocratic policy of socialization"⁵³.

The ENP, a response to enlargement⁵⁴ and first outlined in the Commission Communication on Wider Europe, calls for bridging the dividing lines between the EU member states and their neighbours by promotion of democracy, stability, and security. In its Strategy Paper on the European Neighbourhood Policy published in May 2004, the EU outlines the strategies of cooperation with its target countries⁵⁵. Further in December 2006 and December 2007 the EU proposed strategies of strengthening the ENP⁵⁶. A policy without a "uniform acquis"⁵⁷, the ENP, offers

50 Treaty on the European Union (Maastricht Treaty), 7 February 1992.

<http://www.eurotreaties.com/maastrichtec.pdf>

51 Commission of the European Communities. 1997. For a Stronger and Wider Union, Agenda 2000, Vol. 2. Strasbourg: DOC 97 (7): 27.

52 Ferrero-Waldner "Remarks on Democracy Promotion. Democracy Promotion", 2.

53 Schimmelfennig et al. , "Costs, Commitment and Compliance", 52.

54 Commission of the European Communities. "Communication from the Commission European Neighbourhood," Policy Strategy Paper. COM (2004), 373.

55 Ibid.

56 Council and the European Parliament. "On Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy. Commission of the European Communities". 2006a. Communication from the Commission to the COM (2006) 726 Final.

its partners a “privileged partnership” and “sharing everything with the Union but institutions”⁵⁸, 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”⁵⁹. The neighbouring countries can reach the “privileged partnership” depending on 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”⁶⁰. Taking into consideration the “joint ownership”⁶¹ 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 conditionality⁶². 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, which are not yet worthy to be included, e.g. the South Caucasus countries, the Commission states “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

Commission of the European Communities. 2007. Communication from the Commission. A Strong European Neighbourhood Policy. COM (2007), 774 Final.

57 Kelley, “International Actors on the Domestic Scene”, 36.

58 Romano Prodi, “A Wider Europe-A Proximity Policy as the Key to Stability,” in (presented at the Peace, Security And Stability – International Dialogue and the Role of the EU ,Sixth ECSA-World Conference , Brussels, 2002).

59 Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission European Neighbourhood,” 3.

60 Ibid.

61 Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission European Neighbourhood,” 8.

62 See Schimmelfennig et al. , “Costs, Commitment and Compliance”, Schimmelfennig and Scholtz 2008. Richard Youngs, “European Union Democracy Promotion Policies: Ten Years On,” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 6 (2001): 355-373.

human rights”⁶³. According to various studies and rankings⁶⁴, the state of democracy and respect of human rights is still highly doubtful in the South Caucasus countries, but they were included in the ENP in 2004 and the Action Plans were adopted in 2006. More detail on the content of the EU-Armenia Action Plan is provided in the next section of this paper.

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, which will financially assist 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)⁶⁵. However, the conditionality and the threat of exclusion are partial as right after the Parliament and the Council 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). Therefore, even in the case of non-compliance, the EU will not completely withdraw the financial assistance but will simply change 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”⁶⁶. In addition, a question rises of how consistent and impartial the EU conditionality will be.

63 Commission 2004, 10.

64 Freedom House, Bertelsmann Transformation Index.

65 Commission of the European Communities, “Communication from the Commission European Neighbourhood,” 8

66 Schimmelfennig et al. , “Costs, Commitment and Compliance”, 9.

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. Judith Kelley mentions that even if the benefits of the ENP “may be substantial”, she is concerned “whether governments [will] agree to submit to a system of rules in which they have little decision-making power”⁶⁷. To increase the attractiveness of the ENP, the Commission elaborates the following incentives:

1. 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;
2. an upgrade in scope and intensity of political co-operation;
3. opening of economies, reduction of trade barriers;
4. increased financial support;
5. participation in Community programs promoting cultural, educational, environmental, technical and scientific links;
6. support for legislative approximation to meet EU norms and standards;
7. deepening trade and economic relations.⁶⁸

At the same time trying to encourage compliance, the EU develops the Governance Facility, which allocates EUR 50 million annually for countries which made progress (Ukraine and Morocco were the first to receive this support for reinforcement). Though these might seem as considerable incentives to comply, the membership incentive is still absent and each of the mentioned incentives should be assessed in regard to individual countries and their domestic conditions.

As shown, the ENP follows the usual practice of the EU on norms promotion: it uses political conditionality with some incentives, putting a strong emphasis on the “shared values” notion. Though the Governance Facility has some elements of the reinforcement of support and the ENPI introduces partial reinforcement by punishment (though only in regard to the state funding), the ENP

⁶⁷ Kelley, 2006, 37.

⁶⁸ Kelley, 2006, 37.

follows the usual EU strategy of the reinforcement by reward. The next section of the paper elaborates on the ENP strategy and priorities in Armenia and draws parallels to the relevant domestic conditions of socialization.

5. Armenia as an Aspirant Democracy and Target of the EU's Democracy Promotion

Armenia, which declared its independence in September, 1992 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has so far been a democratic laggard⁶⁹ in comparison to most and an economic frontrunner in comparison to some of the post-communist EU candidate countries and its South Caucasus neighbours⁷⁰. The virtual commitment to democracy in Armenia is beyond doubt because the incoming and outgoing heads of the state and other officials do not lose the opportunity to proclaim their devotion to democracy and respect for human rights. The long-awaited membership of the Council of Europe was met by the former president with exuberant statements abound with commitments to fulfil the requirements for democracy. By its accession to the Council of Europe, Armenia "confirmed the commitment of the entire region to the common values of democracy and human rights"⁷¹. Unwilling to lag behind their Central European counterparts, where a representative of one country saw himself/herself more European than the neighbour⁷², 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"⁷³ as their top priority. Demonstrating high level of identification with Europe or at least paying a lip service, the former and long-serving Minister of

69 Freedom House.

70 Index of Economic Freedom 2009. The Heritage Foundation and Wall Street Journal <http://www.heritage.org/Index/Ranking.aspx>

71 Robert Kocharyan, "Speech by Mr. Robert Kocharian President of the Republic of Armenia on the occasion of the accession of the Republic of Armenia to the Council of Europe" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, January 25, 2001),

http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/speeches/010125rk_CoE.html.

72 Schimmelfennig, 2003.

73 Kocharyan, "Speech by Mr. Robert Kocharian" .

Foreign Affairs Vartan Oskanian said, "our [Armenia's] goal is not just to become part of the EU but also to achieve EU standards"⁷⁴.

With its demonstratively European attitude and actually no prior democratic legacies, Armenia embraced the new relations with the EU in 1996. The EU-Armenia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) entered into force in July 1999, with the goal of promoting respect for democracy, rule of law and human rights, as well as market economy reforms, trade liberalization and cooperation in a wide number of sectors. Meanwhile, the absence of progress accompanied by the aggravating situation of state corruption were among the features of the country⁷⁵. In the scarce amount of academic literature where Armenia is mentioned, it is seen as either some type of competitive authoritarian regime⁷⁶ or as a transitional government⁷⁷ but never as liberal and even rarely as an electoral democracy. Practitioners usually give Armenia low "grades" and classify as partly free, with much improvements to be made for any democratic progress⁷⁸. Since the declaration of independence and before the adoption of the ENP Action Plan⁷⁹ Armenia has held three parliamentary (1995, 1999, 2003) and four presidential (1991, 1996, 1998, 2003) elections and none of them met the international standards⁸⁰. Thus, the EU has returned to a familiar environment of little democratic resonance with a new policy, which supposedly offers more incentives for compliance.

After the ENP Action Plan adoption on 14 November 2006, a new Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for

74 Oskanian, Vartan. 2003.

<http://eurasianet.org.resource/armenia/hypermail/200320/0001.shtml>

75 Michael Emerson, and Gergana Noutcheva, "Europeanisation as a Gravity Model of Democratisation" (CEPS Working Document, November 1, 2004), http://shop.ceps.eu/BookDetail.php?item_id=1175.

76 Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1 (2002): 51-70.

77 Emerson and Noutcheva, "Europeanisation as a Gravity Model of Democratisation".

78 Freedom House. 2008. Freedom in the World 2008. Armenia. http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/press_release/Armenia_FIW_08.pdf Human Rights Watch.

79 Commission of the European Communities. 2006b. EU-Armenia Action Plan. http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf

80 Andersen, Elizabeth. Armenia: Election Marred by Intimidation, Ballot Stuffing. Human Rights Watch Documents on Armenia. 2003. <http://hrw.org/press/2003/03/armenia030703.htm>

Armenia set priorities for the EU assistance for the period of 2007-13. The ENPI sets attractive though yet not so incentive-rich objectives of cooperation between the EU and Armenia: "to develop increasingly close relationship between the EU and Armenia, going beyond past levels of cooperation, to deeper political cooperation and gradual economic integration"⁸¹. Though it remains unclear how the economic integration can be achieved without a membership perspective. The new ENP Financial Instrument allocates an amount of EUR 98.4 million for Armenia for the period of 2007-10. In 2006, EC allocated EUR 17 million for Armenia in bilateral. For 2007 an amount of EUR 21 million was available⁸². Though Armenia shows no improvements in the quality of its democracy (OSCE, Freedom House, and Transparency International), the EU assistance rises, showing inconsistency of the EU conditionality.

Priorities of the ENP Action Plan and the Country Strategy Paper were laid down by the EU in cooperation with the Armenian government, which indicates the government's consent on the promoted rules. The EU and the Armenian government agreed on eight broad priority areas. Two of the priority areas directly correlate with democracy promotion: strengthening of democratic structures and the rule of law and strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Under the ENPI National Indicative Program these two priorities are included under the umbrella area of democratic structures and good governance and are entitled to EUR 29.52 million assistance, which comprises 30% of the total Indicative budget for Armenia⁸³. This umbrella priority area includes sub-priorities of the rule of law and reform of the judiciary; public administration reform, inter alia including combat of corruption; and human rights and fundamental freedoms. The ENPI indicates the specific objectives, potential long-term impact, and indicators of achievement of the specific priority area but is not as precise as regards to the implementation process. The ENPI Country

81 Commission of the European Communities. 2006d. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Armenia. Country Strategy Paper (2007-2013): 4.

82 Commission of the European Communities. 2006c. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument. Armenia. National Indicative Programme 2007-2010.

83 Ibid., 4.

Strategy Paper names twinning and Technical Assistance Information Exchange (TAIEX) as the main tools for achieving the Action Plan's objectives⁸⁴. Both strategies correspond to the social reinforcement strategy of international socialization. Unlike the general ENP documents none of the ENP documents on Armenia mentions what the expected actions of the EU are in case of non-compliance.

The ENP documents, including the 2008 progress report⁸⁵, and the EU actions show that the EU is hopeful towards Armenian progress because of its amended Constitution and is ready to condone other violations of democratic rules. The Constitutional referendum of November 2005 primarily aimed at reducing presidential power and granting increased independence to the judiciary. Usually reluctant Armenian voters showed turnout of 64 percent having 94 percent agree to the amendments. However, in practice there are few changes as regards the independence of judiciary and the final shortlist for the Constitutional Court is still to be approved by the President. Concerns over the independence of judiciary elevated, when in October 2007 President Kocharyan dismissed Judge Pargev Ohanian, after the latter acquitted coffee packaging company Royal Armenia senior executives, who were detained for two years on the charges of tax evasion. They were arrested immediately after accusing the customs officials of corruption⁸⁶.

The Constitutional referendum was followed by the Parliamentary elections of May 2007, when the Republican Party of the Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan won 65 seats in the 131-seat unicameral National Assembly⁸⁷, forming a majority coalition with two other pro-government parties. The OSCE final report on elections stated that some "issues are yet to be sufficiently addressed, notably related to campaign regulation and performance of election

84 Commission 2006d.

85 Commission of the European Communities. 2008. Commission Staff Working Document. Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Progress Report Armenia. SEC (2008) 392.

86 Emil Daniyelyan, "Armenia: Presidential Dismissal of Judge Sparks Outcry over Judicial Independence," *EurasiaNet.org*, October 18, 2007,

http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav101807_pr.shtml.

87 Central Elections Commission of the Republic of Armenia. <http://www.elections.am>

commissions particularly during the vote count and tabulation”⁸⁸ Freedom House rankings of 2005-2008 show that Armenia is in a stagnate condition of a partly free country with an unchanging negative score of 5/4 for political rights and civil liberties respectively. International Republican Institute (IRI) Voter Study Survey also showed that an average of 60 percent of the respondents in the 4-month time period prior to the Presidential elections believed that the Parliamentary elections were not free and fair⁸⁹. The ruling Republican Party was still likely to receive the sufficient number of votes to pass the electoral threshold without bribery and threats, however, it would be unlikely to win the ruling majority.

Despite all the international efforts and domestic legislation, Armenia receives similar low rankings from the Corruption Perception Index of the Transparency International, not moving from the score of 2.9, which “indicates rampant corruption that poses a grave threat to institutions as well as to social and political stability”⁹⁰. Means of corruption were one of the major incentives for high voter turnout: widespread bribery of and “presents” to the voters, threats of dismissal in the case of public sector employment or commander’s order in case of military service. Corrupted means of campaigning, especially in rural areas, helped the incumbents to win the majority in the Parliament and secure the presidential seat (ArmeniaNow, It’s Your Choice NGO). The deputy chairman of the Transparency International Armenian affiliate, Varuzhan Hochtianian, even states “the authorities are not only doing little to tackle corruption, but are punishing people who really fight against it”⁹¹.

88 OSCE 2007. OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission Report. Republic of Armenia. Parliamentary Election. 12 May, 2007: 1. http://www.osce.org/documents/odihr/2007/09/26169_en.pdf

89 IRI (International Republican Institute) 2008. Armenian National Study. International Republican Institute. January 13-20, 2008. <http://www.iri.org/eurasia/armenia/pdfs/2008%20February%2015%20Survey%20of%20Armenian%20Public%20Opinion,%20January%2013-20,%202008.pdf>

90 Transparency International. “Corruption Perceptions Index,” http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi

91 Daniyelyan, “Armenia: Presidential Dismissal of Judge Sparks Outcry over Judicial Independence,”

The same IRI survey published in January 2008 showed disbelief of the voters in freedom and fairness of the upcoming Presidential elections. The Presidential elections of 19 February 2008, when the outgoing President Robert Kocharyan endorsed his prime-minister Serzh Sargsyan as his successor, received mixed messages from the EU and other international observers. First reactions, coming from the observers after the voting ended giving preliminary 52% to Sargsyan, praised the conduct of the elections and stated they were "mostly in line with the country's international commitments" but at the same time the vote count was "bad" or "very bad"⁹². The reaction was changed from praise to "concern" after the oppositional candidates had appealed the voting results and organized sitting mass demonstrations which lasted for 10 days until being dispersed by police on March 1, 2008⁹³. The final OSCE report issued on 30 May, 2008 stated "an insufficient regard for standards essential to democratic elections [which] devalued the overall election process"⁹⁴. Human Rights Watch⁹⁵ expressed serious concerns over the human rights violations during the elections and its aftermath. Such conduct of the elections demonstrates a strong willingness of the incumbent to remain in power by all, even non-democratic, means, making the costs of compliance with the promoted rules of the ENP high, as they endanger the power of the current regime.

Based on the current political situation in Armenia, the ENP strategies of democracy promotion are unlikely to result in effective democracy promotion and achievement of the objectives in the priority area of democratic structures and good governance (See Table 1). International conditions do not satisfy the domestic ones. Though the credibility of incentives and the legitimacy of the EU are high, the incentives offered are not

92 OSCE 2008. OSCE/ODIHR, *Election Observation Mission Report. Republic of Armenia Presidential Election* (19 February, 2008): 2.

http://74.125.77.132/search?q=cache:X9_2Nn_FD8IJ:www.osce.org/item/31397.html+armenia+elections+2008+osce&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk

93 EU 2008 a. Presidency Statement on the events following the presidential elections in Armenia

http://www.eu2008.si/en/News_and_Documents/CFSP_Statements/March/0301MZZ_Armenia.html

94 OSCE, *Election Observation Mission Report*, 1.

95 Human Rights Watch. 2009. *Democracy on Rocky Ground*. Human Rights Watch, February 25.

<http://www.hrw.org/en/reports/2009/02/25/democracy-rocky-ground-0>

sufficient since they are mainly social and materially marginal. Domestic conditions are favourable with regard to the constructivist variable of identification with the EU values; however, the resonance with the issues is reduced due to Armenia's lack of democratic legacies and merely nominal presence of democratic institutions. Most importantly, costs of adaptation are high as full-fledged democratic practices are likely to not only reduce the power of the current regime but also undermine it.

Table 2. Conditions of international socialization in Armenia

International Conditions			Domestic Conditions		
Incentives	Credibility	Legitimacy	Costs	Identification	Resonance
- (low)	+ (high)	+ (high)	+(high)	+ (high)	(reduced)

The overall ENP Strategy Paper identifies the South Caucasus as a region that should receive “stronger and more active interest” than it currently does⁹⁶. The EU also acknowledges the democracy promotion as one of its main foreign policy priorities. This paper claims that the ENP is unlikely to achieve successful implementation of its democracy promotion policies in Armenia. This claim is grounded on a close qualitative analysis of the ENP official documents and Armenia's political situation within the period of inclusion of Armenia in the ENP, adoption of the EU-Armenia Action Plan, and the first progress report of 2008. The potentially ineffective ENP democracy promotion may be explained by the marginal economic and security significance of Armenia to the EU. Irrational action and financial waste are not among the main characteristics of the EU, thus the *raison d'être* of the ENP might be not necessarily democracy promotion but stretching the influence of the EU further beyond its borders. This assumption, however, needs further research to be determined.

The empirical analysis shows that international conditions offered by the ENP are inadequate for effective democracy promotion given current domestic conditions. The rigorously-tested

96 Commission 2004: 10.

international socialization framework argues that in the case of high adaptation costs only credible membership perspective can offer sufficient incentives for socialization. Though the credibility and legitimacy of the ENP and the alleged 'Europeanness' of Armenian state officials are high, the tangible material incentives are low and cannot undermine high adaptation costs. A potential failure in democracy promotion, however, does not guarantee the ENP's failure in domestically less "expensive" priority areas.

This study has contributed to understanding the ENP democracy promotion perspectives in other post-communist target countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Post-communist countries included in the ENP vary slightly according to their economic development and substantially according to their geopolitical interests. However, all post-communist target countries score negatively in democracy and corruption rankings (Freedom House, Transparency International) and usually receive negative evaluations on the conduct of elections and judiciary independence. Further research is needed to assess the ENP's effectiveness in the post-communist countries by identifying variations among key conditions. As for the case of Armenia, to reach the goal of democracy promotion the EU needs to strengthen its compliance incentives, which can be done not only by offering a membership but by also granting other tangible and conditional economic and diplomatic incentives on the national priority issues such as relations with Turkey, the conflict of Nagorno Karabakh, and recognition of genocide claims.

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