

Perspectives on human development theory in democracy promotion: a comparison of democracy promotion programmes in Egypt through the lenses of classical and revised modernisation theory

Citation for published version (APA):

Moen Dyrnes, I. K. (2012). *Perspectives on human development theory in democracy promotion: a comparison of democracy promotion programmes in Egypt through the lenses of classical and revised modernisation theory*. UNU-MERIT, Maastricht Economic and Social Research and Training Centre on Innovation and Technology. UNU-MERIT Working Papers No. 045

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2012

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

- A submitted manuscript is the version of the article upon submission and before peer-review. There can be important differences between the submitted version and the official published version of record. People interested in the research are advised to contact the author for the final version of the publication, or visit the DOI to the publisher's website.
- The final author version and the galley proof are versions of the publication after peer review.
- The final published version features the final layout of the paper including the volume, issue and page numbers.

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UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series

#2012-045

Perspectives on human development theory in democracy promotion: A comparison of democracy promotion programmes in Egypt through the lenses of classical and revised modernisation theory

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Abstract

This paper argues that the concept of socio-economic development needs to be redefined for the purpose of effective democracy promotion. By including aspects from human development theory, advocates of revised modernisation theory state that mass values in a society shift towards a preference for democracy as higher levels socio-economic development provide existential security. This implies that a democratic culture shapes its institutions and not the other way around. If donor countries are willing to make long-term investments in human resources rather than focus on short-term improvements of state institutions, effective democracy may stand a better chance of developing.

JEL classification: O15, F59

Keywords: democracy, democratisation, human development theory, modernisation, socio-economic development, foreign development aid, USAID, Egypt, the Middle East, the Arab world, foreign policy, international relations, good governance, civil society, institutional development, economic policy, judicial reform, civic education

UNU-MERIT Working Papers

ISSN 1871-9872

**Maastricht Economic and social Research Institute on Innovation and Technology,
UNU-MERIT**

**Maastricht Graduate School of Governance
MGSOG**

UNU-MERIT Working Papers intend to disseminate preliminary results of research carried out at UNU-MERIT and MGSOG to stimulate discussion on the issues raised.

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It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried.

Winston Churchill (1874 – 1965)

Abstract

This paper argues that the concept of socio-economic development needs to be redefined for the purpose of effective democracy promotion. By including aspects from human development theory, advocates of revised modernization theory state that mass values in a society shift towards a preference for democracy as higher levels of socio-economic development provide existential security. This implies that a democratic culture shapes its institutions and not the other way around. If donor countries are willing to make long-term investments in human resources rather than focus on short-term improvements of state institutions, effective democracy may stand a better chance of developing.

Introduction

A year after the revolution broke out in Egypt, significant changes have taken place in Egyptian society and especially on the political scene. Former president Mubarak stepped down, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) assumed power and established an interim cabinet of ministers, national parliamentary elections were held, and the newly elected parliament recently conducted their first session. However, despite the changes in parliament, there is reason to believe that it is in fact still the Egyptian military that holds the political threads. Egyptian democracy activists still gather on Tahrir square and many are concerned that SCAF will attempt to write a new constitution before the presidential elections take place some time in 2012. If that happens, SCAF will be in a position to exert heavy influence over the wording in the constitution. There are concerns among SCAF's political opponents that this influence may be used to keep the military budget out of the parliament's reach and safe from public scrutiny. What began as a hopeful transition towards democracy may in other words end up as a little else than a change of puppets.

With a volatile political climate and a transition that does not seem to have reached its endpoint yet, it is highly relevant to discuss what the contribution of the international community should be to this process. The United States plays a vital role in this respect. Only a few countries receive more American development aid than Egypt, and the aid provides extensive funding of both arms purchases and civic education projects. Although the Egyptian government has accepted American development aid, it has nonetheless regarded many of the programmes it funded as intrusive. Especially development programmes dealing with sensitive issues such as politics or democracy have therefore been designed to fit the constraints and context in which they were implemented. Now that the context in Egypt is changing and doors that were closed can potentially open, it is necessary to evaluate democracy promotion programmes to ensure that they are as efficient and well-designed as possible. American democracy promotion has for decades followed the same theoretical model and rationale. Despite countless examples of cases where the theory has been proven insufficient or wrong, there have been few attempts to replace the theoretical foundation behind traditional democracy promotion design.

The discussion of the theoretical principles that underpin the design of democracy promotion is relevant not only because of changes in recipient countries such as Egypt. At a time where political upheaval in the Arab world has provided a possibility to promote democracy in countries that have effectively been out of reach, the national economies of traditional donor countries are marred by budget deficits and reduced economic growth. This makes the need for cost-efficient democracy promotion even more pressing and as aid budgets for democracy promotion have decreased over the past decade, policy-makers who advocate for democracy promotion are to an increasing extent asked to produce tangible results with limited resources. This paper discusses and compares possible ways forward for democracy promotion by analysing two programmes implemented in Egypt from the mid-1990s to the mid-2000s.

Moreover, the paper explores how concepts from revised modernization theory can be used to improve the quality of democracy promotion programmes. According to researchers advocating this theory, modernization is a complex set of

social, cultural, and economic processes that cannot be captured by measuring GDP and literacy rates alone. If the concept of socioeconomic development is expanded to include measures of citizens' well being such as their capabilities and freedom of choice, the link between this development and democracy is strengthened. Furthermore, regarding socio-economic development as a part of the over-arching process of human development can potentially contribute to the design of democracy promotion programmes that support the development of genuine democracy.

The content and scope of the paper

The first section of this paper is a literary review that gives an account of the most significant contributions to modernization theory. Starting out with relatively simplistic forms of analysis using few but broad indicators of socioeconomic development, modernization researchers have moved towards increased complexity. Narrow indicators have been included in the analysis and combined to represent a broader range of societal development. The work of Inglehart and Welzel (2005) (hereafter referenced I&W) is explored in more detail as it represents a clear break with well-known, or classical, versions of modernization theory.

The second part gives a brief outline of the history of American democracy promotion and offers a more detailed account of the methodological approaches most commonly employed in this field. The work of Carothers (1999, 2004) and Burnell (2004) is explored to shed light on the most frequent categorizations of democracy promotion.

In the third part, the modern political and economic history of Egypt is outlined. One of the main arguments in this paper is that context and culture are important and often overlooked factors in the planning and implementation of democracy promotion. For the analyses in part four it is therefore important to be familiar with the context and cultural background of Egyptian society.

Part four is an analysis and comparison of two democracy promotion programmes through the lenses of classical and revised modernization theory. One programme exemplifies the top-down approach to democracy promotion, while the other is an

example of the bottom-up approach. Each programme is placed in a political context and described with regards to its applied methods, stated goals and measured impacts.

The conclusion in part five places the analysis from part four in a political context. It also comments on the practical difficulties of promoting democracy in non-democratic countries and discusses possible impacts of earlier democracy promotion efforts on the current political situation in Egypt. Finally, it questions whether genuine democracy promotion is made a priority in the face of other foreign policy goals of donor countries.

Methodology

This paper is a theoretically founded critical analysis of how classical and revised versions of modernization theory relate to American democracy promotion programmes. The method was chosen for three reasons. First, democracy promotion in the international development context implies an inherently political and sometimes unwelcome intervention in another country's internal affairs. It is therefore important that this intervention is backed by solid and up to date theoretical principles that morally and legally defend it and most importantly, ensure that it works. Hence, critically discussing the existing theoretical framework and comparing it with an alternative framework may shed light on its possible deficiencies. Furthermore, as the critique is focused on the theoretical aspects of democracy promotion, it may be possible to use this discussion beyond the Egyptian context.

Second, the material attained through desk research and the contact made with the Centre for Civic Education staff was not sufficient for an in-depth analysis of each programme. The different characteristics and thus expected impact of each programme also made a competitive comparison seem futile, especially as both were both implemented under considerable constraints.

And finally, the lack of funding and at times chaotic situation in Egypt under the past ten months made a more active approach to the topic difficult. Sources that initially confirmed their support of the paper and agreed to be interviewed became

hard to reach. Due to time constraints, it was in the end necessary to limit the analysis to a theoretical analysis.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

The classical version of modernization theory as outlined by Marx and Weber has been deemed too simplistic but the model's central insights are still recognised as correct. Socio-economic development does in fact lead to cultural, political and social change, and most liberal democracies have high overall levels of socio-economic development. However, there is evidence that socio-economic development may lead not only to democracy but also to communist and fascist regimes. Can modernization theory be expanded to include conditions that more accurately describe in what way socioeconomic development leads to democracy?

1.2. Definitions of central concepts in democracy promotion

1.2.1. Democracy

Applying Lipset's definition (1959:71), which draws on the works of Weber (1946) and Schumpeter (1947), this paper defines democracy as "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunity to change the governing officials. It is a social mechanism for the resolution of the problem of societal decision-making among conflicting interest groups which permits the largest possible part of the population to influence these decisions through their ability to choose among alternative contenders for political office".

This definition emphasises citizens' right to influence political and societal decision-making. In its essence, democracy provides the opportunity to replace unsatisfactory governments through free and fair elections. Political leaders are thus incentivised to implement policies supported by the majority of the population. Furthermore, although not clearly expressed, the notion of "societal decision-making" implies that societal problems or issues of interest can be resolved through legitimate government intervention. For this to be completed, this paper argues that a state apparatus is needed to convert official policies into action and handle its practical implications on a daily basis. Finally, according to Lipset, a viable political alternative to the governing officials must exist. This means that political rights and civil liberties cannot be constrained.

The reason this paper does not apply a more narrow democracy definition by applying the concept of checks and balances, is that the technical or formal aspects of democracy should not become too dominant. Ideally a country's level of democracy is assessed by studying both its laws and its practical application of democratic principles.

1.2.2. Modernization

I&W (2003) claim that there is no clear definition of modernization but use the term in association with certain levels of socio-economic development. This paper follows their lead and acknowledges industrialization and post-industrialization as two distinct phases of modernization. The former is described as "bringing rationalization, secularization, and bureaucratization", while the latter "brings another set of changes that move in a new direction, placing increasing emphasis on individual autonomy, self-expression and free choice" (ibid., 2005:1).

1.2.3. Socio-economic development

Socio-economic development is broad term in need of a more precise definition to serve as a point of reference in this paper. Inglehart and Welzel refer to it as a collection of processes: "Economic growth, rising levels of education and information, and diversifying human interactions increase people's material, cognitive and social resources, making them materially, intellectually, and socially more independent."(ibid.:2). Although slightly vague, this definition encompasses economic and social changes that take place on the micro and macro levels of society, such as the growing emphasis on cognitive and intellectual capabilities and an increased in access to information. It is therefore adequate for this paper.

Finally, Sen lists the characteristic features of socio-economic development as "crucial instrumental freedoms" in his book "Development as freedom" (1999). These features include "economic opportunities, political freedoms, social facilities, transparency guarantees and protective security." (ibid.:xiii). His argumentation falls in line with that of I&W, which suggests that socio-economic development is part of an overarching process of human development (I&W 2005:3).

1.3. Classical modernization theory I: Lipset – the father of modernization theory

1.3.1. Main points, central insights

In 1959, Seymour Martin Lipset published his work on the correlation between socioeconomic development and democracy. In his criticism of those who studied limited societal features, seeking a unidimensional explanation of the prevalence or absence of democracy, he introduced the idea of a subset of conditions, or requisites that are correlated with democracy. Together these components are vital parts of the process of socioeconomic development (Wucherpfennig and Deutch 2009). Rather than claiming a causal link where socio-economic growth inevitably leads to a democratic form of government, Lipset emphasises that some requisites merely seem to be favourable for democracy.

1.3.2. Casting the net wider: the inclusion of non-economic indicators

In addition to naming important indicators of socio-economic development, Lipset outlines three political conditions that constitute and ensure democracy. First, a belief system legitimising the “rules of the game”, including specifications of the appropriate institutions, needs to be in place. Second, a set of political leaders should be in office and held accountable through the “constitutional opportunity to change governing officials”. Third, oppositional political actors seeking to replace those in office are important in order to provide a genuine alternative to the governing officials.

Wealth, industrialization, urbanization, and education constitute Lipset’s key indicators of socio-economic development and carry with them “the political correlate of democracy” (ibid.: 80). In his article, industrialization is measured by taking the percentage of males working in the agricultural sector. Industrialization is clearly related to wealth, which is measured as income per capita and the number of people per motor vehicle, physician and a limited number of household items. Urbanization is measured by using three different indices, all of them indicating the incidence of densely populated (urban) areas. Finally, education is measured by using literacy and enrolment rates. Education is perceived by Lipset as the variable with the strongest ties to democracy and “all the relevant studies

indicate that education is far more significant than income or occupation” (ibid.:79).

1.3.3. The assumptions that link socio-economic development and democracy

The processes that underpin the aforementioned correlations are complex and a number of assumptions are implicitly made with regards to human behaviour. First, industrialization and urbanization contribute to a wealthier, more educated and politically aware population. The fabric of society changes as the middle class expands and takes on a mitigating role promoting stability and long-term protection of assets. The second assumption is that national income levels influence how well a country conforms to democratic values and political tolerance. If a country is overall wealthy, a change of government should not severely affect powerful interest groups’ assets and redistributive values are more likely to prevail. Simultaneously, a poorer country is perceived to have lower chances of developing democratic and bureaucratic institutions due to a lack of universalistic values. Third, the level of civil society engagement in terms of non-governmental organizations and intermediary institutions is linked with educational attainment and wealth.

Finally, it should be noted that unlike advocates of revised modernization theory, Lipset places little emphasis on historical details of the countries included in his study. He acknowledges regional differences by applying region-specific criteria when measuring countries’ levels of democracy but cultural heritage is not conceptualised and included as a key indicator in his analysis.

1.3.4. Extensive generalizations underpin quick and easy solutions

This paper argues that generalising over mass reactions to urbanization, industrialization, increasing literacy rates and wealth accumulation without considering the historical background and contemporary context of a society is a risky exercise. Moreover, Lipset quotes a study by Lerner (1958) suggesting that modernization is a linear process with phases where each variable of modernization unfolds. Democracy is developed rather late in this process and described as the “crowning institution of the participant society” (Lerner (1958)

in Lipset 1959). In a later section of this paper, modernization and democratic developments are by I&W described as non-linear processes with certain inflexion points but also fully capable of regressing. And more importantly, the assumptions made by Lipset about human reactions to socio-economic development are institutionalised and re-interpreted in revised modernization theory.

1.4. Classical modernization theory II: Epstein et al. (2006) – A criticism of Przewoski et al. (2000)

1.4.1. Additional perspectives on the association between democracy and socio-economic development

Following the publications of Lipset, the links between socio-economic development and democracy have become among the most researched topics in political science (Wucherpfennig and Deutsch, 2009). Przewoski et al. (2000) present evidence that modernization is not related to the development of democracy in any systematic way. They claim that the established positive association between the two is due to the reduced likelihood of highly developed countries shifting back to undemocratic forms of government once they have become democratic (Epstein et al. 2006). Furthermore, Przewoski et al. argue that the manner in which countries transition into democracy in the first place is not explained by their degree of modernization.

Additionally, Epstein et al. introduce three categories of government as opposed to the conventional two categories, which are often referred to as autocratic and democratic. By adding a third category, partial democracy, Epstein et al. isolate what they argue is the most volatile form of government. Partial democracies are defined by the authors as “fragile” democracies, countries in their “awkward middle stages”, or perhaps “unconsolidated democracies” (ibid.:21). While autocracies and democracies for the most part are stable forms of government, partial democracies change into autocracies or democracies on a much more frequent basis (ibid.:21). For that reason, the new category of partial democracies is emphasised as a key to understanding democratic transitions. This paper argues that although it is important to research how democracy can be sustained, focusing

on new categorizations of government is of less interest as long as the criteria used for this categorization remain unchanged.

1.5. Human development theory: Sen (1999)

Both classical modernization theorists and those in favour of a more revised version view socio-economic development as a requisite for democracy. Some consider democracy a side effect or result of socio-economic development, thereby implying an explicit causal effect, while others suggest that democracy cannot happen unless a country has reached a specified level of modernization or development. Human development theory includes democracy as a constitutive part of development rather than its end result, and argues that democracy fuels the process of development.

According to the father of human development theory Amartya Sen (1999), democracy is the form of government with the highest potential for human development, and the expansion of political rights and civil liberties are both objectives for and means to achieve this development. Traditional measures of socio-economic development such as income per capita, or social modernization measures like degree of urbanization, are not sufficient to pinpoint levels of human development. Instead, governments and societies must be measured and judged based on how constrained the freedoms of their populations are. The ability to make free and unconstrained choices and exercise political rights depends not only on the formal rights granted to people but also their capability to exercise these rights. This entails a more complex way of analysing the process of development than presented in classical modernization theory and Sen's capability approach has led to significant changes in how poverty and human development are measured in international organizations such as the United Nations.

It follows from this reasoning that the freedom to partake in democracy and exercise political rights cannot be derived simply from establishing the right institutions. Although institutions are important for a well-functioning democracy, these are filled with the values and priorities of the people using them (1999:158). However, democracy not only offers the expansion of basic capabilities such as social and political participation, it also has intrinsic instrumental qualities and constructive elements that contribute to shaping people's values and priorities and

thereby institutions. The instrumental advantage of democracy lies in the opportunity democratic institutions provide for people to express their opinions in public, capture political attention, and hold their governments accountable. This increases the chances that economic or other forms of deprivations or crises are addressed in a way that expands capabilities. Sen gives the example of famines, claiming that no substantial famine has occurred in any independent, democratic country with a relatively free press (ibid: 152). The constructive element of democracy is related to the instrumental. Through exercising the right to assemble and engage in public debate, people are able to conceptualise and assess social, political and economic problems. Public debate and free press can help shape people's values in a way that expands their capabilities. Sen here uses the example of declining fertility rates in the Indian state Kerala, which is much influenced by the public debate over negative effects of high fertility rates (ibid:153).

In human development theory, development is a process of expanding capabilities and eradicating substantial unfreedoms like poverty and other forms of deprivation. The achievement of these virtues constitutes a form of socio-economic development that is closely associated with democracy, which is both a part of human development and is sustained by it. Moreover, if personal freedoms are too heavily constrained, democratic development is not possible.

This theory does not offer a practical recipe for how to develop democracy nor does it engage in a chicken-egg discussion of which type of development is a prerequisite for what. Expanding capabilities through political development implies granting people political rights and civil liberties. Democracy is therefore the form of government that allows the greatest capability expansion, regardless of levels of socio-economic or human development. And importantly, according to Sen, political development does not counter or come at the cost of economic development, as has been argued by some of his peers (1999:148).

1.6. Revised modernization theory: Inglehart and Welzel (2005)

1.6.1. Revised modernization theory

Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel (I&W) build on the work of Sen and other human development theorists. They refer to their theory as a revised version of modernization theory and view socio-economic development as part of a larger development process referred to as the human development sequence. Like Sen, they view human resources as an explicit feature in this process. However, I&W do not study the capabilities of people but rather their culture and values. According to them, socio-economic development alone does not bring democracy but shifts mass values in a predictable direction, which is closely associated with democracy.

In the book “Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy. The Human Development Sequence” (2005), I&W claim that recent democratization literature largely ignores human emancipation as the most fundamental part of democracy. They introduce a version of modernization theory where human development is presented as both a result of modernization and a condition for democracy. Economic development and social change are still seen as vital processes, but like in human development theory, revised modernization theory includes a more complex set of factors to explore the link between modernization, or socio-economic development, and democracy.

According to I&W, socio-economically advanced societies clearly and consistently differ from less advanced societies in cultural values. Moreover, as a society develops towards more economic prosperity and social changes occur, cultural values change according to predictable patterns (I&W *ibid.*:1). Although socio-cultural change in itself is not a linear process, modernization is a process that gives rise to “new type of society that promotes human emancipation on many fronts” (*ibid.*:2). Democracy becomes increasingly likely as a consequence of this development. Unlike Sen, I&W deal explicitly with the temporal aspects of development in their research. They consider human development an overarching process fuelled by modernization and ending in democracy because this is the form of government best suited to maximize human choice. This statement is

supported by statistical analyses based on results from the World Value Survey¹, which will not be dealt with in detail in this paper.

1.6.2. Suggested modifications of classical modernization theory

I&W (2005) suggest six concrete alterations of classical modernization theory. First, other factors besides socioeconomic development need to be included as prerequisites for democracy. Although it seems to be a tendency of advanced or developed societies to be more secular and display more tolerance for difference in opinion, predictions of democratic development based on socioeconomic conditions alone are probabilistic at best.

Second, the traditions and cultural heritage of a society shapes its reaction to socio-economic development. Despite Marx' expectations, industrialised societies have not moved towards one global culture. On the contrary, culture seems to be a very persistent factor particular to each society and must be included in analyses of the link between democracy and socio-economic development.

Third, cultural modernization is not an irreversible process. It is not unusual that societies with contracting economies experience negative effects on the human development sequence. It is for instance expected that xenophobia will rise in Europe as a result of the ongoing global economic crisis.

A fourth suggested adjustment is that the process of cultural change on the basis of socio-economic development should not be seen as linear. Throughout history, this process has changed course and the effects of socio-economic development on culture are largely context-dependent. Industrialised and post-industrial societies will witness different reactions, with the former growing more centralised and bureaucratised and the latter increasingly emphasising self-expression and personal freedom from state authority.

¹ "The World Values Survey (WVS) is a worldwide network of social scientists studying changing values and their impact on social and political life. The WVS in collaboration with EVS (European Values Study) carried out representative national surveys in 97 societies containing almost 90 percent of the world's population. These surveys show pervasive changes in what people want out of life and what they believe. In order to monitor these changes, the EVS/WVS has executed five waves of surveys, from 1981 to 2007." (Presentation brochure 2011)

The fifth suggestion includes the acknowledgement of modernization as a process not specifically linked with any regional culture. Modernization is not the same as Westernization or Americanization. In fact, the United States differs from most post-industrial, rich societies in that it has kept its traditional and religious values relatively intact.

The sixth and final suggested amendment to classical modernization theory is according to I&W the most important. Modernization should primarily be recognised as a process of human development. This is due to the emergence of self-expression values, which enable human emancipation and manifest themselves in all domains of life, including family and work life, political participation and religious orientation. In fact, self-expression values are found to be the strongest determinants of democracy. In the post-industrial stage, these values work with socioeconomic development and democracy to reach new levels of human emancipation.

1.6.3. Statistical analysis of mass values

The key new insight presented in revised modernization theory is that socio-economic development changes a society's value set in a predictable way and that the emergence of self-expressional values is closely and positively correlated with democracy. To illustrate this relationship, I&W use scatter plot diagrams showing patterns in cross-cultural variations when countries are compared using different measures of socio-economic development (ibid.:56). One of the basic diagrams shows how countries compare to each other based on two value set variables and national level income data from the World Bank, which is used to draw lines between low-income, middle-income and high-income countries. The first variable is a measure of how traditional or secular-rational mass values are in a country. Traditional values often include religious beliefs while secular-rational values imply a stronger belief in science and the rationalization of authority (ibid:5). The span of possible attitudes between the two extremities constitutes the vertical axis in the map. A similar continuum between survival and self-expression values constitutes the other axis. Socio-economic development in its most basic meaning implies increased existential security. When self-expression values are dominant,

people have less reason to worry about survival and show a greater taste for individual freedom and the right to express themselves.

According to I&W, these two indicators represent a wider range of questions asked in the World Value Survey and are correlated with two different stages of the socio-economic development process. Scoring high on secular-rational values is a strong indicator of a modernised or industrialised society, which typically entails centralization, bureaucracy, and an increase in workers in the secondary sector of the economy. However, a high score in this category is not strongly associated with democracy. As the authors put it: "Democracy is not just a set of rules that depend solely on institutional engineering" (ibid:271). Put differently; the process of human emancipation that is vital to democratic development is not necessarily a part of industrialization.

Self-expression values are, on the other hand, found to have the strongest correlation with post-industrialised or post-modern societies, and also with democracy (ibid:75). In post-modern societies the tertiary sector of the economy thrives, jobs require more education, and citizens live more autonomously from state authority. Where industrialization often leads to centralization and streamlining of state institutions and services, citizens in post-industrial societies tend to move in the opposite direction and emphasize personal freedom in all aspects of life, including the demand for social, economic and political rights.

Such a two-dimensional map is basic but can be used for more elaborate categorizations of cross-country variation, such as in Huntington's (1996) map of cultural zones. I&W claim that the "two-dimensional space reflects a multi-dimensional reality"(ibid.:66) and repeat the exercise with a host of other variables. By adding World Bank income data to the diagram with the two key indicators, it seems clear that high-income countries invariably demonstrate high levels of secular-rational and self-expression values compared to middle- and low-income countries. Interestingly, some middle-income countries like Russia and China score high on secular-rational values but low on self-expression values. Both countries are industrialized and while China is a communist state, Russia was in

2010 characterized by Freedom House as “not free”². They serve as an illustration of I&W’s finding, namely that secular-rational values are associated with modernization, while self-expression values are associated with post-modernization and democracy.

1.6.4. Temporal aspects and cultural impact

I&W add an important temporal dimension to their research by including several rounds of the World Value survey with a varying number of years between them. Using panel data rather than cross-sectional data as a basis for the research enables analyses of which development processes seem to fuel which. Knowing more about how economic, social, and democratic development relate to each other is useful for a wide range of professions and stakeholders, including democracy promoters. It also allows the authors to make predictions about future developments and then test their hypotheses when new survey results are ready.

If modernization really is an exercise of human emancipation, should not different populations with the same level of socio-economic development display the same taste for self-expression and secular-rational values? Not necessarily, according to I&W. The measured level of socio-economic development merely helps predict the direction in which mass values are shifting (ibid.:66). Cross-cultural variation in democracy cannot not be fully explained by varying levels of socio-economic development. There are also other factors that play a role and other theorists have attempted to capture some of them. Huntington (1996) divides countries into cultural zones based on religion, political traditions, or language (ibid.:63). Exploring these classifications further is however outside the scope of this paper.

1.6.5. Causal links between socio-economic and democratic development

In order to relate their findings directly to the process of democratic development, I&W explore possible causal links between self-expression values and democracy. Their results indicate that the majority of causal arrows point from culture to institutions. In line with Sen’s argument that institutions will be filled with the

² Freedom House Country Report 2010:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&country=7904&year=2010> (Accessed November 6, 2011)

values and priorities of the people using them, I&W conclude that institutions are more likely to be influenced and shaped by the culture they are created in than vice versa. If this is the case, it has implications for foreign development aid, and it would imply that the effectiveness of democracy aid focused on capacity and institution building depends largely upon the cultural context. The assumption seemingly made implicitly by many democracy promoters, namely that democracy can occur in any culture provided that the right institutions are in place, clearly contrasts with what I&W present. In the following chapters, practical approaches to democracy promotion and democracy promotion programmes are presented and evaluated using classical and revised modernization theory.

2. Democracy promotion in practice

2.1. Democracy promotion- a brief account of its history

2.1.1. American efforts to promote democracy globally

Public policies and aid directed at promoting democracy on foreign soil have been implemented for the majority of the 20th century, regardless of whether one counts numerous military interventions as measures to “secure democracy” or prevent hostile powers from coming into political office. This paper deals limits its scope to examining the efforts exerted by the United States due to their relevance for the following case studies from Egypt. Furthermore, the work of Thomas Carothers (1999, 2004) and Peter Burnell (2004) are main points of reference in this chapter.

The work of Thomas Carothers is and has been influential in the field of democracy promotion. As Vice President for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he has published a number of books on practical and theoretical aspects of democracy aid. Like most researchers in this field, he describes three waves of American democracy assistance. The first wave started in the 1960s and stretched into the 1970s and concentrated on Latin America, Asia and Africa. The Kennedy administration’s reliance on classical modernization theory and belief in America’s duty or even destiny to do good, led to the implementation of extensive economic development and military aid programmes overseas. In total there was a 33% increase in foreign aid and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) was created (Carothers 1999:20-21).

The second wave started in the 1980s under the Reagan administration. Democracy promotion became part of anti-communism combative policies and Latin America and Asia were still the main recipient regions. Finally, the third wave came at the time of the Soviet Union’s collapse. Although the aforementioned regions were still receiving aid, democracy assistance grew most rapidly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet states. In addition, countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East were added to the list. Or as Carothers puts it (1999:40): “By

the mid-1990s, U.S. democracy aid was all over both the developing world and the former communist world and was an accepted part of U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy.”

2.2. The transition paradigm and the natural sequence model

2.2.1. The transition paradigm; perceptions of democratization as a linear process

With the third wave of democratization beginning in the 1980s, a paradigm was developed to help explain how countries transitioned away from authoritarian rule and towards democracy (ibid.2004:167-68). It grew to become a universal principle in the 1990s when even more countries started their move towards a more democratic rule. Since then the transition paradigm has guided American policy in this area even though this categorization implies that a very high number of countries are currently “transitioning”. Carothers has argued that a revision of this paradigm is long overdue and that it is based on a number of ill-advised assumptions. In his essay “The end of the transition paradigm” (2002, in Carothers 2004), the core assumptions are picked apart.

The first assumption is that countries moving away from authoritarian rule are moving closer to democracy. This implies that there are only two pure forms of government and that any other form of government lies on a continuum between them.

The idea of a continuum is brought further in the second assumption, which is that democratization happens in distinct stages or natural sequences. The *opening* stage refers to changes or cracks in the existing rule and is followed by the *break-through* stage. In this stage the old regime collapses and a democratic system emerges, with elections being held and institutional structures coming into place. The final phase of *consolidation* is when democratic forms turn into democratic substance, a slow process that aims to solidify the new system and institutions.

These assumptions according to Carothers are problematic because they in most cases do not describe reality (ibid. 2004:169). Countries do not necessarily become

democratic when abandoning authoritarian rule. They can slide back and forth on the aforementioned continuum for years without really consolidating democracy or falling back to authoritarian rule. Furthermore, labelling all non-democratic systems as authoritarian is a simplistic categorization that seems out-dated. Separating only between democratic and non-democratic governments is hardly helpful when designing democracy promotion programmes, since these need to be based on more detailed information.

The third assumption in the transition paradigm is that elections are of high importance to the democratization process as they provide new governments with legitimacy and encourage political participation. Although Carothers acknowledges elections as important, he claims that American democracy promoters have a tendency to place too much emphasis on them. He points out that genuine elections do not necessarily lead to increased political participation or stimulate institutional reform (ibid.:178).

Fourth, democracy promoters adhering to the transition paradigm typically assume that underlying societal features, such as levels of socio-economic development, ethnic make-up, or political history, are unimportant and will be overcome once the democratization process is underway. Finally, they also tend to see democratization as a way of remodelling an already existing state, without taking into consideration that some areas of the world have nearly non-existent state infrastructures and need to build their institutions from scratch.

In sum, these assumptions make up an image of democratization as a straightforward process, where elections represent the corner stone of democracy and cultural heritage is easily overcome as a country progresses into democracy. Carothers states that although this paradigm has been of great use, especially during the third wave of democratization, it is now out-dated simply because it does not describe reality (ibid.:182). However, the task of developing an analytical framework that gives an accurate, yet simplified account of the reality that democracy promoters face in their work remains unsolved.

2.2.2. The natural sequence model

The transition paradigm represents a linear interpretation of democratization. Another way of assuming linearity in development is by applying a “natural sequence model”. According to Carothers (1999:85-92), American democracy promoters despite recent improvements make the implicit assumption that countries develop in a way that is “natural” or universal. This leads to a partial or complete negligence of historical, cultural and other factors that may influence a country’s political development process. Many Western, mature democracies grapple with what Carothers calls “a distinct syndrome of postmodern fatigue with democracy – and perhaps with politics itself” (2004:150). Still, it is wrong to assume that developing countries go through the exact same phases in their efforts to build up democratic structures. The typical postmodern symptoms, like moving from bureaucracy and industrialization towards individualism and a loss of interest in centralized institutions, are not determined to follow phases of industrialization and modernization³. It is crucial to study development of democratic structures in transitioning countries as path-dependent, complex processes rather than attempts to “catch up” with mature Western democracies (ibid.).

2.3. The democracy promotion template

2.3.1. Definitions of commonly used concepts in democracy promotion

This section of the paper describes the most frequently applied approaches and methods in the field of democracy promotion, and draws on the works of Peter Burnell (2004, 2006) and Thomas Carothers (1999, 2004). Although Carothers does not operate with a very strict categorization of methods for democracy promotion, he and other democracy researchers make some important distinctions with regards to overall approaches. Each of these approaches has their own historic background, success stories and specific objectives that make them distinguishable from the rest. It is important to note that a standard American

³ Like Inglehart and Welzel, Carothers does not regard modernization as a straightforward, deterministic process.

democracy promotion package usually contains a mix of approaches and in many cases they complement each other, enabling the practitioners to tackle challenges from numerous angles (Carothers 1999:90).

The rather vague concepts of approach and method must be clearly defined for the purpose of this paper. Separating between approaches and methods will enable the reader to distinguish between two different levels of implementation.

Approach in this context refers to the main strategy or frame of implementation in which the methods of choice can be implemented. Approaches normally share the goal of supporting democracy in a recipient country. They differ with regards to the angle from which they address the issue. Some approaches emphasize the importance of free elections, some aim to build sound and democratic institutions, while others focus on strengthening human resources. Ideally, the approach is chosen based on a thorough review of conditions and constraints on both the programme donor and recipient sides.

Methods are matters of practical choice and refer to the practical steps donors or implementers take to reach targets. An approach can consist of a wide range of methods, and some methods, such as technical assistance or staff training, can be employed within different approaches. Furthermore, several approaches can be implemented simultaneously in the same recipient area or country, either combined as part of an overarching strategy or independently.

2.3.2. Basic steps towards democracy

A common approach to democracy promotion is what Carothers refers to as “the basic steps” (ibid.:123). In this approach, electoral assistance and direct support of political parties are the most frequently used methods. The main objectives include support of electoral processes that should lead to free and fair elections and the foundation or strengthening of political parties. This is to ensure stable multiparty systems in newly emerging democracies. Although widely used by American democracy promoters, this paper will not analyse the basic steps approach in detail. This paper argues that supporting electoral systems is in its essence a form of institutional aid, which could also sort under top-down approaches (see 2.3.4).

2.3.3. Economic policies as indirect democracy promotion

Peter Burnell (2004:100) divides democracy promotion into three main approaches: “economic relations, via the state, and via civil society” and considers economic relations an indirect way of promoting democracy. Using economic policies to enhance political change is a double-edged sword, because it runs a high risk of undermining the concept of political legitimacy and inflicting misery on already deprived groups in the affected society. According to Burnell there are two principal ways of using economic approaches to promote democracy. Creating financial or economic shocks by imposing trade blocs or similar manoeuvres can potentially undermine or even topple an undemocratic regime. However, the success of such an approach would largely depend on its aftermath and the incidence and support of pro-democratic forces in the country. Furthermore, if a country suffers serious economic blows and living standards deteriorate, its public institutions can become ineffective to the point where all political legitimacy is lost. This will have implications for the development of a democratic rule. Burnell sums it up stating: “Where an economic wasteland is created so as to bring down a regime, that is a very inauspicious foundation on which to try to build a new democracy” (ibid:103).

The second alternative is to include a non-democratic country in world trade and hope that socio-economic development leads to pressure from within to implement democratic reforms. South Korea and Taiwan where political change followed considerable economic and social progress, constitute typical examples of what supporters of this approach aim to achieve. However, Burnell points out that it is more common to see domestic inequalities grow when a country is included in the world economy than the opposite. Even where there is a redistribution of wealth in line with democratic ideals, as seen in the case of Singapore, there is no guarantee that this will fuel a democratic reform process (ibid:105).

This paper argues that it is correct to consider this approach indirect. There are a number of known and probably unknown pitfalls associated with using economic policy tools to either build up or tear down a country’s economy. The level of risk seems high when considering the host of influential factors that are effectively out of reach for foreign policymakers, such as the actions and reactions of an

authoritarian regime. With an indirect approach like this, policymakers can only maintain a vague hope that their efforts will have a direct impact.

2.3.4. The top-down approach – supporting institutional reform

The second category is what Carothers refers to as the top-down approach. Burnell presents a somewhat wider definition of this approach and describes it as “state relations” (ibid:106). He includes both soft diplomacy and military interventions in his definition, which makes it somewhat broad and less relevant for this paper. The top-down approach is therefore described drawing mostly on Carothers’ work.

The top-down approach is the largest category of democracy promotion in terms of budgets, and it refers to democracy assistance for state institutions. According to Carothers, democracy promoters often favour this approach and perceive it to have the largest impact on the recipient society (1999:89). It has been widely favoured by American democracy promoters from the beginning, much due to the disinclination of the government officials to work with unruly civil society movements. Supporting slow but steady institutional reform and controlled phases of transition have been perceived as safer ways of aiding democracy abroad.

This approach aims at introducing or improving conditions for democracy through improving the effectiveness and efficiency of state institutions. It is typically directed at the judicial and the legislative branches of government. As an overly dominant executive branch often leads to a democracy deficiency, this approach seeks to reform or rebalance the state by strengthening other branches. The constitution, judiciaries and legislatures are therefore key recipients, but local governments and civil-military relations are also considered important (ibid.:158). There is a wide range of methods that can be deployed within the top-down approach. These methods share a common focus on state institutions rather than civil initiatives. Programme officials can help draft or rewrite the recipient country’s constitution, train staff in the judicial or legislative branches, sponsor equipment or activities such as workshops, or work to strengthen relevant legislation. Staff training can emphasize strictly managerial issues concerning efficiency, or focus on raising the quality of the work being done by the institutions through offering workshops or study trips abroad.

The top-down approach is based on the conviction that poorly performing authoritarian or semi-democratic states need well-functioning institutions to develop into full-fledged democracies (ibid.:200). It is in other words a contribution to socio-economic development and the modernization of state institutions that in turn may lead to real political change. As Burnell (2004:107) puts it: “Where society has no confidence in the state’s capabilities, the case for being free to choose between candidates for elected office looks less compelling.” Furthermore, the notion that citizen-led initiatives rarely force substantial change even in well-established democracies lead many democracy promoters to push for the top-down approach rather supporting grassroot level movements (Carothers 1999.:202).

2.3.5. The bottom-up approach – strengthening civil society

The final approach to democracy promotion presented in this paper is the bottom-up approach, also referred to as the civil society approach. This approach is appealing to many types of democracy promoters for a variety of reasons (Burnell 2004:110). For governments and their development agencies, supporting civil society organizations may represent less of an intervention in another state’s internal affairs. Multilateral institutions often take the same view, refusing to get involved in state institutional reforms with the expressed aim of promoting democracy. More politically neutral concepts such as “good governance” tend to focus on an effective state apparatus as a means to promote political stability and rule of law, which in turn improves the business climate for foreign investments. This approach of separating technical assistance and capacity-building from political affairs can be interpreted as reluctance to intervene in a recipient countries’ innermost political structures (Menocal et.al 2007). Next to and sometimes combined with “good governance”, the bottom-up approach has become more popular over the past two decades (Burnell 2004).

The bottom-up approach aims to encourage the founding and support of civil society organizations. Although civil society is rather simplistically described by Carothers as “the space in a society between individuals and families, on one hand, and the state or government, on the other” (Carothers 1999.:209), his definition is sufficient for the scope of this paper. This approach does not only attract

government agencies but also civic associations, research institutes and similar organizations in donor countries (Burnell 2004:110).

However, despite Carothers' broad definition of what constitutes civil society, there is only a limited range of civic organizations that typically receive support from foreign donors (Carothers 1999:209). The most frequent aid recipients are Western-style non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the media and its watchdog organizations, in addition to independent labour unions. Advocacy NGOs seeking to exert political influence in fields such as human rights, female emancipation, environmentalism, or anti-corruption often receive a large bulk of the funding from American democracy promoters (ibid.:210). Religious societies, non-political organizations such as sports or music associations, informal groups based on ethnic or other social identity, or organizations promoting socio-economic development, such as volunteer health clinics or agricultural initiatives, rarely make up a significant part of democracy promotion programmes.

The bottom-up approach in general requires smaller budgets than large-scale projects aiming to reform parts of or entire branches of state institutions. This helps explain at least some of its growing popularity, considering that American democracy promoters have experienced severe budget cuts since the 1990s (ibid.:209). The majority of American funding for civil society organizations goes to political advocacy NGOs, where recipients mostly receive either staff training and technical assistance or direct funding (ibid.:213). Training of staff and technical assistance usually entails advice on how to run the organization efficiently, plan media campaigns, write grant proposals to secure donor support, draft laws, and other similar organizational and political skills. Direct funding often means the sponsoring of equipment, such as computers, photo copiers or fax machines. It may also refer to grants for specific activities undertaken by the supported NGO. Finally, some democracy promotion programmes include efforts to strengthen the legal framework around NGOs or initiatives to create broader coalitions consisting of several organizations.

3. Democracy aid in the Egyptian context

3.1. The state of democracy and democracy promotion in Egypt

3.1.1. The political, economic and cultural history of Egypt

In order to understand the context in which democracy promoters in Egypt work, it is important to be familiar with the country's modern political and economic history. Since the first Egyptian kingdom arose in circa 3200 B.C., Egypt has gone from being one of the richest and most advanced civilizations in history to experiencing political and economic turmoil, which has left the country to struggle with some deep-rooted societal problems.

Under the Ottoman Empire (1517-1914) Egypt transformed into a modern state, most notably under Pasha and viceroy Muhammad Ali who ruled Egypt from 1805 to 1848. He introduced a number of reforms including tax collection, nationalization of agricultural land, and attempted to industrialize the economy. Most importantly in the context of this paper, he established a bureaucratic apparatus and implemented other administrative reforms to ensure that economic and military power remained centralized. Since Egypt was a colony at the time, it became acquainted with the concept of state institutions. The industrialization of the primary and secondary sectors of the economy contributed further to the process of modernising Egypt. The majority of the population, however, remained poor, uneducated and without political influence.

Egypt gained full independence in 1952, after a coup d'état led by a group of Egyptian military officers referred to as "The Free Officers". Both President Gamal Abdel Nasser (1952-1970) and his successor Anwar al Sadat (1970-1981) were among the original officers who initiated and led the revolt against the British and the Egyptian royal family (US State Dept. 2011). After the assassination of President al Sadat in 1981, his Vice President Hosni Mubarak was elected president.

Between 1952 and 1981, Egypt's economic development stagnated for a number of reasons. The building of the Aswan High Dam in 1971 changed the conditions for

agricultural production in the Nile valley and extensive privatization reforms created an unfavourable business climate. Despite President al Sadat's efforts to reverse the trend by introducing open-door policies to attract foreign investment, Egypt's national economy struggled under the burden of an oversized public sector (ibid.).

President Mubarak (1981-2011) continued and introduced economic reform programmes with the clear objective of attracting foreign investments, strengthening the private sector and downsizing the public sector (ibid.). This has led to a more robust economy and considerable GDP growth which was slowed down but not reversed by the global financial crisis (Carnegie Endowment 2011). However, despite increasing popular demand for the liberalization of national politics since the mid-2000s, political reforms have been few and far between. It is widely claimed by Egyptian oppositional forces that the motivation behind political reforms in recent years has been to keep critical voices in the international community at bay.

In February 2011, following weeks of widespread public demonstrations, strikes, and violent clashes between protestors and police forces, President Mubarak resigned. Awaiting parliamentary elections in November 2011, the Supreme Council of Armed Forces have assumed leadership of Egypt (CIA Factbook 2011).

3.1.2. Egypt as recipient of foreign aid – a stable ally in a volatile region

Egypt's role as a stabilising force in the Middle East dates back several decades. As an ally of the United States, Egypt keeps peace with and sells natural gas to Israel and has been committed to combating extremist tendencies among Egyptian islamists. Furthermore, it has up until the recent regime change kept its border to the Palestinian territories almost completely sealed. Even during the war in Gaza in the beginning of 2008, the Egyptian government hesitated long before allowing food and medical supplies to enter Gaza through the Rafa border crossing.

The military has exerted great control over by the armed forces since the coup d'état in 1952. It lent its support to the National Democratic Party, which was disbanded after the departure of then President Mubarak in February 2011 but enjoyed an overwhelming majority during the entire reign of Mubarak. The most

significant political opposition during the Mubarak era was the Muslim Brotherhood, which is a conservative religious organization with a political faction. The political faction was banned during the Mubarak era but did serve the regime with an excuse to uphold the state of emergency and reject criticism regarding lack of political freedom by pointing to what seemed to be the only real political alternative to the National Democratic Party.

The Egyptian regime early recognized militant islamists as its primary political opponents. The assassination of President Al Sadat in 1981 by an islamist in his own guard contributed strongly to this notion and since that year, a state of emergency has been in effect. Under the state of emergency civilians can be arrested and held without charges over longer periods of time, the prosecuting authority can try civilians before a military tribunal, and freedom of speech and assembly are under heavy restrictions.

In 1979 Egypt's President al Sadat signed a peace treaty with Israel following the Camp David accords in 1978. The Camp David agreement was negotiated with the help of American president Jimmy Carter and since then, relations between Egypt and United States have steadily improved (US State Dept.). There also continues to be considerable economic and military cooperation, in which the Americans view Egypt as an ally and a stabilising force in a volatile region.

Except for Israel, Egypt is the largest recipient of American foreign aid⁴ (Wang 2011). The United States has spent on average \$2 billion annually on aid to Egypt since 1979, including both military and economic assistance. According to the U.S. State Department, the United States spends around \$1.3 billion annually on military assistance to Egypt, while the level of economic aid has been in decline since 1998 (ibid.).

On average, democracy and governance programmes were awarded a modest \$24 million annually between the fiscal years of 1999 and 2009, while development programmes that did not directly target the political apparatus received a larger share of the funding. Between 2004 and 2009, USAID spent more than \$180

⁴ Excluding the money spent on wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to another source, Pakistan had a higher amount of aid requested for them in the 2011 state budget (Wingfield 2011).

million in Egypt on programmes to promote rule of law, human rights, civil society and good governance (USAID Audit Report 2009). However, the audit report acknowledges the constraints under which these programmes operated. It concludes that due to the uncooperativeness of the Egyptian government, many of the targets were not reached and impact was “limited” (ibid:1).

3.2. The most serious democratic deficiencies in Egypt

Egypt suffers from democratic deficiencies in both its institutions and civil society. The deficiencies are in part a result of grave systemic flaws, such as a constitution that allows for a very dominant executive branch, strict censorship laws making it illegal to damage Egypt’s image abroad and emergency laws that have been in effect since 1981. The latter widely extends the government’s authority to restrict public gatherings, try civilians before military courts, and search individuals and places without warrant (FIDH 2011).

In part Egypt’s deficiencies also come as a result of widespread corruption and abuse of power by the government, military, and police forces. In 2010 Egypt was ranked 98th out of 178 countries on Transparency International’s Corruption Perception Index⁵, thereby being perceived as more corrupt than countries like Saudi Arabia, Djibouti and Bahrain. Moreover, despite the ban on torture imposed by President al Sadat, torture is still a widespread practice in Egyptian prisons and police stations (Human Rights Watch 2011).

4. Analysing democracy aid through the lenses of classical and revised modernization theory

4.1. The top-down approach – Assistance of Justice Support (AOJS)

4.1.1. Introduction and approach

For the past two decades judicial assistance programmes have been among the most used forms of democracy promotion (Rocha Menocal et. al 2007:8). Despite

⁵ Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) was launched in 1995 and annually ranks almost 200 countries by their perceived levels of corruption.

this, not all donors can or wish to engage openly in the provision of democracy-fostering programmes. Therefore, the term “good governance” (see 2.3.5.), which refers to a range of methods that include, but go beyond democracy promotion have increased in popularity over the past decade. Despite its vagueness, the core concern of this concept is normally states’ ability to govern (ibid.:3). Some organizations such as the World Bank pursue an agenda of “good governance” and emphasize judicial reform as a way of facilitating business development and economic growth. This enables them to finance development programmes that support democracy despite mandates that are restrictive about political involvement (ibid.:2). However, “good governance” programmes can also provide development assistance that strengthens the governing capacity of an undemocratic regime.

After a national judicial conference held in 1986, the Egyptian Ministry of Justice (MOJ) approached the United States Agency for Development Aid (USAID) and requested “technical assistance in automation aspects within the process within the court process” (Amideast AOJS Final Report 2003:9). The conference highlighted the Egyptian judiciary’s inefficient case flow management which had led to long delays in the administration of justice and reduced confidence in the legal system among both citizens and business leaders. In 1996, USAID awarded a contract to the private non-profit organization America-Mideast Education and Training Services Inc. (AMIDEAST) to provide capacity-building through staff training and technical assistance. The first key objective stated was improved efficiency in two pilot civil courts, and the second objective was improved judges’ knowledge and application of Egyptian civil law (ibid.:1). AMIDEAST worked with two sub-contractors, the National Center for State Courts based in Virginia in the United States and Systems Research Egypt (SRE) based in Cairo. The total project budget was approximately \$18.8 million, and was concluded in the last quarter of 2003 (ibid.:1). The project was granted additional support from USAID for a second period from 2004 to 2009. The part of the project that was drafted and implemented after 2003 is commonly referred to as AOJS II. However, this paper deals exclusively with AOJS (I) due to a lack of necessary documentation for analysis.

4.1.2. Content of the aid programme and methods applied

From USAID's standpoint, the project objective was not only to provide technical assistance, but also to develop the judicial component of a larger effort to create "an enabling environment for sustainable democracy" (ibid.:7). This confirms that the top-down approach to democracy promotion can be incorporated in a wider agenda of "good governance" that includes both efforts to make political change and strictly non-political capacity-building.

The project was planned around seven methods designed to improve efficiency in the two pilot courts, strengthen key institutions like the National Centre for Judicial Studies, and expand judges' knowledge and application of Egyptian civil law. The direct work to streamline case management and build administrative capacity within a large state institution is specific to the top-down approach. However, most of the methods applied could also be used within other approaches. Not all methods were implemented at once since the project spanned over more than six years from beginning to completion.

The establishment of a project office was considered an important step to ensure the implementation of the remaining tasks and served as a hub for the project administration. The office was set up with the necessary technical equipment and communication systems and became operational during the first year of the project. The project staff also worked to build a constituency around the project and facilitate communication between stakeholders in the cooperating institutions, business environment, and the international community of judicial expertise. Furthermore, as part of the wider effort to improve the judiciary beyond the two pilot courts, the project strengthened the administration and management capacity within the Egyptian National Center for Judicial Studies.

The project also engaged directly with the two selected pilot courts. Extensive training for the administrative staff was provided to achieve computer literacy and new case management skills. Judges and other judicial staff received training to enhance their knowledge of Egyptian civil law. In addition to this, selected judges were provided with a home-based personal computer to encourage legal research and work with automated systems from home.

Finally, one of the project goals was to influence legal reform work in Egypt. However the establishment of a planned working group for this purpose was suspended.

4.1.3. Impact

The project evaluation states that significant impact was achieved in the areas of case management practices, sustainable systems and court procedures in the two pilot courts involved (ibid.:1). The efforts to clear the pilot courts' backlogs through introducing new case management systems lead to significant reductions of case processing times. According the project evaluation, the backlogs could be cleared completely if the positive trend continues, although an official timeline is not given (ibid.:2). Moreover, the introduction of automated systems to initiate and process cases together with simplified court routines streamlined the courts' procedures and increased satisfaction among its users, including lawyers.

The human resource development among staff at the courts and the NCJS was "marked". Also, a higher number of judges and lawyers than initially projected were trained in how to sustain best practices and reengineered systems. Egyptian judges showed a 19.5 % improvement in knowledge of Egyptian civil law, which is 4.5% more than the target. It was not clarified what their initial level was.

One target had a clear political aspect to it and turned out to be unwelcome. The project originally sought to establish a Regulatory Reform Task Force to support legal reform work and provide advice to the Minister of Justice. However, the ministry rejected this offer and stated that it would duplicate efforts as this work was already in progress. Thus, "All parties agreed that this task would be eliminated from the Project's scope" (ibid.:9).

4.1.4. Programme motivations and impact through the lenses of classical modernization theory and the "good governance" approach

Capacity-building of and technical assistance to state institutions may help reduce the long delay of Egyptian court trials and thereby improve citizens' access to justice. An effective judiciary can foster positive attitudes towards the rule of law, but more importantly it provides individuals and organizations with the opportunity to dispute decisions made by other branches of government. The

judicial branch in Egypt is known to be relatively independent and fair, but cases can get stuck in the system for years due to significant backlogging and inefficient administrative routines (Elbayar 2005).

An effective judicial system is also considered imperative in order to attract foreign investors. According to the OECD (2010), an effective institutional and regulatory framework is required to create a favourable climate for economic development in the Egyptian private sector. Social problems such as rising poverty and unemployment rates, especially among young people, can be mitigated through attracting investments that in turn lead to much needed job creation. A more far-fetched hope is that foreign investors will bring political attitudes with them that have a positive impact on the domestic political climate in the long run. So far this has not been a dominant trend.

Another reason to focus on capacity-building in the judicial branch is the staff of the institutions. Investing in human resources by providing staff training has the potential to improve essential democratic practices such as judicial independence. The Minister of Justice legally exerts considerable authority over the judiciary, but the Judges' Syndicate in Cairo has traditionally been among the few professional unions willing and able to openly criticize the government. On several occasions the union has clashed with the Mubarak regime, sometimes leading to public protest and the regime's backtrack. The arrest and sudden release of two senior judges, who accused the regime of rigging parliamentary elections in 2005 serves as a prime example (Ibrahim 2006). By strengthening a promising segment of government, democracy promoters may be able to make it more resilient towards unlawful interventions from the executive branch.

Burnell (2004:102) points out that in countries defined as liberal democracies today, the rule of law was established before democracy was introduced. Lipstein (1959) also emphasizes rule of law as one of the political conditions for democracy. In other words, if citizens learn to respect the law as the "rules of the game", democracy stands a better chance of developing. The rationale behind this argument is that basic democratic components like free elections are not useful if one or more actors perceive themselves to be above the law. This is a good point, but if real progress is to be made based on this line of reasoning, there should be

some minimum requirements as to what the law itself contains and what it regulates. Training people to blindly trust and respect the law does not guarantee democratic development. This paper would argue that this is not a strong argument for supporting capacity-building in the judicial branch of a non-democratic government in Egypt. Additionally, , the argument disregards cultural and historical differences between today's liberal democracies and Egypt that are too significant to be overlooked.

Furthermore, and to its credit, this approach enables democracy promotion programmes to be implemented even under difficult conditions. The top-down approach has the potential of operating with a disconnection between political affairs and technical assistance, thereby taking on the role of promoting "good governance" (Rocha Menocal et al. 2007). "Good governance" includes democracy promotion, but also less political objectives such as institutional capacity-building, transparency, accountability and adequate service delivery (ibid.) Incorporating the top-down approach in a broader agenda of "good governance" may enable democracy promoters to work in environments where any form of political advice is unwelcome.

However, it cannot be assumed that "good governance" leads to democracy. It may lead to a more stable state of affairs and rule of law, but there are numerous examples of undemocratic countries where capacity-building in state institutions has done little for democracy. There is also the issue of which institutions to include in a top-down approach. Democracy promoters may be able to cooperate with some state institutions but denied access to others. The Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs serves as an example of an institution where successful democracy promotion would most likely have a large and direct impact. However, it is highly unlikely that foreign advisors would be welcomed. In 2002, Egypt passed what has been referred to as one of the strictest NGO laws in the world (Gubser 2002). This particular law holds that all civil society organizations require a license from the ministry to operate legally. Moreover it gives the ministry the right to oversee all activities of all civil society organizations and shut them down if they are considered to "threaten national unity" or "violate public order or moral" (Elbayar 2005). More importantly, the law also prohibits NGOs from receiving foreign

funding without ministry approval. Needless to say, Egyptian ministry officials have almost unlimited authority to control civil society through this law.

Top-down projects also run the risk of only being allowed into the non-political areas of an institution. For instance, in the AOJS project, the Egyptian Ministry of Justice accepted extensive technical assistance but refused help with reforming the judicial system. At first glance, this way of promoting democracy can seem rather unintuitive. By including legal reform as one of many project goals, the staff almost seemed to hope they could sneak democratization in the through backdoor. At the same time, cooperation with the ministry would most likely not have been possible at all if the project goals were explicitly political. Such trade-offs are to be expected as democracy promotion in its essence implies intervention in another country's internal affairs. However, it is important that acknowledging the difficult practical aspects embedded in this form of development assistance does not influence the evaluation of what constitutes effective democracy promotion.

Finally, economic inequalities may persist in the face of economic development. According to Burnell (2004), rising domestic inequalities is the trend among countries recently included in the global trade market. This makes the perceived link between democracy and socio-economic development problematic and suggests that economic growth by itself is not enough.

4.1.5. Programme motivations and impact through the lens of revised modernization theory

According to human development and revised modernization theory, democracy is a part of the overarching process of human development. In other words, democracy is about empowering citizens and expanding their capabilities. Improving citizens' access to justice is undoubtedly a way of expanding their capabilities, provided that the law ensures everyone is equal before it. This would represent a significant improvement for those unaccustomed to the rule of law, and it would limit the freedoms of any privileged minority. This certainly applies to the Egyptian case, where former President Mubarak was known to rule by "intra-elite consensus" (US Congress Library), while most Egyptians were and still are cut off from exerting real influence over political decisions.

Classical and revised modernization theory both support the idea that a functioning state apparatus contributes positively to socio-economic or human development, and that democracy is closely associated with this process. Countries where no centralized government is in charge and able to provide basic public services are often defined as failed states⁶. These states are usually marred by low levels of human development, and have living standards that are considerable below the international and regional averages⁷. By supporting capacity-building in a central state institution like the judiciary, democracy promoters can potentially prevent economic backlashes which will lead to widespread poverty and a decrease in existential security.

Despite the similarities between classical and revised modernization theory, the latter represents a different view on the relationship between democratic culture and institutions. I&W (2005) separate between effective democracy and formal democracy. The former “reflects the extent to which officeholders use their power in ways that do not deprive ordinary people of their formal rights as citizens” (ibid.:192), while the latter denotes the level of democracy on paper. Effective democracy is closely associated with the rise of self-expression values, which implies a stronger taste for both individual autonomy and the right to participate in decision-making concerning political and economic affairs (ibid.:56). The link is however considerably weaker between these values and formal democracy. This can be explained by formal democracy’s failure to provide genuine freedoms for its citizens. Furthermore, I&W state that self-expression values spread mainly from culture or society to institutions and not the other way around. In other words, self-expression values have a strong causal impact on how democratic institutions develop, while the spread of democratic values in the opposite direction is “negligible” (ibid.:209). Consequently, revised modernization theory questions

⁶ The Failed State Index is compiled by the American think-tank Fund for Peace and among its indicators are widespread corruption, deterioration of public services, violation of human rights and lack of political representation.

⁷ The countries that are ranked high on the Failed State Index are usually ranked low on the Human Development Index, see for instance <http://hdr.undp.org/en/data/map/> (retrieved 13.11.2011)

whether it really is possible to introduce or strengthen democracy simply by improving the capacity of state institutions.

If culture has such a significant influence on how state institutions develop, it is crucial to assess the society in which a top-down approach like the AOJS project is implemented. I&W refer to the empowering aspects of democracy as “effective democracy” and the institutional aspects as “formal democracy”. Ideally, the former is a successful and well-functioning version of the latter, but it is important to note that there is no deterministic relationship between the two. It is not uncommon for states to maintain a facade of formal democracy which hides severe deficiencies in its effective implementation of democratic principles. One of the most serious threats to effective democracy is corruption, because it violates the rule of law and undermines people power. In the Egyptian context where widespread corruption has been documented for decades, and international rankings suggest little signs of improvement⁸; there is reason to ask whether capacity-building in the judicial branch really can foster effective democracy, or if it will just contribute to the current state of affairs.

With this in mind, there is another aspect to consider about democracy promotion in general and the top-down approach in particular. In classical modernization theory socio-economic or merely economic development are considered important for the development of democratic rule. However, if democratic values do emerge in society or culture and not in institutions, the top-down approach is may not be democracy promotion at all but another form of development assistance. Instead, it can be argued that the AOJS project mainly contributes to a stable regulatory environment for business development. This can in turn lead to increased living standards and the possible rise of self-expression values as the issue of existential security becomes less pressing. Over time, the demand for democracy could increase due to this economic development. However, this line of argumentation can be used to label nearly any kind of development assistance as democracy promotion. If democracy promotion can refer to any form of aid that at some point may contribute to the rise of democratic rule, this paper would argue that there is

⁸ “In general, Egypt has maintained a weak position in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) from 1998 to 2009.” Transparency International 2011.

little need for it. Hardly any development agency openly supports the strengthening of authoritarianism.

Furthermore, it is necessary to ask whether the label of “good governance” (see 4.1.4.) merely enables projects like AOJS to retain some legitimacy as democracy promotion when in fact they are implemented to create favourable conditions for private sector development. It is problematic if “good governance” can be marketed as democracy promotion to donors and policymakers, and as business development to local authorities and potential investors. This would mean that donor countries and agencies could state their support of democracy promotion while in fact they would be providing little more than strictly non-political capacity-building to the recipient countries. Hence, over time it could become more attractive for donors to focus on “good governance” programmes with a higher chance of reaching project goals than investing in long-term human development programmes, which may be met with suspicion in recipient countries and are difficult to evaluate. In fact, when comparing recent USAID democracy promotion budgets to the agency’s support for “good governance” projects, one could get the impression that this development is already well underway.

Blending democracy promotion into a programme where the focus is on technical assistance can complicate the programme evaluation process. “Development assistance” and “good governance” are broad terms, and project designs in these categories may legitimately acknowledge the need to prioritize state-building and modernization before effective democracy. Therefore, if the concept of democracy promotion is to retain a specific meaning, there should be a clear line between it and the other two concepts.

In short, human development leads to existential security and an increase of self-expression values, which in turn is closely associated with democracy. In order to promote this development, it is not enough to facilitate economic growth and institutional reform alone. There needs to be a focus on expanding personal freedoms, and it is questionable whether the AOJS project fulfils this criteria. By the standards of revised modernization theory, it is highly uncertain whether capacity-building in the Egyptian judiciary, taking into account the level of corruption in this particular context, is in fact democracy promotion at all.

4.1.6. Concluding remarks

Classical and revised modernization theories agree that strong state institutions have positive impacts on the freedoms of citizens and the development of a regulated and healthy economy. Whether judicial assistance can be defined as democracy promotion and whether “good governance” is as closely related to democracy promotion as some international organizations and donors claim, are issues that have yet to be resolved.

4.2. The bottom-up approach – We the People: Project Citizen

4.2.1. Introduction and approach

In 2002, USAID hosted a regional conference in Jordan about the state of civic education in the Middle East. One of the main objectives was to plan the establishment of an Arab network to oversee the implementation of civic education programmes in Arab schools (CCE Funding Proposal 2005:1). Following the conference some of the participants initiated the founding of civic education organizations in their home countries. Moreover, a regional organization named Arab Civitas Association was established in Jordan to coordinate these efforts. In 2003, the American non-profit organization Centre for Civic Education received a grant from The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)⁹ to support the operations of Arab Civitas as well as the national organizations. This analysis is based on the first year of the programme’s implementation phase, which spanned from mid-2003 until mid-2004.

4.2.2. Content of the aid programme and methods applied

“We The People: Project Citizen” is a civic education programme that promotes “competent and responsible participation in state and local government” (ibid.:13),

⁹ “The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) is a regional program that helps citizens in the Middle East and North Africa develop more pluralistic, participatory and prosperous societies. [...] MEPI advances U.S. foreign policy goals by supporting citizens’ efforts for economic, social, and political empowerment, expanding opportunities for women and youth, and helping communities work alongside governments in shaping their own futures.” From the MEPI website (2011)

and has been implemented in American middle schools since the 1995-96 school year. It is designed to build awareness around public policy processes and how regular citizens can influence them. CCE sponsored and prepared the required materials for the programme and Arab Civitas was responsible for the translation into Arabic. The materials were then distributed from the regional level to national organizations.

Although the training manual was translated from English to Arabic, and some changes were made with regards to societal context, the programme's basic teaching methods remained the same. Project Citizen was initially designed for an audience of older children and adolescents, but can also be adapted for adult students. In Project Citizen participants are divided into groups and each group addresses a local issue that can be resolved through public policy, usually on the local level. The issue itself is not necessarily political, but often of social or environmental character. The groups work to define the problem and research possible solutions. The programme ends with a showcase, a simulated legislative hearing, or a competition where the participants present action plans for implementing the best public policy to resolve the issue (CCE Funding Proposal 2005.:2). Through the presentation, participants display their understanding of public policy and in some programmes students are also selected to participate in national or regional showcases for Project Citizen.

In Egypt, the Taha Hussein Association for Civic Education was engaged by the Egyptian branch of Arab Civitas to initiate programme activities suitable for children of school age. However, due to difficulties in introducing the programme within Egyptian public schools, private civic education clubs were set up to give afternoon classes (Glaser Consulting Report 2004:6). Two main activities related to Project Citizen were initiated during the first year of the programme. First, teachers, parents and administrators from approximately 20¹⁰ after-school civic education clubs participated in a four-day workshop to learn about Project Citizen and how to teach it. Second, ten Egyptian NGOs took part in a one-day workshop with a similar objective. In addition to this, 25 Egyptian primary school teachers

¹⁰ This was the programme proposal. The number of teachers trained exceeded the programme target, but there were no indications that more clubs were founded.

were trained in “Foundations of Democracy”, which is a similar civic education programme designed by CCE and structured to fit younger children.

The first year’s programme activities mainly applied two methods. At the beginning of the programme technical assistance was provided by CCE to the Taha Hussein Association in the form of translated teacher’s manuals and student sets from Arab Civitas. It also funded the establishment of roughly 20 after-school clubs to teach Project Citizen in an informal setting (ibid.:7). The principal part of the programme was however focused on personnel training, such as workshops to train teachers, parents and club leaders or administrators.

4.2.3. Impact

Evaluation reports concerning the first year of Project Citizen in Egypt imply that the programme “laid an impressive groundwork for teaching civic education to primary and middle schools” (Glaser Consulting Report 2004:6). The Taha Hussein Association for Civic Education expected that two teachers and one administrator from the estimated 20 established civic education clubs would participate in the workshop to be trained in Project Citizen teaching methods. Exceeding this expectation, more than 120 teachers, parents and administrators attended the training and were enthusiastic about taking the Project Citizen principles back to their students (CCE Evaluation Report 2004:1). However, they did express some doubts as to how controversial public policy issues would be handled, and whether the children and youth would be able to influence local government decisions.

Each civic education club was expected to have an average member base of 50 students, meaning that 1,000 Egyptian students should have been exposed to Project Citizen as a result of this programme. However, the Taha Hussein Association reported to CCE that approximately 800 students had received education. A pre-test was distributed to a sample of about 120 students to test their political skills and knowledge. The post-test results were not ready at the time of the evaluation. (Glaser Consulting Report 2004: 6). As for the NGO training, there was no available data about the impact of this training.

Since the programme had been implemented for a period of one year before the Center of Civic Education and an external consulting company evaluated it, long-

term effects are not included in the reports available. According to the CCE Program Coordinator Michelle Costa, the programme was continued until 2006 in cooperation with CCE (personal e-mail 2011). Despite CCE's intention to conduct an in-depth evaluation of the programme, MEPI asked for a reallocation of funds for this purpose and overtook the responsibility for evaluating the programme in Egypt (ibid.). She is not sure whether Project Citizen is still implemented there.

4.2.4. Programme motivations and impact through the lens of classical modernization theory and the "good governance" approach

Lipset (1959) was the first to include non-economic indicators in his analysis of requisites for democracy. His analysis holds that economic development alone is not enough, and that it is the consequences of this development that are interesting in relation to democracy. According to Lipset education is the indicator with the strongest link to democracy, thus civic education can be perceived to have a positive impact as well. With regards to the bottom-up approach, having received a basic education has two clear advantages. First, in most countries being literate offers regular citizens better chances to participate in politics and civil society, which is the key objective of the bottom-up approach. Without basic reading skills it is challenging to process the information needed be part of the political scene on a local or national level. Second, reading skills equip citizens to learn more about topics they are interested in. In other words, if citizens can read and possibly write, they are more likely to benefit from voluntary civic education programmes and actively use what they learn.

The Project Citizen programme in Egypt assumed literacy among its target group, hence it did not contribute to basic education in literacy and numeracy. Instead, it was geared at enhancing political skills and knowledge, while strengthening citizens' ability to understand and influence politics. This paper would argue that fostering civic skills is a vital part of Lipset's definition, which states that education "broadens men's outlook [...] and increases their capacity to make rational electoral choices" (1959:79).

Civic education can also be related to an important political requisite for democracy. Lipset (1959) states the importance of an existing political alternative to the government in power. In other words, in a well-functioning democracy there

needs to be an organized opposition to the ruling forces even if these forces are democratically elected. Civil society organizations may help create and sustain arenas where political alternatives can develop. The bottom-up approach in general and civic education clubs in particular can therefore be important contributors to building a strong and politically engaged civil society, which in turn is favourable for democracy.

It is important to note that the revised version of modernization theory does not place much weight on cultural context and heritage. The principal analysis addresses certain “regional differences” only to a limited degree (see part 1.2.). Therefore, although Lipset’s analysis may be correct, and relevant on the theoretical level, his general statements about the importance of education are not very helpful for those designing a bottom-up approach in a specific national context.

Unfortunately, the effects of civic education programmes on democratization are difficult to measure. Changes in citizens’ attitudes do not necessarily manifest themselves as clearly as reductions in case processing times, or other institutional improvements. The impact of Project Citizen and similar programmes is difficult to estimate for several reasons. First, the key objective is hard to evaluate. Pre- and post-testing can check whether participants have improved their knowledge of political processes, but whether they have changed their attitudes and will be more inclined to participate in political decision-making is harder to assess. Second, it is nearly impossible to control for a host of other factors that influence this inclination. Some contextual factors can be addressed through development programmes that mitigate existential insecurities and facilitate better learning of the democracy and citizenship principles. Despite this, the problem of accurately measuring the impact of civic education programmes and similar methods within the bottom-up approach has yet to be solved. .

Furthermore, successful implementation of a programme like Project Citizen does to a large extent rely on the level of cooperation or tolerance displayed by the recipient country’s authorities. Therefore, methods such as civic education training can potentially be only small drops in a big undemocratic ocean. In Egypt, civic education programmes were tolerated in private clubs but teachers had doubts

about whether their students would be able to influence public policy-making (see 4.2.2.). The teachers also displayed doubts about their own ability to correctly handle controversial issues in class. These doubts imply that attempts by citizens to intervene in public policy processes are unlikely to be accepted by an authoritarian government like the Egyptian government¹¹. The degree to which Project Citizen participants are able to use their skills seems to depend largely on the environment around them. Contextual factors also make the expected impacts of the programme difficult to pinpoint. In any case, it must be assumed that an approach focused directly at increased political influence for regular citizens will face serious obstacles in authoritarian regimes.

In sum, despite its focus on education and citizen empowerment, the bottom-up approach and civic education programmes display two main deficiencies when reviewed on the basis of principles from classical modernization theory¹². First, measuring the success of methods within the bottom-up approach is problematic because results, such as internalization of democratic values, are often difficult to observe. Policy-makers and donors in most instances seek visible results produced within a short time frame, and some bottom-up methods are not able to provide such information. Second, the results from these methods are very dependent on the context in which they are implemented. In particular, this can be a considerable obstacle for civic education programmes, which have been criticized for being out of touch with their immediate surroundings. It also means that programme designers have an additional challenge in mitigating potential interventions from local authorities.

4.2.5. Programme motivations and impact through the lens of revised modernization theory

According to revised modernization theory, the rise of self-expression values and the taste for personal freedom is correlated with an increasing demand for

¹¹ Note that the programme was implemented in 2003 and 2004, when President Mubarak was still in power.

¹² These principles constitute the theoretical foundation for countless democracy promotion programmes over the past decades (Carothers 1999), and are used to justify both top-down and bottom-up approaches.

democracy. These values are perceived to emerge in cultures rather than institutions, and are closely associated with post-modern society and high levels of socio-economic development. Still, although improved living standards and existential security play an important role in this process, learning about citizenship and basic democratic principles may nonetheless contribute to strengthening it.

Education expands capabilities and ideally, it empowers citizens to take part in political decision-making and hold their governments accountable. Despite its restrictive NGO law, Egypt has a diverse civil society with a wide spectre of organizations (Gubser 2002). Project Citizen was therefore implemented in a culture of active citizenship and with the support of many engaged teachers and parents. By providing civic education to the younger generation, the programme hopefully contributed to sustaining this culture of participation.

Regarding the participatory aspects of civic education, some of the teachers who attended the Project Citizen workshop voiced concerns about whether their pupils would be able to influence policy-making. There were also some concerns with how controversial topics would be addressed in class. Still, by providing information on regular people's right to dispute public policy, and by encouraging the active search for alternative solutions, Project Citizen expanded the children's capabilities to get involved. This paper would argue that the chances of young Egyptians peacefully attempting to influence political decision-making would be significantly smaller without them having some basic knowledge of individuals' democratic rights.

Furthermore, applying revised modernization theory as a basis for analysis also encourages critical questioning of the rationale behind capacity-building in institutions, and whether this method actually promotes democracy. Institution-building may ensure basic security and certain non-political rights for regular citizens¹³, but non-democratic regimes are in many instances able to guarantee the same level of public order and safety as democratic ones.

¹³ Examples are access to formal justice systems and basic property rights.

In general, the bottom-up approach is focused on citizens' opportunities to lead free and fulfilling lives, and it aims to promote democracy through supporting civil society organizations and the emergence of self-expression values. However, despite its overall compatibility with revised modernization theory, the bottom-up approach displays weaknesses when it comes to its practical aspects and heavy reliance on contextual factors. While classical modernization theorists are critical of the efficiency of promoting democracy through the bottom-up approach, those in favour of revised modernization theory may with good reason question how many actually benefit from the methods typical of this approach.

Much of the bottom-up approach revolves around the cooperation with a small segment of Western-style advocacy NGOs (Carothers 1999:211). This leads to the question of which segment of the population gets its capabilities expanded, and whether this approach is not too concentrated around citizens that are already politically active. A largely overlooked segment of civil society concerning itself with expanding capabilities in non-political matters also contributes to human development. By covering basic needs and lifting people out of poverty and deprivation, these organizations may over time help promote self-expression values and the demand for democracy. In other words, there is an unexplored potential among Egyptian non-political groups, which should not be overlooked just because they do not have a typical Western organizational structure.

Moreover, even if the bottom-up approach is the most appropriate way to promote democracy, it may prove difficult to implement programmes like Project Citizen in an effective manner for two reasons. First, the programme's key objective to introduce citizens to their democratic rights may be viewed as too political by some recipient governments. There is little doubt that Egyptian officials in general take this stance¹⁴, and Project Citizen in Egypt was taught on a private basis and not introduced to classrooms in public schools. Second, many recipient countries do not welcome alterations of school curriculum by foreign educators or programme staff, especially regarding sensitive issues like national politics, cultural heritage or citizenship. As for Egypt, the 2010 Human Development

¹⁴ This is clearly displayed in the Egyptian NGO law, which forbids civil society organizations to receive funding from abroad without approval from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Report states that “the concept of civic engagement, as a core educational subject, does not exist in traditional education” (UNDP 2010:51). This paper would argue that it is unlikely that the Egyptian government would allow foreign development programmers to reform the national public school curriculum, and even more unlikely that it would allow new components to be added.

These challenges are contextual factors and not inherent flaws in the bottom-up approach. Still, they frequently manifest themselves and should be acknowledged nonetheless. Carothers (1999:232) points out that in the face of uncooperative governments, many of the programmes are simply too far removed from people’s lives to produce any real change. This is an important point that should be considered regardless of which theoretical principles one uses for evaluating Project Citizen. If a method is inherently ineffective, it cannot be justified by any theory.

Finally, it should be noted that the bottom-up approach consists of more than Project Citizen, which is designed to spread basic information to a large number of people. Another civic education programme that was considered for the purpose of this paper is the New Generation programme funded and implemented in Egypt by the American non-profit organization Freedom House¹⁵. Unlike Project Citizen, the New Generation programme is offered to only a handful of highly engaged individuals who are thought to be able to make real change in Egyptian society. Promising human rights and democracy activists are selected and trained extensively in democracy promotion and political activism. They are taken on a field trip to Washington, D.C. to meet with senior government officials, provided with a mentor from the International Solidarity Committee of Freedom House, and awarded a lump-sum grant to continue their activism and “implement innovative initiatives” in Egypt after the programme’s end (Freedom House 2011). It would have been interesting to follow these two different types of bottom-up approaches over a number of years to see how they compare and what the outcomes are. However, such a comparison remains outside the scope of this paper.

¹⁵ The programme has not been included as a principal part of the paper because relevant documents and reports were not made available despite numerous attempts to get in touch with Freedom House staff.

4.2.6. Concluding remarks

Applying the bottom-up approach entails a focus on expanding regular citizens' capabilities to take part in political decision-making. Although this approach has been and still is regarded as difficult to implement and unreliable in terms of producing measurable impact, its popularity has increased over recent decades. Hopefully, with this popularity, refined methods that unify tangible results with genuine support for the power of the people will come.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Comparing approaches

5.1.1. Theoretical considerations of democracy promotion

Classical and revised modernization theories have much in common. Both consider socio-economic development to be a requisite for democracy and do not differ in their general definitions of the two concepts. There is however considerable variation when it comes to assessing what other requisites are necessary in order to achieve democracy.

Classical modernization theory has underpinned much of the American efforts to promote democracy over the past decades. This has contributed to a host of democracy promotion programmes that first and foremost aim to enhance socio-economic development as defined by Lipset (1959). However, a one-sided view of socio-economic development as increased living standards and educational enrolment, well-functioning institutions and a flourishing civil society may be misleading. Revised modernization theory suggests a shift in focus from the traditional structures of a liberal democracy to the mass values that sustain it. By suggesting that a strong link exists between self-expression values and the demand for people power, this theoretical framework adds what could be the missing link between socio-economic development and democracy.

Self-expression values imply a taste for personal freedom and demand for more influence in political decision-making processes. According to I&W (2005) these values typically develop when survival is secured and higher levels of socio-economic development are reached. Furthermore, self-expression values are strongly associated with post-modernism and post-industrialism.

There is not necessarily much variation between the theories with regards to the recommended methods for democracy promotion. Aid programmes for economic development and capacity-building in state institutions may very well be a part of democracy promotion, according to revised modernization theory. The real difference lies in what constitutes the overall goal for these programmes. In democracy promotion programmes based on the principles of revised

modernization theory, technical assistance to government institutions or support for private sector development should be motivated by an attempt to expand the capabilities of citizens. This can be done by increasing citizens' access to justice or facilitating job creation. The success of these programmes should therefore not be judged based on reductions in case processing times or annual GDP growth, but on whether people receive fair and timely treatment by courts, or they are able to work for a salary that allows them to secure their existence.

5.2. What was feasible in Egypt during the political climate at the time?

5.2.1. Practical considerations of democracy promotion

Regardless of which theoretical principles are applied to design a democracy promotion programme, it is likely that the implementation of the programme will run into varying degrees of resistance. In the context of foreign development assistance, democracy promotion does by definition imply an attempt to intervene in another country's domestic affairs. This form of seemingly politically motivated intervention is far from welcome in all recipient countries.

President Mubarak was still in office during the implementation phase of the two programmes analysed in this paper. As a part of his public sector reform, and probably also due to his eagerness to attract foreign investment, the judicial reform programme AOJS was allowed to start up in the mid-1990s. However, although AOJS was implemented at the request of the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, Egyptian officials refused legal reform assistance, which was the programme goal most directly geared at promoting democracy. The evaluation report concludes that this part of the programme was suspended in unanimous agreement. For this reason it can be argued that the main result of this programme, regardless of whether or not it improved regular citizens' access to justice, was that the governing non-democratic regime was helped in streamlining some of its administrative routines.

Moreover, the effects of the civic education programme analysed in this paper can be assessed in a similar manner. Despite the efforts of a handful of engaged civil society activists, Project Citizen could only be taught in private clubs and reached

about 800 pupils in its first year of operation. Although this was deemed by external evaluation consultants to be an excellent start for a civic education programme in Egypt, it does not counter the fact that many more pupils could have been reached with the government's cooperation.

Therefore, when evaluating these programmes it is crucial to consider the constraints under which they were implemented. There is little doubt that the Egyptian government of that time was dismissive of attempts from abroad to introduce political change. Democracy promoters were forced to either turn to the next best option, like improving administrative routines in Egyptian courts, or to constrain their outreach, such as teaching civic education in private clubs to a limited number of Egyptian children.

The Egyptian government's resistance to facilitate or tolerate democracy promotion is not unique. The direct and political goals in parts of AOJS and all of Project Citizen are unlikely to resonate with any authoritarian regime. This makes the case for applying revised modernization theory's principles in programme design and preparations seem compelling. Where some traditional democracy promoters seem to believe that relatively crude measures of socio-economic development can pinpoint how receptive populations and governments should be to democracy and base their programme design on that information, revised modernization theorists place great emphasis on contextual factors and cultural heritage. These factors shape the value sets of whole populations and may provide additional information about what levels of engagement to expect from programme recipients. They are however more difficult to measure and aggregate. Still, it may be better to get imprecise measurements using the right indicators, than produce confident predictions based on the wrong ones.

Finally, classical modernization theorists have had the tendency to view democratization as a linear process where certain sequences or developments follow each other naturally as a country transitions from authoritarianism to democracy (see part 2.2.2). In the case of Egypt, most of its modern history suggests that reality is more complex.

5.3. The current state in Egypt

5.3.1. The way forward

Following widespread public protest and bloody clashes between demonstrators and the police over several weeks, President Mubarak stepped down on February 11, 2011. His attempts to silence the opposition in the streets by replacing the cabinet of ministers, appointing a vice-president and announcing his intention to resign after the next elections had no effect. He is now on trial with political allies and parts of his family charged with extensive fraud and ordering the murder of protestors during the process that led to his resignation.

It is too early to tell what will happen in terms of genuine democratization in Egypt. Parliamentary elections are scheduled for November 28, 2011, but since those were held on a regular basis under the former rule as well, the question is therefore whether or not they will be fair and free. Furthermore, the ruling Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) has been accused of suggesting amendments to the constitution to retain its power in the face of a newly elected government. In short, Egypt's current state reveals little of what the future holds.

With regards to American democracy promotion efforts in Egypt and the Arab region as a whole, Carothers (2011) points out that the United States will deal with each country differently and on the basis of its own foreign policy goals. He therefore expects a "salad bar of policy lines" in the Arab region not unlike the one that has been applied in the former Soviet Union countries (ibid.:5). Finally, although President Obama has expressed his support of the democratization process that is seemingly underway in Egypt, it is highly uncertain how relations will develop between the United States and the Egyptian military.

5.3.2. Possible impacts of the analysed programmes

The top-down approach seems to have had little or no impact on the democratization process that may be underway in Egypt. Top-down programmes may even have contributed to sustaining the old regime's power by providing technical assistance and improving its administrative routines. The fact that the recent uprising against non-democratic regimes in Arab countries seems to be a result of political activism in the streets and over the internet rather than of

gradual transitions in state institutions, sends the signal to democracy promoters that there are limits to how gradual a democratic transition should be.

It is difficult to estimate possible impacts of the bottom-up approach on the current process in Egypt. As was already mentioned, measuring the effects of civic education and similar programmes is complicated by a host of other factors that influence individuals' inclination to participate in politics and policy-making. However, it must be acknowledged that the push for political change in Egypt came from below. Regular citizens who did not yield to repeated attacks from large state institutions like the police and the secret security services forced the resignation of the old regime. Rather than exaggerate the role of bottom-up programmes in this development, democracy promoters should study the mechanisms that led to it and support the momentum that has risen among the Egyptian people.

5.4. The theoretical rationale behind American democracy promotion

5.4.1. The missing link between socio-economic development and democracy

The discussion regarding which type of democracy promotion works best and what should constitute the theoretical foundation of these programmes is more relevant today than ever before. First, the simultaneous uprising against oppressive regimes in several Arab countries has paved the way for extensive democracy promotion in this part of the world. USAID practitioners are currently working on creating new programmes to support democratization in several countries (Carothers 2011). This paper argues that it is of vital importance that these efforts are not diminished by out-dated programme designs. The recent political developments in the Arab region give clear incentives for democracy promotion programmers to focus more on human development as the link between socio-economic development and democracy, and less on cosmetic changes in the institutions of corrupt and non-democratic governments. They also suggest that the traditional policy line of encouraging gradual and linear transitions from non-democratic to democratic rule may be due for revision.

Second, questioning the theoretical principles behind democracy promotion is also a matter of defining the results that should come from it. Programmes based on classical modernization theory can justify tangible goals like reduced court backlogs or the provision of technical equipment because this assistance contributes to overall socio-economic development, which in turn is associated with democracy. In contrast, basing democracy promotion on principles from revised modernization theory implies long-term investments with often imperceptible objectives of expanding citizens' capabilities and enhancing their freedom of choice.

The United States and other donor countries currently struggle under the burden of budget deficits, low economic growth and rising debts. Therefore, it is not surprising that politicians' urge to invest money in long-term development programmes which impacts are hard to estimate seems to be declining. Instead, there is a growing tendency to support "good governance" programmes, where democracy promotion can be combined with more tangible economic development goals or regulatory reform. This implies a shift of resources from "pure" democracy promotion towards package programmes with several, sometimes unrelated or perhaps even contradicting objectives¹⁶. In this context it is important that focus remains on what constitutes genuine and effective democracy promotion, and not on what is best suited to promote other development objectives.

5.5. Final remarks

Donor country governments have a wide range of foreign policy goals in which democracy promotion is only one part. It is of vital importance for the industry of democracy promotion that its definition is not broadened to include all development aid that at some point in time may contribute to democratic development. Furthermore, democracy promotion is per definition a challenging task because it implies a political intervention in another country's domestic affairs, and results are uncertain due to a host of uncontrollable factors at play.

¹⁶ This paper argues that creating a stable regulatory environment that is favourable for business development may be inconsistent with developing effective democracy.

This paper argues that the definition of democracy must be reserved for what I&W refer to as “effective democracy”. It should not be replaced with superficial efforts to democratize countries through technical assistance or “good governance” programmes. Although these programmes may be more successful in producing short-term changes compared to long-term investments in human development that does not automatically make them effective in democracy promotion.

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