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Democracy promotion in a post-political world

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UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES HUMANITIES AND LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

**DEMOCRACY PROMOTION
IN A POST-POLITICAL
WORLD**

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This thesis is dedicated to Flo Edelmann – who knows why...

This thesis is concerned with democracy promotion's unexpected and often unheralded new role and trajectory. While having retreated from the limelight cast on democracy promotion in the early 1990s, the thesis argues that democracy promotion demonstrated considerable staying power in coming to work silently but vigorously across, and even through, other international policy areas. The thesis traces and conceptualises the trajectory of democracy promotion from an independent policy to its generalisation and resurfacing in conflict management, statebuilding and climate change policy discourses.

In its methodological approach this study draws on critical realism and adopts a genealogical ethos for ordering and interpreting the textual and programmatic material. The trajectory and displacement of democracy promotion are analysed and conceptualised by inferring from the work of Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt. In supplementing Foucault's work on forms of governing, power and subjectivity with aspects of Arendt's work on the human condition and politics, the thesis takes a different analytical approach than the common liberal framing. Rather than investigating democracy promotion as part of (neo)liberal governmentality it explores the discourse through the prism of the social. In doing so, the radically reworked meaning of democracy and its role for international policy-making can be captured. The rise of the social and its impact on the understanding of democracy and the modality of its promotion has been largely missed in existing literature and remains under-theorised.

This thesis argues that while once democracy promotion was concerned with elections and institutions in the formal political sphere of constituted power, democracy now has a new lease of life in a different sphere of problem-solving and governing: the sphere of the governance of the self. The sphere of self-governance unfolds not in terms of the autonomous human subject but rather emerges as a sphere permeated by relationships into which the human subject is embedded and through which it is enabled to govern itself.

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby confirm that this thesis is the product of my own work. All sources used are referenced.

Jessica Schmidt

Date

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This thesis is concerned with democracy promotion's unexpected and often unheralded new role and trajectory. As a discourse, it has undergone a double transformation, firstly, through the inversion of classical liberal understandings of state-society relations and, secondly, through the dissolution of the barriers between artificial constructions of the political and the lived relations of the societal. This double transformation has enabled the discourse of democracy promotion to operate across other policy concerns from conflict management to statebuilding and development to climate change. Where once democracy promotion was concerned with elections and institutions in the formal political sphere of constituted power, this thesis argues that democracy now has a new lease of life in a different sphere of problem-solving and governing: the sphere of the governance of the self. The sphere of self-governance unfolds not in terms of the autonomous human subject but rather emerges as a sphere permeated by relationships into which the human subject is embedded and through which it is enabled to govern itself.

The thesis traces the shift from a concern with democracy in relation to formal processes of government to democracy and democracy promotion's imbrication within problems of conflict and post-conflict governance, statebuilding and development and most recently in managing the problems of climate change. It argues that far from disappearing, with the growing disillusion with global promotions of liberal forms of government towards the end of the 1990s, democracy promotion has adopted a new, more extensive, and to an extent secret life at the core of western policy interventions. In short, this thesis analyses the reworking of democracy's locale, meaning and role, from a concern with changing the nature of public decision-making to changing the nature of private decision-making. It argues that this shift occurs in the context of the search for novel forms of governance. This search takes place in a post-political era beyond the politics of Left and Right, held to be more complex, plural and contingent and not amenable to traditional forms of rule and of problem-solving. In order to reveal or uncover

this shift the central conceptual concern of the thesis is to understand the transformation and inversions of democratic assumptions at play in the changing focus of government.

Thesis Problematique: The Failure of Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion as an international policy as well as an academic field of research soared in the early 1990s, avowedly establishing itself as the new international principle for the post-cold war order (Ikenberry 1999; McFaul 2004; Kurki and Hobson 2012: 1; Magen and McFaul 2009: 5-8). With the end of superpower rivalry and the demise of communism, the promotion of liberal democracy, conceived as the only remaining system of governance able to fulfil human aspirations (Fukuyama 1992; Inoguchi, Newman and Keane 1998), appeared to offer itself as a readily available grand strategy (Ikenberry 1999). Twenty years later, common wisdom, it appears, has converged around the insight that democracy cannot be promoted. We have all witnessed the difficulties and even failure of democratic interventions from Haiti (Zanotti 2011) to Bosnia (Chandler 2000) through to Afghanistan and Iraq (Carothers 2006; Hobson 2009). Even more incremental approaches in Central Asia or North Africa seem not to have produced the desired results (Boonstra 2008; Crawford 2008; Pace 2009; Hoffmann 2010). After the initial enthusiasm at the beginning of the 1990s, the undeniable fact that democracy promotion had produced outcomes that were a far cry from liberal democracy meant that a more sombre mood took hold. In his observations on the implications of the breakdown of communism and the subsequent post-cold war period, poststructuralist scholar David Campbell, for instance, warns of the prospect that '[w]hat we have been less able to confront is the possibility that the collapse of communism has been followed by the failure of democracy' (Campbell 1998: 192). In hindsight, it seems, the 1990s were characterised by premature and unwarranted optimism (Kurki and Hobson 2012: 1).¹

In academic literature, democracy promotion is conventionally understood and couched in Robert Dahl's notion of polyarchy (Przeworski 1991; Schmitter and Karl 1991; Diamond

¹ In fact Fukuyama's *End of History* (1992), drawing on Hegel and Nietzsche, raises intriguing and, as it should turn out, pertinent doubts as to the consequences of this "victory" for liberal democracy, politics and the (political) subject (Fukuyama 1992: 287-340).

1995). This has led to a conception of democracy promotion that is firmly rooted in a concern with the public exercise of authority. Furthermore, this concern is guided by the idea that the two most important elements of democracy revolve around representative government and the vertical as well as horizontal limitation of public authority.

Early influential democratisation scholars give a clear account of such a notion. For instance, Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl frame '[m]odern political democracy [as] a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected representatives' (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 76). Larry Diamond, in a report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts, uses the term democracy to describe a constitutional, civilian regime voted into power through regular, free and fair elections based on universal suffrage, organisational pluralism, political and civil rights as well as effective power of elected representations and mechanisms of checks and balances between governmental institutions (Diamond 1995: n/p). For Adam Przeworski, thus, democracy is captured by the idea that 'multiple political forces compete inside an institutional framework' (Przeworski 1991: 11). This relation of representation was underpinned by the separation between rulers and ruled as well as the distinction between society and polity (Hindess 2000). As Przeworski further remarks: '[R]epresentative institutions seat individuals, not masses. A relation of representation is thus imposed on the society by the very nature of democratic institutions'. In addition to elections, its representative-democratic character rested on the existence of collective organisations which channelled individual interests existing in society into collective and governable interests of the polity (Przeworski 1991: 11-12). In other words, democracy as a representative form of government finds its locale in the public sphere in which authority is exercised and to which it is also confined. While an economic dimension played an important role in democratisation debates, the key point is that a market-based economy was deemed to constitute a corollary to representative democracy as political system rather than the two collapsing onto each other (hence the reform processes in Central and Eastern Europe are usually characterised as a "*double transition*" – an economic and a political one; see, for instance, Przeworski 1991). Sitting behind the minimalist notion of representative democracy proffered by empirical democratic theory was also the wish to separate ethics from politics and to replace internal restraints with external checks and balances (Dallmayr 2010: 171-2). The rationale for doing so rested in the increasing

complexity, competitiveness and interest-driven nature of modern politics which was considered to make democracy as a prescriptive ethics unviable and inadequate (Dallmayr 2010: 171). Predicated upon this understanding – and its seeming self-evidence – early democracy promotion therefore sought to democratise political structures and ensure the representativeness and accountability of government through fostering elections (Diamond 1995; Hook 2002). Moreover, based on the newly emerging assumption of representative democracy’s universality, it was held that political and economic liberalisation would lead to the establishment of democratic governments (Ikenberry 1999; see Carothers 2002).

Towards the end of the 1990s, however, substantial scepticism and disillusionment about the democracy promotion project began to creep in. This crisis of democracy promotion has manifested itself in three main aspects: the electoral fallacy – or a problem with political content; the discarding of linear liberal trajectories – or a problem with the liberalised decision-making subject; and the inability to generate knowledge – imbricated also with a problem of Western power and priorities. Most crucially, commentators began to view the focus on electoral support as naïve, excessive and even dangerous (Mansfield 1995; Smith 2001; Carothers 2002). Promoting democracy by way of fostering elections came to be considered an ‘electoralist fallacy’ (Hughes 2000, cit. in Smith 2001: 89). The nature of this fallacy, however, was not confined to simply equating elections with democracy. Promoters, it is acknowledged, were quite aware of other institutional requirements, such as the rule of law and civil liberties. Instead, the fallacy consisted in overestimating what elections can *actually do* for democracy. Thomas Carothers in his seminal declaration of the end of the transition paradigm thus denounces what he considers a misguided belief that ‘elections will serve to broaden and deepen political participation and the democratic accountability of the state to its citizens’. The erroneous assumption, he announces, rests in the idea that ‘elections will be not just a foundation stone but a key generator over time of further democratic reforms’ (Carothers 2002: 8). It seems that behind this critique sits a problem with politics; for if political agendas and organisations for substantial reforms were available there is nothing that suggests that elections could not bring these reforms about.²

At the same time, another central tenet of democracy promotion understandings appeared to prove itself wrong: the assumption that economic and political liberalisation

² In this critique, he is even preceded by both the United Nations which confirms Carothers’ contention: ‘Democratic elections are an important component of democracy, but they do not create democracy’ (UN 2000: §21) as well as the European Union which noted already in 1998 that ‘[a]s an end in themselves, elections alone will not necessarily make a country a democracy’ (European Commission 1998: 5).

would necessarily culminate in a liberal-democratic form of government (Carothers 2002; Paris 2004). Again, disenchantment seeped in with the absence of tangible success. In their highly influential critiques, Roland Paris detects various ‘pathologies’ produced by democracy promotion through liberalisation (Paris 2004: 152), whereas Carothers even declares the ‘crash’ of linear assumptions (Carothers 2002: 14). The failure to materialise rendered the linear conjecture between liberalisation and democratic government but a misguided and naïve belief in the self-evident power of liberal trajectories. As Carothers notes, most liberalising countries ended up in a grey area. According to Carothers this area was characterised by two syndromes, ‘feckless pluralism’ and ‘dominant power politics’, in spite of all formal requirements of liberal-democratic government and freedoms in place (Carothers 2002: 14). In their exclusive ‘focus in political processes and institutions’, Carothers remarks, democracy promoters were blinded to contextual factors such as sociocultural and institutional legacies into which the actors of democratising countries are embedded (Carothers 2002: 16). While the critique of the electoral fallacy revealed a problem with politics, the crash of liberal trajectories indicated a problem with the liberalised subject. It was this “grey zone” that questioned assumptions of individual decision-making processes based on notions of rational choice and attested to the importance of informal and contextual factors into which subjects were embedded that perverted such decision-making.

Subsequently, once neither elections nor liberalisation served to epitomise and operationalise democratic government, a third problem surfaced: it became increasingly apparent that the field – as well as policy-makers and practitioners – were unable to generate knowledge about democratisation and democracy promotion (Youngs 2003; Youngs 2004; Geddes 2007; Ottaway 2009). Barbara Geddes laments that even after more than two decades democratisation research has not been able to find more than correlations. With no causal explanations established, all the field provides are circularities and vagaries. ‘Given the quality and amount of effort expended on understanding democratization’, she complains, ‘it is frustrating to understand so little’ (Geddes 2007: 319). In this context, Marina Ottaway, of the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, provides an interesting, albeit inadvertent, rationale. Concurring that democracy promotion and even democracy itself is failing to inspire people, she observes ‘the rise of boutique ideologies’ that are characterised by fragmentation, concomitant to the rise of civil society and advocacy groups, unable to cohere sufficient ideological resources to

materialise into powerful political movements (Ottaway 2009: 55-6). After having highlighted this political problem and the absence of grand ideological programmes, she concludes by drawing attention to the complexity of democracy as a form of governance. In the absence of traditional politics of Left and Right, democracy emerges as a rather complex set of formal and informal processes to the extent 'that many people around the world, including some in democratic countries, do not have a clear understanding of how democratic systems are supposed to work' (Ottaway 2009: 57). Richard Youngs, long-standing expert in EU democracy assistance, adds a third dimension, next to difficulties encountered by academics as well as citizens: democracy promoters also fail to see the "larger picture". They design their interventions and programmes in an 'ad hoc' (Youngs 2004: 13) and 'piecemeal fashion' (Youngs 2003: 131) that lacks coordination and consistency. The promotion of democracy, he finds, is thus plagued by 'arbitrary accidentalism' (Youngs 2004: 13). Crucially, what has never materialised during the 1990s is an 'overarching "systematic thinking"' which, according to Youngs, leads to ever increasing confusion over aid priorities (Youngs 2003: 131).

In other words, without the availability of thinking about democracy and its promotion in terms of a political model of representative government as the end point of a linear process, obtaining certainty and knowledge about its conditions and workings becomes problematic. Academics, practitioners, and even citizens, it appears, do not know where to look for democracy and what to look at when seeking to understand democracy and how to get there, when apparently it can no longer be claimed to primarily rest or unfold in formal political institutions of public decision-making. The emerging mysterious nature of democracy is aptly captured by the World Movement for Democracy in a statement on the occasion of the 2010 Day of Democracy: 'When it is there, you can breathe and you don't even notice that you are breathing' (World Movement for Democracy 2010³). Seemingly having lost its discrete content and substance, democracy, while clearly present, turned into an intangible 'like oxygen' (World Movement for Democracy 2010). Moreover, as in particular Young's critique highlights, imbricated in the mystification of democracy is also a difficulty of Western power to purposefully employ itself through the promotions of formal liberal forms of government, manifesting itself in terms of a confusion with priorities, interests and strategies.

³ World Movement for Democracy (2010) 'Let People Breathe the Air of Freedom', Statement on the International Day of Democracy, 15 September, available at <<http://www.wmd.org/about/statements/day-democracy-2010>>

This thesis hence is concerned with the failure of democracy promotion as conventionally understood in terms of addressing the formal public sphere. It, however, critically asks whether the conditions of this failure as well as the manifestation and ramifications for democracy and its promotion have been adequately captured in the dominant critiques of democracy promotion. In this context, it questions whether existing critical approaches allow us to engage with the afterlife of democracy promotion. Dominant strands in critical democracy promotion literature come forth as a normative critique, a left-leaning critique and, more recently, an epistemological critique. Normative critiques revolve around a rhetoric-reality divide in democracy promotion (Burnell 2008; Crawford 2008; Pace 2009) whereas left-leaning critiques are concerned with the imperialist tendencies they see ingrained in democracy promotion (Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Abrahamsen 2000; Zanotti 2011; Kurki 2013). In this context, this thesis asks whether the more recent critique of the inadequacy of our framings for understanding democracy promotion and the subsequent search for conceptualisations is indicative of epistemological anachronisms and aporias in the normative and leftist critique that undermine our potential to capture and theorise the current context of democracy promotion in its relation to world order and the understanding of democracy therein.

Whereas the project of exporting representative democracy as a formal public form of government is increasingly being discarded, the discourse of democracy in international policy-making has not disappeared, as for instance one of the most recent and extensive critical studies by Milja Kurki concurs (2013). Kurki's main argument is that democracy promotion has gone into hiding into programme design and implementation strategies and hence cannot be grasped in terms of surface appearances. This thesis observes that instead of promoting democracy in terms of elections, government institutions and civil rights, democracy operates less visibly but persistently as an agency-centred conception through other policy fields. That is, we find a marked emphasis on inclusion, empowerment and relationships. Moreover, there appears to be a crucial link emerging between the importance accorded to relationships and the promotion of democracy in terms of inclusion. In conflict management, much emphasis is put on empowerment (UN 2000; World Bank 2007; OECD 2009; UNDP 2009), in statebuilding it is local ownership, social accountability and responsiveness that have become popular (ERD 2009; OECD 2011; UNDP 2012) and in climate change discourses the growing concern is with collective action and

engagement (WRI 2008; IPCC 2011). In other words, after the apparent failure of promoting liberal forms of government as a “grand international strategy” for the post-cold war period, democracy as inclusion, participation, collective action and engagement has come to silently permeate all major policy concerns that followed since the end of the cold war. As democracy is being reworked in terms of an agency-centred form in the face of the failure of promoting representative forms of government, democracy promotion re-emerges as an integral tenet of subsequent policy fields such as conflict management, statebuilding and development and climate change. Moreover, this more agency-centred conception of democracy across these international policy concerns is imbued with a very noticeable social dimension. That is, empowerment, inclusion and engagement are invoked with a stark emphasis on relationships, interactions and networks. The main question that this thesis poses therefore is: How are we to understand this afterlife of democracy promotion? How can we conceive of and conceptualise this reworking, proliferation and socialisation of democracy?

In other words, this project is intrigued by the question of how it has become possible at all to think of “air” as a pertinent metaphor for describing not only the nature but also the importance of democracy. If, to paraphrase the World Movement for Democracy, democracy is “like oxygen”, how can we think about the imperative or necessity implied in the metaphor for both the concept itself and its promotion? Since democracy promotion has not disappeared after the “crash” of liberal assumptions but has re-merged elsewhere, what is the target and rationale of democracy promotion? How does an agency-centred, socialised reconceptualisation of democracy operate in relation to emerging rationalities of governance and concurring logics of intervention?

Argument

The Illusion of Autonomy

This thesis revolves around two fundamentally intertwined arguments. The first one concerns the nature of democracy in the afterlife of democracy promotion as we thought we knew it. The conception of democracy that emerges is dissociated from concerns with the public exercise of authority and seeks to democratise subjects themselves. Democracy

emerges as a particular way of governing the self. However, the target is not the autonomous, rational subject of decision-making but rather the subject as embedded, imbricated in and determined by the relations to others and to its environment. The aim of democratisation, crucially, is also not autonomy. That is, the issue at stake is not the problematisation of autonomy (or, by extension, sovereignty) but rather that autonomy comes to be understood as an illusion. We are faced with an emerging conception of democracy and of democratisation that neither seeks to liberate others from the shackles of tyranny and unfreedom nor seeks to capacity-built others in order to 'use their autonomy safely and unproblematically' (Chandler 2010: 3). More in line with Chandler's recent reformulation of post-liberal governance that 'rather than necessity becoming the precondition for freedom, the critique of our hubristic belief inhuman freedom is leading us to the appreciation of necessity'(Chandler 2013: 23), it is suggested here that *democratisation becomes a process through which the embedded subject comes to realise its lack of autonomy*. Realisation here refers to both meanings of the term: acknowledgement and fulfilment.

This realisation encapsulates an acknowledgement of unintended consequences that frustrate, overpower and ultimately annul intention due to the complex interactions and interconnections of a globalised world; it fosters an awareness not only to the presence of others but decisively also an awareness that, due to one's embeddedness in lived relations – and the way such embeddedness determines one's outlook in inconceivable, pre-cognitive ways – preferences, intentions, interests, demands and expectations may always be the result of misperception; a play on the mind. Subjective expectations and mind frames hence need to be adapted, reconfigured or even let go of according to external stimuli. In other words, democratic agency is to be exercised in relation to and based on an irreducible lack of autonomy.

The internalisation of democratic agency into a concern with the self does not imply a negation of the external world as such. To the contrary, participation in this world of lived relations and process into which the self is embedded is fundamental for realising the new promise of democracy. However, the relation between self and the world has been reversed: while self-transformation and self-governance used to be considered (and used to be promoted) as a means of engaging with and (re)shaping external conditions of collective life, the logic has been reversed with in contemporary democracy promotion. The primary sphere of human (political) agency is the subjective rather than the public, but

always in relation to others and the environment. Engagement and contact with others indicates where the subject is still misperceiving, where it still needs to work on itself. The promotion of inclusion is thus pivotal to the reconceptualisation of democracy and the rationality of governing emerging with this reframing. That is, the more inclusive, the greater the promise of new democracy; the greater the network, the greater the possibilities of effective self-governance in relation to the illusory nature of autonomy.

In effect, what this means – and this is the second main argument developed throughout the following chapters – is that after the failure of conventional democracy promotion, *all* subsequent policy concerns, the governing perspective adopted therein and the problematisations at play, are seeking to bring about this new democratic regime. In other words, democracy promotion, in its reconfigured way, emerges as the main concern guiding international policy-making since the failure of promoting liberal forms of governing.

Conflict management, statebuilding and climate change emerge as a sequence that is characterised by an increasing bifurcation of problem framing and solution.⁴ Put differently, in the trajectory from conflict management to climate change we can discern a growing remoteness of problem framing (most obviously displayed in climate change, which is presented as a global problem) while, at the same time, the proposed governing rationale increasingly refers to the self in a way that dissolves the distinction between West and non-West or donors and targets. Within this trajectory, democracy promotion culminates in an attack on technocratic solutions, models and, most especially, on representative structures of governing and understanding. Of fundamental importance for understanding this trajectory is the rise of the social. This aspect has been ignored or under-theorised by the literature on democracy promotion.

The Rise of the Social

⁴ The sequence does have a chronological dimension to it, but there is, of course, overlap. The idea of sequence here is understood mainly in conceptual terms; that is, the present concern is with how these three broad policy fields that have emerged as the most pressing of their time display a distinct logic in terms of governing rationales and the role of democracy.

Four years after Carothers famously proclaimed the ‘end of the transition paradigm’ (Carothers 2002) a pivotal handbook for democracy promoters appears.⁵ Its proclamation in turn reads: ‘Democracy is not only a political system but also a social form of processes and interrelationships (Large and Sisk 2006: 7). The ‘democratic management of social relations’, it is emphasised, is essential for dealing with issues such as civil conflict, statebuilding and sustainable development (*Ibid.*: 7).

This shift in emphasis, meaning and locale of democracy from political system to social form, the thesis suggests, must be seen in context of the particular conditions that have given rise to the prevalence of social relations and socialisation processes as well as the particular role the social has subsequently been accorded with. The three vertexes of democracy promotion’s failure sketched out above are not only reflective but also conducive to the rise of the social. Manifested in the perceived overestimation of elections, the unexpected absence of linear trajectories of liberalisation and the increasing difficulty of “knowing” democracy are three interrelated but distinct dimensions of the rise of the social. The increasing predominance accorded to social processes and relations emerge firstly as a result of a decline of the politics of Left and Right, catalysed by the end of the cold war (see Chapter 2). Secondly, the social dimension emerges as that which frustrates universal, liberal trajectories and provokes a shift from universality to contingency (see Chapter 3). Thirdly, the social undermines or reconfigures knowledge production, where the invisibility and contingency of social dynamics and the mystification of the working of power in relation to these dynamics always already questions what might be considered to be known – and ever “knowable” – about the other and local contexts and conditions (see Chapter 4). Metaphorically speaking, we could think of the first manifestation as the rise or “discovery” of the social proper, the second one as the handing over of power to the social, and the third one as the birthplace of the new democracy and its promotion (see in particular Chapter 5). Whereas the “discovery” of the social proper is relatively easily captured, the second and third need to be drawn out in some more detail here as these have far-reaching implications for limits, necessities and reframings of forms of governing.

I. The Rise of the Social after the Politics of Left and Right

⁵ The IDEA handbook series is ‘aimed primarily at policymakers, politicians, civil society actors and practitioners in the field’ (Large and Sisk 2006: n/p). The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) is an intergovernmental organisation dedicated to supporting sustainable democratic change through generating and providing knowledge on democracy and democratisation for global, national and local actors (<http://www.idea.int/about/>).

With the demise of communism, not only did the last leftovers of Left-Right contestation disappear but so too did certain political means of communism or socialism that democracy promotion had been parasitic on. Once the rationale of democracy could obviously no longer be associated with conventional political struggles and democracy promotion could no longer draw on traditional means of political organisation, elections lose their primacy in the democratic edifice and even emerge as dangerous. The question of what could possibly account for the success and persistence of democracy thus turns attention to the remaining and invisible – but hitherto neglected – dimension that now was held to be responsible and hence preceded and determined surface appearances: social and socialising processes of habituation and routinisation. This development is reflected in the simultaneous emergence of social constructivist theorising of political change (for example Wendt 1992; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Johnston 2001) and the consolidation debate in democratisation studies (for example, Linz and Stepan 1996; Diamond 1999).

II. The Rise of the Social as Frustration of Universal Liberal Trajectories

The second manifestation of the social in its function of frustrating universal, liberal trajectories is again alluded to by Carothers in challenging the ‘assumption ... that the underlying conditions in transitional countries – their economic level, political history, institutional legacies, ethnic make-up, sociocultural traditions ... – will not be major factors in either the onset or the outcome of the transition process’ (Carothers 2002: 9). What Carothers draws out marks a crucial caesura in the trajectory and conduct of democracy promotion imbricated in wider reverberations for our understanding of the world. Democracy promotion’s initial task was considered to consist in transforming local contexts through the import of institutions and mechanisms designed according to universal(ised), absent and abstract ideals (see for instance, UN 1992; Ottaway 1997). The constituted power of these juridico-political frameworks, it was assumed, would lead to the ‘construction of a new [societal] environment’ (UN 1992: §57). This rationale is inverted with the growing power accorded to local contexts and their “sociocultural traditions” and “institutional legacies”. With the end of the transition paradigm it was conceived that it is these traditions and legacies that determined how formal political structures functioned – or emerged as dysfunctional. Decisively, implicated in this new primacy of the social is the

understanding or realisation that sociocultural factors and informal institutions, such as norms and conventions, influenced individual decision-making in a way that made interventions and promotions based on rational choice thinking untenable (Chandler 2010: 179). By extension, the belief in universality was hereby undermined, consequently giving rise to particularity, difference and contingency which manifested itself as a misfit between the imported model and local contexts. As a result, the promotion of institutions that were previously held to operate on universal paradigms comes to be re-interpreted as hubristic and illegitimate attempts of imposing alien systems. What was needed, instead, were more “organic” forms of governance that took account of existing realities and social dynamics (see for instance Newman, Paris and Richmond 2009).

Various important developments and displacements take place at this moment of hubris and misfit. These mainly revolve around a double effect the rise of the social has on the division between the public and the private: on the one hand, the new-found importance of social dynamics and relationships undermine the government in and through formal institutional framework of the public. It means that the public realm becomes but a surface appearance – epiphenomenal of processes and dynamics underneath, to the extent that surface appearances are suspected to be fundamentally deceptive. Here a key lecture delivered by Joseph Stiglitz, former president of the World Bank, on the need of a new development paradigm, aptly captures the problem. Technocratic approaches, including modernization, he declares, must be considered inadequate and deficient because they ‘did not reach down deep into society’ to achieve a substantial change (Stiglitz 1998: 7). The reason being that the locale of change, where it must actually happen and where it must be brought about, was misconceived and underestimated in institutional approaches: genuine societal change requires ‘a change in ways of thinking’ rather than a change in the constitution of formal political structures (Stiglitz 1998: 20). However, once the mind – ways of thinking – emerges as the crucial site of change, immediately the limitation of (not only but even more pronouncedly) liberal representative forms of governing is revealed:

[E]ffective change cannot be imposed from outside. Indeed, the attempt to impose change from the outside is as likely to engender resistance and give rise to barriers to change, as it is to facilitate change. [...] [I]ndividuals cannot be forced to change how they think. They can be forced to take certain actions. They can even be forced to utter certain words. But they cannot be forced to change their hearts and minds. (Stiglitz 1998: 20)

In other words, individuals could potentially be forced to publicly behave in certain ways – say and do certain things – but change could not be effected that way at the level

considered necessary. For liberal representative democracy, bound to an episteme of limiting the exercise of public power (see for instance, critical Huntington 2006 [1968]: 7) even the exercise of that kind of coercion is not possible. As Francis Fukuyama, writing on the difficulties of representative government, summarises the problem: the social and cultural traits – which influence the way individuals think – ‘seem safely beyond the reach of institutional solutions, and hence of public policy’ (Fukuyama 1995: 9).

On the other hand, and this is the twin effect of the rise of the social, this also means the end of the private sphere as the sphere that does not need to be of concern for governing and intervention. That is, social dynamics, relationships and processes and the way they impact on subjective ways of thinking have now revealed themselves as the realm that matters for governing. Liberal representative government, predicated on a public-private division, as a central mechanism of limiting public authority, appears to be limited in its capacity to employ itself at this private and subjective level. What appears to have access to the mind, however, is the social itself. It is informal institutions, norms and logics of appropriateness that, in their frustration of universal trajectories, reveal themselves as holding sway over ways of thinking. It is in relationships and interactions that the social thus is perceived, presented and invoked to exercise its power over the self. In other words, we see a shift in bringing about democratic change as it merges with governing rationalities more broadly from what can be called the constitutive power of the public (institution building) to the relational power of the social (building states of mind).

III. The Rise of the Social as Reconfiguration of Knowledge

It is in this third manifestation of the social is that the reconceptualisation of democracy as a way of realising the lack of autonomy, and in particular, the techniques of its promotion become apparent and operative. Of crucial importance is the way unintended consequences come to feature in international policy discourses, most especially in statebuilding and even more markedly in climate change concerns. Unintended consequences, in conjunction with an emphasis on learning, play a central role as a technique of promoting democracy. Being attentive to the emerging conception of democracy as embedded self-governance is essential for capturing and making sense of this discursive and programmatic focus.

With the accelerated rise of the social since the end of the cold war,⁶ it is increasingly becoming understood that not much can be done in terms of tackling substantive political, economic and social issues, particularly not through direct intervention. While there certainly is, as Chandler maintains, an apologetic element to this understanding (Chandler 2010: 168), the issue is more intricate than simple apologia (which still implies the idea that disengagement is a matter of choice and could be rescued if donors, governments and international organisations decided to be less apologetic). More importantly than apologia is that the impression that little can be done is also the consequence of the realisation that little can be known about the world and the other. With the primacy of the social – the way social or socialisation processes and interactions have come to be understood to arbitrate ways of thinking and decision-making – and the primacy of relational power over constituted power, difference becomes essentialised in a way that goes beyond a divide between the West and the post-colonial world. The understanding that Western subjects are more rational than their non-Western counterparts is irrevocably undermined by the rise of the social. Thinking in terms of rationality/irrationality has entered a process in which the binary is becoming meaningless: bounded rationality, a concept developed by the highly influential school of new institutionalism (in particular North 1990; Stiglitz 2001), effectively means that either all subjects are rational, but they are differently so depending on their contingent context, or none are because all subjects are embedded and influenced in their decision-making by the particularity of existing informal constraints that always already shape their perception of the world (North 1990: 20). In other words, human existence in the world emerges as a socio-psychological process from which there seems no extraction. As Chandler puts this: ‘There is no gap between the individual and the world’ (Chandler 2013: 19).⁷The social trumps the subject. As such, the world can never

⁶ No claim is being made that this is a process originating in the post-cold war era. An indicative document on the rising inadequacy of representative forms of government is the influential 1975 report to the Trilateral Commission. It addressed the increasingly pressing question posed about the governability of democracy (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975). The authors maintain that the power and appeal of traditional institutions, political leadership and mechanisms of social control was waning. As a result, democratic government became increasingly unable to govern, not necessarily because of direct challenge from below but because of the diversification of society, increasingly “privatistic” citizens, and the inflation of “relevant issues” governments had to deal with as a result of this loss of public spirit and political cohesion (*Ibid.*: 1-9). Yet, the end of the cold war and the end of associated systems of meaning and politics certainly has played a catalytic role.

⁷ However, Chandler extends this point by problematising that ‘[t]he individual is in the world but without any social relations mediating the actions and choices of the individual and the effects of these choices and actions as they appear in the world’ (Chandler 2013: 19). With this reading the thesis does not concur. It appears that rather than the lessening of mediation between effect and choice, the way “unintended consequences” are framed within the social is that the human is in the world full of relationships that infinitely mediate between effect and choice, so that the individual is asked to work backwards, from the

reveal itself to us (here the difficulties encountered by former US Secretary of State Donald Rumsfeld in confronting “unknown unknowns” illustrates this point well: unknown unknowns are ‘things we do not know we don’t know’).⁸

A fundamental consequence arising out of this irreducible embedding is that knowledge can only be tacit or situated knowledge and the possibility of obtaining knowledge, or information, is thus understood to be confined to and accessible only by subjects that are immersed in a particular environment. This, as Fukuyama aptly explains, is the rationale behind the programmatic and discursive turn towards “local solutions” (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 115-6). Again, this applies to all subjects; in that sense all subjects are grounded now. Deduction, abstraction and conceptual knowledge or truth, encapsulated in epistemological frameworks of representation, that hold validity beyond local conditions and can be communicated, or for that matter, contested, as Fukuyama elucidates, are merely an illusory temptation; and in particular, a temptation that donors have fallen prey to in thinking there is anything universal about particular institutions or practices (*Ibid.*: 116). All knowledge is local and so are all solutions. In logical extension, all actions and decisions taken must necessarily have unintended consequences. While, due to our embeddedness, we may never learn what these consisted of, their facticity is presented to be undeniable and unavoidable, likewise as a result of the unknown unknowns of the social.

And again, like hubris and misfit, in the previous manifestation of the social, this (re)discovery of solutions, marks a crucial caesura. The essentialisation of difference, the localisation of knowledge, and the invocation of unintended consequences rather than constituting a problem to be overcome (which is now considered impossible), appears to offer a novel form of governing that encloses what is to be known and what is to be done into socio-psychological processes themselves (see also Chandler 2013: 16). This trend manifests itself prominently in recent policy discourses on statebuilding in terms of “less is more” (for example OECD 2011: 47; ERD 2009: 12; IDS 2010). Currently, there appear to be two techniques developing that seek to enclose knowledge and agency into the embedded

unfathomable effects to the self-questioning and hesitation with regard to choice-making (see in particular Chapters 4 and 5). Chandler himself argues this in a later chapter (Chandler 2013: 35)

⁸ This remark has been made at a NATO press conference in June 2002. Rumsfeld explained: ‘The message is that there are no “knowns.” There are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don’t know we don’t know.’ Indicatively, he adds: ‘It sounds like a riddle. It isn’t a riddle. It is a very serious, important matter’ (transcript available at <<http://www.nato.int/docu/speech/2002/s020606g.htm>>, accessed 18 April 2013).

self for the purpose of continued adaptive self-governance: one is through “unintended consequences”; the other is through “decisions without thinking”.

The idea that doing less is doing more emerges in conjunction with facilitating dialogue, fostering inclusion, and importantly managing expectations and cultivating learning. The rationale that appears to be emerging is that encapsulated in local solutions is not primarily an engagement with local conditions per se. Rather, the link between “less is more” and inclusive approaches, expectation management and learning is provided by accepting external conditions as what(ever) they are since these conditions are presented as no longer communicable or comparable. These conditions, however, as a lived social reality into which subjects are embedded, provide the context through which unintended consequences can facilitate the continuous adjustment of expectations and mental frameworks as indicated by (changing) conditions as they are. In this sense, for instance, a UNDP capacity-building guideline rationalises the importance of participation and inclusion as a mechanism that ‘help[s] individuals, organisations and systems to monitor, guide and adjust their behaviour and to learn and self-regulate’ (UNDP 2009: 11). Cultivating sensitivities to the world as it is and fostering awareness to the unintended consequences of embeddedness is thus a pivotal ingredient of novel forms of democratic (self-) governance (see also Chandler 2013: 41). In this context it is important to bear in mind that “local” no longer refers to a place but denotes a condition: everyone is local, socialised and networked and hence subject of such governance. In other words, learning that conditions are what(ever) they are and that unintended consequences are unavoidable not only democratises the non-Western other but in this sense also the Western self. Through their contact with contingent contexts of the other’s embeddedness, through experience and anticipation of unintended consequences, donors are also encouraged and enabled to adjust their mental frameworks, attitudes and expectations with and according to the constraints of the conditions they encounter (see most starkly advocated in IDS 2010, and Carothers and de Gramont 2011).

The second technique applies itself at the level of resistance encountered that requires working at: the temptation of thinking one knows more than one knows – that individuals presume they can define an agenda, that what guides their decision-making are legitimate interests or coherent intentions. These “anthropocentric” features emerge as barriers to adjustment and adaption to reality as it is (for example Baser and Morgan 2008: 17; World Bank 2010: 324-5; IPCC 2011:30; see also Chandler 2013: 23). This reality, as a

consequence of the rise of the social, is perceived and presented to be the product of interaction rather than action, where relational power is greater than constitutive power and where the social trumps the subject. Problematisations along this temptation not only permeate policy concerns of statebuilding and development through their infusion with new institutionalist rationalisations (seminal North 1990: 22; see also ERD 2009: 95; Collier 2010: 231; CFS and IDS 2010: 46). They culminate in climate change discourses (World Bank 2010; UNDP 2011; IPCC 2011) and are reflected in the radical rethinking of democracy in the recent emergence of new materialist theorising (see for instance Connolly 2011). What “decisions without thinking” broadly encapsulate and seek to aim at is a pre-cognitive level of decision-making. This is attempted either through everyday situations or the invocation of extraordinary situations in which the interaction with others and with the environment function as stimuli through which greater awareness of the embedded subject’s lack of autonomy can be fostered. Engagement and commitment, which feature prominently in climate change concerns, come to operate within the rationale of provoking such decisions as a means that enables individuals to empty themselves from remnants of anthropocentric patterns and temptations so as to encourage them to immerse themselves into the democracy of lived relations of the social.

The rise of the social, in other words, is fundamental for understanding not only the failure of democracy promotion as conventionally conceived but also for making sense of the reworking of democracy as an agency-centred, relational form and its contemporary promotion in international policy making. It is thus the rise or shift to the social itself that needs to be traced and examined for making sense of democracy promotion’s trajectory. It is through the three manifestations of the rise of the social in the way it hollows out democracy as a form of representative government, undermines liberal trajectories and binaries and embeds the subject irreducibly within social dynamics, relationships and processes that new limits, necessities and mechanisms of governing develop. Through an engagement with the shifting epistemological context in which the rise of the social is imbricated, the promotion of democracy as a process through which the embedded subject is encouraged to govern itself in relation to and through its lack of autonomy reveals itself as the paramount concern of contemporary policy-making. It could even be suggested that rather than democracy promotion dissolving into adjacent policy areas, the reverse is the case. The rise of conflict management, statebuilding and climate change concerns form a nexus that is bound together by a concern of seeking to democratise the subject that fully

realises and emancipates itself from the shackles of modern man through cultivating its attachments and immersions. In this sense, problematisations that travel and develop through conflict management, statebuilding and development and climate change *are* a democracy promotion mechanism. It seems, the promotion of this novel conception of democracy fulfils the role of dealing with questions of governing and policy interventions once it emerged that nothing can be done to address substantive political, social and economic issues.

The following section sets up the methodological approach of this thesis and draws out the conceptual intimations that guide the choice and reading of the programmatic and textual material. It explains and concretises key concepts and notions used and how they reverberate with theorisations of (liberal) governing, power, and democracy that inform this study.

Methodological and Conceptual Intimations

For its methodological framework this study draws on some impulses and approaches of critical realism as presented by Patrick Jackson (2011) and chooses, orders and develops its policy, programmatic and textual material inspired by the genealogical studies of Michel Foucault. It does so in acknowledgement of the possible tension between the methodology and method with regard to the respective relation between ontology and epistemology. The tension is eased however by an instrumental, tentative and critical following of critical realist approaches, on the one hand, and understanding of genealogy, as Foucault himself suggested, as a critical ‘mood’ rather than a programme, on the other (Foucault 1972, cit. in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 105).⁹

Critical Realism and Critical Genealogy

⁹ The essay from which the quote is taken from, ‘The Discourse of Language’, appeared in the American edition of *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. It was not published in the German and British publications available to the author.

According to Jackson, critical realism develops around two core postulates: one is that there is a world independent of the mind at which knowledge production is directed and the second, related one, is that this knowledge is not confined to experience but aims at understanding deeper levels of reality (Jackson 2011: 73). Based on these propositions, critical realism's main ambition is to unearth conjectures, causes and ultimately ontological structures that can explain or can account for empirical observations (Patomäki and Wight 2000: 233; Joseph 2007: 345-6). Following Jackson, two strategies to pursue this agenda are adopted: abductive inference and transfactualism. Abductive inference, in the words of Jackson, 'is a way of reasoning from some puzzling set of observations to a likely explanation of those observations' (Jackson 2011: 83). That is, in collecting data and putting the set together critical realism asks for its internal coherence, generates conjectures and seeks to conceptualise these. In its concern with ontology, critical realism assumes that the conjectured object – and I would add here: problem or issue (but will return to this point) – 'must be taken to be real, to actually exist, and thus to be something other than an instrumental theoretical convenience' (*Ibid.*: 83). Transfactualism constitutes the second analytical step. It leads from conjecture to causation (*Ibid.*: 77-88). In other words, beyond experience or empirical observables, such as 'events, states of affairs, experiences, impressions, and discourse', there is a causal force to reality, i.e. 'underlying structures, powers, and tendencies', that produces what appears on the surface. As Heikki Patomäki and Colin Wight explain: 'For critical realists this underlying reality provides the conditions of possibility for actual events and perceived and/or experienced phenomena' (Patomäki and Wight 2000: 233; see also Joseph 2007: 346).

To inform and guide the analysis, this study incorporates three methodological strategies operative in critical realism, with two caveats, which in turn should also alleviate some of the tension between critical realism and critical genealogy.

First of all, the rationale of drawing upon critical realism rests in this study's agreement with the following point that has been raised in regard to Foucault's concern with truth regimes:

If *all* knowledge is the product of regimes of truth then they can hardly be said to be a problem [this is simply the way of things]. If, on the other hand, we are meant to understand their existence as problematic, then this implies that they are in some sense regimes of either untruths or else unacceptable truths insofar as the constructions of the regimes have bad consequences (Sayer 2000, cit. in Joseph 2004: 149).

What this study takes from critical realism, which developed as a countermovement to postpositivism's and constructivism's mind-world monism (see Joseph 2007: 345; see also Joseph 2004), is that from a critical perspective, there clearly are truths and truth regimes we might wish to question, precisely because there is a *relation* rather than a congruence between discourse and reality.

Hence, critical realist perspectives hold open a space for an understanding of discourse as consequential for the real world, that it has real life effects and – to bring this closer to the present study – that policy discourses, sets of knowledge that underpin and feed into them and the problematisations they encapsulate influence policy interventions (the interplay between truth regimes, problematisation and forms of governing seems to underpin much of Foucault's lecture series, see for instance the role of probabilities and statistics for governance, Foucault 2009). Moreover, through a critical realist position, the reverse can also be captured: that reality feeds back into (policy) discourse and triggers modifications in problem framings. While much of this study is concerned with policy discourse and how their rationalisations are informed by and reflected in academic and theoretical literature, critical realism here is useful to perceive and reflect upon these rationalisations also as "lessons learned", that is, to think of policy concerns and discourse as responsive to developments and problems in the external world. In other words, through critical realism's separation of reality and mind, the discursive focus of this study can be linked to trajectories of the external world.

Secondly, the methodological framework of critical realism was chosen for its affirming interpretivist stance (in counterdistinction to neopositivism, see Jackson 2011). As Jackson emphasises: 'To abduce an explanation is a *creative* act, not an automatic one' (Jackson 2011: 83; emphasis in original). That is, critical realism offers a platform from which understanding and knowledge can be achieved through an interpretative analysis of material. Crucially, however, the aim is still explanation. Abductive inference means interpretation while still maintaining coherence and avoiding meaningless contingency. This study thus infers abductively: it seeks to understand its "puzzling set of observations" and give an account of what binds these observations together. It approaches abductive inference as an ambition that, due to this strategy's (attenuated) mind-world dualism, is underpinned by the belief that a coherent rationale to the facts can be established, which can also be meaningfully conceptualised without, however, insisting on fully-fledged truth claims.

Thirdly, the methodological choice entails a dimension that goes beyond its capacity for enabling analysis. This third dimension is a dissident one. One of the reasons for the adoption of critical realism is *because* it operates on a mind-world dualism. This thesis argues that we are witnessing an emerging governmental rationale of embedding subjects, obfuscating abstract and conceptual knowledge and encouraging human agency to immerse itself into a socio-psychological process of constant self-adaptation, a trend that is to an extent also reflected in IR scholarship's 'ethnographic turn' with its practical focus (Lie 2013: 201-2). In the light of this, not only can a critical realist perspective help to analytically engage but also to analytically resist this political and epistemological trend to some degree. Critical realists would probably agree with this move as they share the concern that our contemporary predicament is a 'loss of the world' (Patomäki and Wight 2000: 219).

Despite its intimations, this thesis does not fully adopt a critical realist perspective as a comprehensive framework for analysis. That is, this study's aim does not necessarily concur with that of critical realism. The divergence manifests itself in terms of an agnostic point and a critical point.

The thesis is agnostic, and to an extent sceptical, with regard to critical realism's research agenda. It is agnostic as to whether what needs to be discovered is an underlying structure that seems to lie on an even deeper level of reality. In extension, the fear is that the insistence on underlying structure must almost necessarily assume stasis of that structure. There seems to be at least a risk that critical realism has difficulties in perceiving and conceptualising change or might make the researcher's gaze inattentive to change. This investigation thus does not aim at unearthing structure on the deeper levels of reality but rather establish coherence or, simply put, it is satisfied with the attempt of offering an explanation to the observations made. Rather than taking an underlying structure as a conjectured object that actually exists, I would merely suggest that we can understand the underlying problem or issue that is abductively inferred from a puzzling set of observations as something that actually exists. Concretely, but somewhat simplistically, applied to this study we would have the following setup: the puzzling set of observations are international policy discourses concerned with democracy promotion; the conjectured "object" is the rise of the social and the underlying problem or issue is the reworking of democracy as a process of adaptive self-transformation.

Related to this question on research agenda, secondly, it may be the presumption of causal powers below the level of reality that might bring critical realism close to the mystification of power and knowledge within the rise of the social. Jackson has a point in highlighting that within critical realist theorising the ‘specter of Cartesian anxiety lingers: we might, in fact, be deluding ourselves that our knowledge points to a mind-independent reality, and we can never know for sure’ (Jackson 2011: 96). The nature of Cartesian doubt and how this helps us conceptualise contemporary democracy promotion will be discussed below in intimating the work of Hannah Arendt on this. In critical realism, this thesis concurs with Jackson, the Cartesian anxiety of never knowing for sure manifests itself in what appears almost as a peculiar embrace of Cartesian anxiety or an evasion of engagement – never wanting to know for sure. The problem here seems to be the invocation of undetectable unobservables (*Ibid.*: 85-8). What Jackson is critically inferring is that in critical realism the focus seems to be much more on the insistence on undetectable structures rather than on attempts to unearth them (*Ibid.*: 89). ‘[T]he critical realist account of structure’, Jackson notes, ‘contains a thread that would almost certainly be lost if structure could be precisely detected and measured’ (*Ibid.*: 91). To put Jackson’s rather intricate reasoning that ensues into simpler words: in a slight of hands, critical realism seems to be wanting to make sure that those casual powers that allegedly produce observable phenomena remain hidden in order to ensure that they can be called upon as a universal explanation whenever convenient (*Ibid.*: 91 and 102). Jackson problematises, that, consequently, arguments made out of a critical realist perspective do not expose themselves to critique. More important for this study, however, is that the use of undetectable unobservables may lend itself for aporetic critique that, sitting on a quasi-transcendental, produces little substance and meaning and would therefore remain inconsequential (as a critique or critical explanation).¹⁰

The thesis thus stops short of transfactualism and stays with abductive inference, which as methodology also seems more commensurable with critical genealogy as a

¹⁰ The difference between making reality reveal itself, or, more precisely, making it work for us (see Chandler 2013: 30-3) and fronting an “undetectable unobservable” that cannot be revealed but is accorded with explanatory power of surface appearances could perhaps be illustrated with a point made by Hannah Arendt on the difference between Copernicus’ and Galileo’s discoveries and the respective reaction of the Catholic Church. The Church, as Arendt states, did not feel threatened by the idea of earth circling the sun as such. As long as the hypothesis ‘save[d] the appearances’ the interest and implications were purely scientific. Rather, what then provoked upheaval and the Church’s categorical rejection was the fundamentally different aspect of ‘demonstrat[ing] the reality of the movement of the earth’ (Arendt 1998: 260). The former was inconsequential for politics, the latter seemed to substantially challenge established forms of subjectivity.

method. The tension between the two, if the former were to be applied in a dogmatic or orthodox fashion and the latter as a fixed programme, spring from critical realism's posting of a fully-fledged ontology with only partial knowledge, whereas genealogy tends to lend primacy to knowledge or truth regimes and is agnostic with regard to ontology.

While Foucault gave various, and also differing, definitions and accounts for what he was doing, a very useful conceptualisation of genealogy and in particular how "critical" and "genealogical" relate is this:

Critical and genealogical descriptions are to alternate, support and complete each other. The critical side of the analysis deals with the system's enveloping discourse ... [I]t practices a kind of dogged detachment ... The genealogical side of analysis, by way of contrast, deals with series of effective formation of discourse [...] [L]et us say that, if the critical style is one of studied casualness, then the genealogical mood is one of lighthearted positivism (Foucault 1972, cit. in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 105)

We could infer from Foucault's "dogged detachment" as well as the possibility of critical description as something capturing a systemic aspect that, in this description, a dualism or non-congruence between reality and mind, or here, truth regime exists. In this sense, critical genealogy can be housed within a methodological framework drawing on critical realism. We may not have to unearth absolute ontological truths from the deeper level of reality in order to avoid relativism or empiricism.

The way this study intimates from (critical) genealogy should begin with an essential caveat. It does not aspire to conducting a comprehensive genealogy in the Foucauldian sense. Instead, it takes Foucault's genealogical mood as an ethos that guides the choice, reading and ordering of its material. What this thesis learned from Foucault's genealogical studies is how to ask questions differently, how to adopt a different gaze for approaching its material. With regard to democracy promotion this translates into seeking to understand what has been ignored in the literature on democracy promotion. As Foucault once explained his agenda: it is 'a matter of shaking ... false self-evidence' (Foucault 1991: 75).

Out of this genealogical ethos, what this study is then interested in is how concepts have become operative in different ways in international policy discourses, how they are emerging with a different rationale, how interplays between problematisation and solution mutate and how these are indicative of a shifting political and epistemological context. In this sense, the programmatic and textual material discussed in this study has been selected to the extent that modifications and reworkings in rationalisations of democracy and its promotion are discernible.

Conceptualising the Survival of Democracy Promotion

This section presents the main tropes and concepts that guide the analytical approach and highlights their implications for understanding the afterlife of democracy promotion through intimations from key thinkers that inform the line of inquiry. With regard to constitutive power and the shift to relational power, the thesis infers from some of the work of Hannah Arendt, in conjunction with Chandler's recent work, as well as drawing critically from Foucault's understanding of (shifting notions of) power as presented in his lecture series on (liberal) forms of governance. It is also particularly through some aspects of Foucault's studies on changing rationalities of governing that the rise of the social can be conceptualised and further developed in the concrete context of democracy promotion's trajectory. In this context, the influential democratic theory of Fred Dallmayr sheds further light on how emerging international governing rationalities that are not immediately recognisable to conventional perspectives on representative democracy need to be understood as democratisation processes. Drawing upon these thinkers, however, does not posit the main rationale of this thesis. That is, it is not a thesis whose aim or end point is political theory. Instead, the thesis infers from some aspects of their work in an instrumental fashion. That is, it engages with these theorists only in so far and to the extent that it enables a coherent analysis and conceptualisation of international policy discourses concerned with democracy promotion.

From the following pivotal observation by Foucault in the lectures on *Security, Territory, Population*, we can work both backwards, to constitutive power, and forwards, to contemporary conceptions of democracy as a governing rationality within the shift to relational power:

[T]he milieu appears as a field of intervention in which, instead of affecting individuals as a set of legal subjects capable of voluntary actions – which would be the case of sovereignty – and instead of affecting them as a multiplicity of organisms, of bodies capable of performances, and of required performances – as in discipline – one tries to affect, precisely, a population. I mean a multiplicity of individuals who are and fundamentally and essentially only exist biologically bound to the materiality within which they live. [...] [W]e see the sudden emergence of the problem of the “naturalness” of the human species within an artificial milieu. It seems to me that this sudden emergence of the naturalness of the species within the political artifice of power relation is something fundamental (Foucault 2009: 21-2).

The appearance of the milieu – that is, the subject’s organic embeddedness – Foucault is pinpointing here, refers us to a form of power and corresponding form of governance that lies beyond sovereign and disciplinary power and their respective understandings of the human subject as a legal subject or a responsabilised subject. We can now ask: what made the milieu appear, what is the “fundamental thing” that happens within the political artifice of governing and what, in contemporary times, is the role of democracy promotion in relation to this fundamental change in the political artifice? While these questions guide the study and are addressed in the course of the following chapters, it is important to clarify here the conceptual edifice through which these are approached.

As has been alluded to in the previous section, the milieu – or for the present study, the social – appears to have worked itself into the artifice of governing as a result of a loss of political structures, content and struggles as well as a frustration of presumed linear trajectories underpinning liberal understandings. In this context, the shift in modes of exercising power has been termed as a shift from constituted power of the public to relational power of the social. Both notions of power are counter-distinguished, theorised and employed for the present study through intimations from some of the work of Arendt (1998; 2005) with regard to the role of law and institutions and draw upon some conceptualisations of disciplinary power Foucault offers in his studies on government (in particular 2009). Drawing on Arendt in addition to Foucault for guiding the outlook and focus of this study can provide a supplement to the more established combination of Gramsci (and/or Marx) and Foucault for critical inquiries (Joseph 2012; Kurki 2013; see Chandler 2013). Arendt’s points on the nature and consequences of Cartesian doubt, as the dark underside to the great discoveries of modernity, are a particularly important supplementary dimension that the thesis finds useful to think through the implications of the rise of the social. The contemporary relevance of Cartesian doubt for our understanding of the world has also been acknowledged by Jackson (see quote above) by making this the – somewhat implicit – central hook, legitimatising and ordering his categorisations of different approaches to studying international relations (along mind-world monism and mind-world dualism). Moreover, the spectre of Cartesian doubt, as we shall see, also emerges within Foucault’s (albeit protean) conceptual edifice of power. An aspect that, to the best of this author’s knowledge, has been ignored in Foucault-inspired studies on the exercise and nature of power and the conduct of conduct.

I. Constitutive and Constituted Power

Arendt's work allows us to understand the importance of laws and institutions not only in the sense of giving a formal framework to the exercise of public government but also for giving meaning to the contingency inherent in human existence (Arendt 1998: 190-1; Arendt 2005: 180-7; see Chandler 2013: 30-2). In and of themselves, human relationships (and non-human-human ones) potentially proliferate infinitely, where every interaction is effected by previous ones and provokes an unknown number of following interactions and effects, transmitted and multiplied by the other as a 'relay' (Foucault 2003: 29). In this way, interactions circulate. The way we exist in the world "naturally", by necessity, is influenced by and based on human relationships and interactions (Arendt 1998: 23-4). Hence, as Arendt elaborates in regard of the difference between Roman and Greek notions of law, if laws and institution were solely or primarily understood in terms of and as a product of (organic) links and interactions, it would not make a difference to our "natural" and contingent existence. In this natural or contingent existence we manage our relationships and ourselves in relation to others in an ad hoc manner, on a day-to-day basis. Here, our decisions and actions, in their limitlessness and purposelessness (managing and coping as on-going, endless processes that cannot find a goal or purpose outside of themselves), are inconsequential – instantly forgotten – for the broader conditions these relationships and our immersion in them produce. Simply put, if we understand and operate according to a notion of laws and institutions as informal and context-sensitive, a notion that sees their legitimacy and understands their effectiveness solely in terms of the social context out of which they self-produce, we eliminate the level of extraction and abstraction through which a change of these conditions could be achieved. In Arendt's words: 'The [Greek] *nomos* limits actions and prevents them from dissipating into an unforeseeable, constantly expanding system of relationships, and by doing so gives actions their enduring form' (Arendt 2005: 187).

Political organisation, Arendt states, is a process through which 'certain essential commonalities' are 'abstracted from an absolute chaos of difference' (Arendt 2005: 93). Abstraction from existing societal dynamics and individual interests – the "chaos of difference" – is thus essential for meaningful political organisation and meaningful political content (see also Arendt 1998: 191). This abstraction, according to Arendt, cannot be a natural process that simply "bubbles up" through interaction. Instead, laws and institutions

that create and enable abstraction are an artificial intervention into always already existing social dynamics and thereby create an artificial, public edifice. 'As a made product' they 'stand in opposition to anything that has come into being naturally and needs no assistance, either from god or men, in order to exist' (Arendt 2005: 181). We could understand this artificiality to encompass an element that radically transforms, or even "destroys" something of what naturally exists or, to take this into the context of the present study, substantially changes local contexts and conditions. Laws and institutions thus create something new: a new political framework for new forms of political organisation and new articulations of interests. This seems to be what Arendt calls the violent element in institution-building. As she asserts: 'The crucial point is that the law', in its indispensability for creating a public and a polity, 'has something violent about it in terms of both its origins and its nature'. As such, 'it comes into being by means of production' (Arendt 2005: 181). For getting an idea of how to understand and operationalise these means of production for the thesis, we can, in very broad strokes, draw upon the notion of fabrication in *The Human Condition*.

What is important for the present study is the element of intentionality and, to an extent, instrumentality Arendt ascribes to production or fabrication (Arendt 1998: 139-40). Fabrication necessitates the prior existence of an idea or model of what is to be constructed or constituted and based on this idea(l) or model and the gap between what exists and the idea(l) the means are designed. In this sense her notion has (co)inspired the following understanding of institution-building: in order to build laws and institutions that are of permanence, that "stick" because they have the power of (political) meaning behind them, they need to be part of an intentional, political project that derives its meaning and legitimacy from an absent idea(l), from a desired end point and from a model according to which what already exists is to be transformed (Arendt 1998: 140).¹¹

While approaching his object of study from a different angle (less emphasis on the history of political concepts and more focused on the practices of governing), we find a similar idea in Foucault's understanding of the logics of disciplinary power. This becomes clearest in his counter-distinction of disciplinary power from security or security dispositif.¹²

¹¹ While this activity for her is not in and off itself political, Arendt also acknowledges that the "making" of laws and institution is not the same as the making of objects (Arendt 1998: 188).

¹² The thesis does not use the trope of security or security dispositif in the Foucauldian sense. Foucault's use and understanding diverges considerably from more common understandings and would, in the context of this study, lead to confusion. Instead in the following chapters, post-disciplinary power will be referred to as relational power.

Like Arendt, Foucault seems to see artificiality and constitution to represent a central element of the logic of disciplinary power and governing.¹³ As he highlights: ‘The disciplinary treatment of multiplicities in space, that is to say, [the] constitution of an empty, closed space within which artificial multiplicities are to be constructed and organized according to the triple principle of hierarchy, precise communication of relations of power, and functional effects specific to this distribution’ (Foucault 2009: 17). ‘Discipline’, Foucault emphasises, ‘works in an empty, artificial space that is to be completely constructed’ (*Ibid.*: 19). Based on its approach of creating its object of governing, discipline operates with ‘an end, or an objective or result to be obtained’ (*Ibid.*: 12). What is important here is the way the disciplinary perceives and approaches its space and object of governing: the governing edifice is an artificial construct in which the object of governing is also an artificial creation. Obviously, there is also a coercive or rather authoritative element involved which establishes a hierarchy, that is, the relation between the source of power and the object of governing is top-down. While at the same time, this power relation between government and object of governing is clearly communicable and visible.

Based on the Arendtian emphasis on the importance of laws and institutions as well as the Foucauldian understanding of the logics of disciplinary power, the thesis infers and conceptualises some essential rationalities that underpin representative democracy and its promotion, in particular during the cold war. The first, and most important, one is the understanding and treatment of context. There is a lack of consideration for context because this context is subject to transformation. Its rationale is the goal-driven not context-driven. As such, it encapsulates an ambitious agenda of bringing about societal change. Change, however, that is located at surface appearances: change means (re)organisation. The source of power, legitimacy and meaning of this agenda springs from an absent but known or imaginable and communicable idea(l) or model according to which context is to be transformed. By extension, and according to the absent idea(l) or blueprint of organising collective life, the governing edifice (the space) and the polity of governable interests (object of governing) needs to be constituted. While this space of constituted

¹³ There is, of course, a difference between sovereign power and disciplinary power which is extensively discussed in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1991). Here, Foucault, for instance, notes that with the disciplines extra-judicial elements begin to invade the juridical edifice (Foucault 1991: 16-22 and 47-54). This seems to be the onset of the governmentalisation of sovereignty. As Foucault seems to argue, one of the central differences between sovereignty and government is that the former finds its purpose solely in itself, whereas the latter has a concern external to it. No claims are therefore made that Arendtian law-making and Foucauldian disciplinary power are congruous. There simply seem to be points of contact that are useful for thinking through and conceptualising democracy promotion in its shift from institutional form to social form.

power is hierarchical, with a clear separation between political elite and the governed, its predication on an idea or purpose, makes this power relation transparent and graspable.

These inspirations for thinking through the nature and logic of constitutive power (institution building) and, by the same token, constituted power (the public as the object of governing) allows this thesis to understand and analyse initial democracy promotion as a representative form of governing. In particular, it allows an approach that can think through early democracy promotion beyond allegations of insincerity, naivety and ignorance by being informed with a more conceptual understanding of the rationality sitting behind representative democracy as well as political transformation – and how both were and could have been considered meaningful and feasible projects. In this context, analytical receptivity is established towards the role of political parties and most especially the way in which early democracy promotion as well as the representative democracy of the “Free World” was parasitic and even dependent on political and epistemological means of an alien ideological framework. Simply put, it allows the following analysis to understand how crucial communism was for giving meaning and giving political means for (radically or even violently) establishing spaces and forms of representative government (which only after the cold war came to be fully consummated with liberal form and episteme).

II. Cartesian Doubt and Relational Power

For grasping not only the nature of the shift from constituted power to relational power but also pervasiveness and implications of the shift in terms of our understanding of and existence in the world, I will seek to establish a tentative dialectic between my readings of Arendt and Foucault, mediated by some interpretations offered by Chandler (which again serves an instrumental purpose for conceptualising democracy promotion, not that of establishing a theoretical outlook). In doing so, I will shift the focus somewhat from the role of laws and institution as political frameworks to the role of laws and institutions as frameworks of meaning.

As Arendt has powerfully shown, despite the seeming victory of Enlightenment, the victory of rational man, his mastery over his environment and knowledge of the world, friction was built in the very discoveries that gave rise to modernity. This friction, Arendt seems to indicate, rested in the way the new-found belief in the existence of universal truth and how they have come into palpable reach, ultimately served to expose our

particularity and groundedness, the predicament of lacking perspective and super-vision. It seemed to demonstrate more forcefully that as humans we are always ever only being able to see part and having to infer to the whole – and the doubt inference necessarily inflicted. ‘The perplexity inherent in the discovery of the Archimedean point was and still is that the point outside the earth was found by an earth-bound creature’ (Arendt 1998: 284). Moreover, this self-doubt was exacerbated by the nature of the discovery: it was not there for us to see; we had to use a crutch (the telescope) to make up for the inadequacies of human capacities. The only conviction gained, consequently, was that ‘it was not contemplation, observation, and speculation which led to new knowledge’ (*Ibid.*: 274). The real doubt then was not with regard to truth as such but that whatever we think is intelligible and meaningful, whatever we think yields some wider truth, whatever we might think we see and whatever construct we may use in order to make sense may have nothing to do with reality (*Ibid.*: 275). As a consequence, what humans thought were their particular cognitive, contemplative, speculative and creative capacities turn into the spectre of delusion. By the same token, the power to create reality has been given over to reality itself, to which we are attached but over which we have no say or formative powers. This seems to be the context that led Arendt to proclaim that nothing ‘stood to lose as much through the elimination of contemplation from the range of meaningful human capacities as fabrication’ (*Ibid.*: 191). As Chandler powerfully reframed this for our contemporary condition of globalisation and complexity: ‘the world which cannot be comprehended meaningfully by us – the world of ‘blind necessity’ – constitutes the end of *our* world, precisely because it is not amenable to our appropriation as a meaningful structure within which we can consciously engage (and, in the process, expand our meaningful world)’ (Chandler 2013: 30, emphasis added; see Arendt 2005: 129).

What should become clear is that this Cartesian doubt writ large in today’s complexion frustrates an engagement with the world and with contexts and conditions through ideas, models, goals, benchmarks and mental and political frameworks with the notion of changing them. These contexts and conditions are real – they are part of reality that we have handed over – and therefore we cannot know them. Abstraction is delusion. This also makes the exercise of disciplinary power unviable. What Foucault observes, hence, is a change in the modality of power that no longer sees empty spaces and possibilities of radically transforming or artificially constructing the realm of governing. The emerging rationality of governing ‘works on a given’. ‘[T]his given will not be reconstructed to arrive

at a point of perfection ... It is simply a matter of maximising the positive elements' (Foucault 2009: 19). What follows in extension, I would suggest, is the lesser the understanding of space and possibility of perfectability (or closer to home, achievement), the greater must be the positive elements. In other words, the less we can have solutions, the less we can allow ourselves to have a problem. Before briefly elaborating on this point with regard to current theorisations of democracy and relating this back to this study's outlook on contemporary policy-making, I will seek to highlight how this Cartesian doubt writ large, the loss of meaning, understanding and knowledge it heralded, may be conceived of to relate to the rise of relational power. I do this via a shortcut: I take it as a given that Foucault's work on power has hugely influenced contemporary scholarship and in particular those concerned with understanding and criticising international policy-making (Foucauldian conceptions of power also represent the main thrust for contemporary critiques of democracy promotion, see Chapter 2).

What Foucault seems to be silent on – or rather, only seems to offer arcane allusions of – is that which provoked or could account for the shift from the disciplinary power to a form of power that works through givens, contexts and milieus. While highlighting that the shift happened somewhere between the emergence of a question of economy and the cost of policing, in *Security, Territory, Population* we find not much more than that 'friction' has broken out and that 'the wound has been sufficiently sensitive to have provoked some real and even violent reaction' (Foucault 2009: 9). Now this cursoriness may have various reasons (and he may simply be referring to prisoners' revolts or the release of the carceral into society – the former of which would be unsatisfactory and the latter would seem somewhat tautological where the effect equals the cause: reworking and proliferation of security/risk). Nevertheless, in the light of this gap, I will for a moment shift from Foucault-the-analyst to Foucault-the-perpetrator.

In the lecture series preceding *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault gives a very clear, even imperative, account of how he and we are to understand and study power:

[M]ethodological precaution: Do not regard power as a phenomenon of mass or homogenous domination – the domination of one individual over others, of one group over others, of one class over others; keep it clearly in mind that *unless we look at it from a great height and a very great distance*, power is not something that is divided between those who have it and those who are subject to it. Power must, I think, be analysed as something that circulates ... It is never localized here or there ... Power functions. Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks; they are in a position to both submit and exercise this

power. They are never the inert consuming targets of power; they are always its relays. (Foucault 2003: 29; emphasis added).

In other words, there is nothing inherent in power per se that makes it necessarily circular and relational, to be working through the social rather than the constituted as communicable and meaningful (hence contestable). Instead, it is Foucault's own Cartesian anxiety, or rather celebration, which he imperatively imposes not only on those concerned with the study of power but also those that are subject to it and those that exercise it (which they are and do, if we follow the logic, it's just that we cannot look at it from a high enough level of extraction or abstraction to meaningfully cohere or "see" its structure).

It appears it is Foucault who tells us we can never meaningfully understand power because we are embedded. It seems it is him who grounds us. It is Foucault who tells us that we should not even try to think in terms of power structures and imbalances, that we need to understand it as relational in a way that we can never extract ourselves from its contingency simply because we, as embedded, milieued subjects, can never know since we are already part of it, exercise it without knowing, are subjected to it without knowing, reproduce it without ever knowing how. His description of power – the way it functions rather than being constituted, the way it is localised nowhere, the way it is exercised through networks and processes of interaction – therefore indeed provides an inspiration that contributes to a conceptually enriched understanding of the way democracy promotion as a process through which the embedded subject comes to realise its lack of autonomy has become the main concern of contemporary international policy-making. It can also help to abductively infer how this new democratisation project relates to an understanding of the world that little can be done because little can be known as a late consequence of the anxieties created at the onset of modernity. However, this study does not wish to conduct its analysis through this perspective on power. While providing much input to this study, Foucault's contribution is also part of the thesis' critical genealogy. From the Foucauldian grounding, it appears, it is a small conceptual step to novel conceptions of democracy and democratic agency. Fred Dallmayr gives a paradigmatic account which is reflected also in the recent rise of new materialist theorisations that forcefully rally against what they consider the illusion of human autonomy (for instance, S Frost 2010; see Chandler 2013: 43).

The Dallmayrian branch of new democratic theory reinserts ethical self-constraint into the democratic edifice for the same reasons it had previously been taken out of it and

replaced with external constraints: because the world and its politics is complex and characterised by a multiplicity of individual interests that challenge the establishment and realisation of a common good out of its convergence with individual ethos. Finding much inspiration in the work of John Dewey, Dallmayr celebrates that ‘Dewey not only broke with the traditional hierarchical worldview; he also boldly overturned the modern Cartesian or rationalistic metaphysics with its bifurcation of mind and matter, subject and object, thought and practice’ (Dallmayr 2010: 7). Instead of such bifurcation, the new promise of democracy (the title of his book), revolves around the ‘upholding of social “relationalism”’ (Dallmayr 2010: 184) in a way that connects the individual directly to the lived reality of social relations (Dallmayr 2010: 173). For this, Dallmayr asserts we need a “new” kind of Buddhism’. This new democratic Buddhism entails a steering clear of the ‘pursuit of social blueprints’ and focuses exclusively on “self-emptying” (Dallmayr 2010: 183). Crucially, the democratic agency of self-emptying through ‘associated living’ (Dallmayr 2010: 173) neither comes naturally nor easily. Rather, it is an ongoing process that constantly needs to be encouraged, instilled and cultivated (Dallmayr 2010: 187). It is this emphasis on the non-naturalness of cultivating democratic agency in relation to and through a lack of autonomy that provides a useful inspiration for working through the emerging rationale of governing in international policy-making and opens up analytical grounds for critically engaging contemporary statebuilding and climate change as policies concerned with promoting this new democracy. In fact, it almost seems as if Dallmayr was laying out the new governing programme when proclaiming that the central task of political institutions and economic arrangements must be the creation of an environment in which ‘democratic self-rule’ as a ‘practice of self-restraint and self-transformation (even self-emptying)’ can flourish (Dallmayr 2010: 187).

By inferring from this notion of democracy as a process of self-emptying that is achieved through participation in lived relations of the social, the novel governing techniques of “unintended consequences” as a way of inculcating self-hesitation, of “deep appreciation” as an openness to the contingency and complexity of the world and of “decisions without thinking” as a way of overcoming the barriers to new forms of democratic agency allow to construct a coherence in the trajectory democracy promotion has taken since the 1980s. While the nature and manifestations of the rise of the social that has been sketched out in the argument section is key for understanding the reconceptualisation of democracy, and its promotion as well as the role it has come to be

accorded with in international policy-making, the conceptual intimations presented here are key to understanding the rise of the social as a late but pervasive political and epistemological conversion as a consequence of Cartesian doubt-turned-affirmation in which it is not only policy-making but a larger “truth regime” that reduces and governs human existence in the world as a socio-psychological process from which there seems little exit.

Structure of the Thesis

In the chapters that follow the thesis engages with the transition from democracy promotion as being concerned with formal political frameworks to democracy promotion as being concerned with mental frameworks. After the short-lived era of grand proclamations, it seems, democracy has gone into hiding. Not only, however, has it gone into hiding, it also has become operative across other major international policy concerns. Throughout the following chapters the thesis seeks to develop an understanding of this trajectory by way of tracing and conceptualising the rise of the social that appears to make a radically reworked conception of democracy promotion less of a choice and more of a necessity for contemporary international policy-making.

The argument is developed in the course of five chapters. Chapter 1 critically reviews existing critical literature on democracy promotion and asks whether it provides adequate analytical and conceptual tools for reflecting upon the submergence and generalisation of democracy promotion. Chapter 2 sets the stage for the remaining chapters in investigating and comparing cold war and post-cold war understandings of democracy, its workings and its promotion. Chapters 3 to 5, then, examine policy fields that have come to be concerned with democracy promotion. These also, indicatively, constitute the fields that have emerged and supplanted each other as the most pressing international concern since the end of the cold war. The most obvious one appears to be civil conflict management, which dominated the international agenda in the early and mid-1990s; it is here that the failure of democracy promotion as conventionally understood manifests itself most starkly. Towards the turn of the millennium statebuilding emerged as an autonomous and urgent policy problem facing the international community as well as a positive epistemology in academic circles. Importantly it emerges after the perceived failure of promoting institutional

solutions. That particularly contemporary statebuilding is less immediately concerned with promoting formal state institutions than often held to be, in fact, contributes to the development of problem framings that link statebuilding to what seems to be a completely unrelated issue: concerns with climate change. To be sure, concerns with environmental sustainability have been voiced for some time. But more recently it has come to feature in policy discourses as the most urgent and most global problem due to its radical nature of questioning the survival of mankind. What the following chapters ask is whether we need to understand the sequence and supersession of pressing international policy-making not in terms of incorporating elements of democracy promotion but rather as emerging techniques and mechanisms of promoting a radically redefined notion of democracy.

Chapter 1 reviews three dominant critiques at play in democracy promotion literature. Democracy promotion is criticised in terms of hypocrisy, hegemony and decline (or failure). Commentators in the first group problematise what they consider the insincerity with which the democracy agenda is pursued and view the normative dimension to be polluted by interests. In approaching their critique through a rhetoric-reality divide, this branch considers and consolidates democracy as essentially desirable as well as a normative potential dormant but theoretically realisable by Western foreign policy actors. More left-leaning critics, in turn, see democracy promotion to constitute either in itself a form of Western domination or part of a global liberal hegemony. While very early critics employed a Gramscian framework, more recent works are predominantly Foucault-inspired and see democracy promotion as part of a regulatory regime of engineering (neo)liberal subjectivity. The third and most recent group has two concerns: on the one hand, the literature highlights the apparent failure or decline of democracy promotion, while on the other hand, and simultaneously, the study of democracy promotion in itself becomes subject to critique; it is problematised that the field has not developed adequate analytical and conceptual tools for understanding democracy promotion. On this basis, the chapter asks whether contemporary critiques can adequately capture and theorise current trends in democracy promotion. It is especially interested in Foucauldian critiques that intimate changes to or limits of global liberal governmentality. In scrutinising where and how these changes and limits are seen and conceptualised, the chapter asks whether these contributions genuinely enable us to see beyond the liberal edifice of governing in a way that allows for a conceptual engagement with the trajectory and understanding of democracy promotion in international politics. The chapter suggests that indicative incongruences show that might

point us to a different analytical route than the ones suggested in the context of liberal governmentality's limitation. The chapter intimates that it might be more revealing to approach contemporary forms of governing and modalities of exercising power in international relations from the vantage point of democratic governance promotion, and understand liberal forms to have been epistemologically and discursively incorporated, rather than fronting liberal governance as the primary principle and understand democratic forms to have been fused. It suggests that this allows us to see liberal forms to be the more transitory governing rationality of the 1990s and apprehend changing forms of democratic governance promotion as the more persistent international policy concern.

To explore the questions that have opened up in relation to the existing literature, Chapter 2 proposes a crucial change in the historicisation of democracy promotion. Rather than taking the end of the cold war as democracy promotion's inceptive moment, it closely scrutinises rationalisations of democracy promotion and political change during the cold war. Here it is particular the wider epistemological and political setting in which the 1983 *Democracy Program* launched by the Reagan administration was embedded that is of interest. The chapter asks for the conditions that allowed for democracy promotion to emerge as a feasible and viable project in the context of ideological and superpower rivalry and compares this to conditions and rationalisations of democracy promotion and political change in the aftermath of the cold war. In doing so the chapter suggests that democracy promotion and political change during the cold war were not framed in the same liberal terms that characterised the post-cold war period. It seeks to highlight how democracy was understood to require constitutive and constituted power that creates the public artifice of representative government. This understanding, as the chapter suggests, was very much predicated on the availability of communist forms of cohering power through political mobilisation and organisation both as a challenge that Westerns forms of governing had to master as well as source to be drawn upon for promoting democracy and political change. From an understanding that democracy needed to be constituted as an artifice and maintained by political purpose, the mass political party plays a central role in cold war democracy promotion. Thus informed the chapter investigates the epistemological and political trends unfolding in the immediate aftermath of the cold war that affected the understanding of democracy promotion and political change. These emerge in terms of the novel notion of consolidation with regard to understandings of democratisation processes and the rise of social constructivism with regard to conceptualising political change. By

scrutinising their underpinning rationalities as well as the understandings of democratisation and political change, the chapter draws out the conditions for the turn to the social in terms of a heightened focus on civil society as a new actor and the growing importance accorded to socialisation processes as a novel site of democratic change. It emphasises the shifting understanding of democratic change from political modernisation and seeks to highlight how the discovery of the social must be understood as a direct consequence of the loss of political meaning, means and purpose. On these grounds, the chapter suggests that the emergence of the social signalled and catalysed a political and epistemological crisis unfolding at the underside of the “happy 1990s”.

As Chapter 3 demonstrates, it is particularly the way in which democracy promotion interlinked with civil conflict management that this crisis becomes manifest. As will be shown, two aspects play a decisive role in its manifestation and course: the merging of democracy promotion with political liberalisation and the nature of post-cold war civil conflicts. The chapter’s main concern therefore is the “destiny” of liberal-democratic trajectories and binaries in the way these were asked to deal with civil conflicts. In this context it asks of the effects of deeply rooted identity conflicts on the liberal edifice of governing and seeks to highlight the role these conflicts played for the shift from institution-centred to agency-centred conception of democracy. The chapter explores the two subsequent stages within the institution-centred approach – promoting elections and institutional engineering proper – before engaging with the agency-centred turn. It will be suggested that the “discovery” of the social – in terms of deeply rooted identity conflicts – had three effects: first, it frustrated liberal-universal trajectories within the election promotion approach. Secondly, it already impinged upon the liberal equilibrium of governing through a public-private divide from its very beginning. Thirdly it led to a discarding of liberal democracy’s universality and the concomitant contention that the model did not fit local contexts. The chapter highlights how the discarding of universality correlates with a self-allegation of hubris in designing institutions. In the wake of the transition from universality to hubris democracy promotion shifts to agency-centred notions. It will be suggested that the renunciation of the universality of the liberal-democratic model, the rise of local context and the self-charge of hubris are the result of a growing fundamental uncertainty unfolding between what could be known about concrete workings of local contexts and the abstract workings of institutional models. The chapter then inquires after any changes in the understanding of conflict after the failure and hubris

of democratic institution building. It seeks to highlight how conflict is reworked as a question of violent behaviour which becomes subject to therapeutic governing through (re)socialisation. In the context of conflict management this shift manifests itself as empowerment promotion.

It will be intimated that what we see developing is the beginning of a political and epistemological process in which dominating problems that have emerged and contributed to the crisis of governing are being reworked into a positive governing rationality within democracy promotion.

Based on this observation, Chapter 4 engages more closely with the problem of unintended consequences which seemed to have elicited the self-allegation of hubris. It does so in conjunction with the growing understanding of institutions as informal norms arrangements in order to trace and capture the emerging governing rationality of democracy promotion from democratising institutions to democratising the subject. Both aspects, unintended consequences and informality, feature prominently in discourses on international statebuilding which provides the policy context for this chapter. It asks whether both elements must be understood as governing mechanisms based on Cartesian doubt rather than authoritative knowledge. More concretely, the question to be examined is whether the proposition made in recent democratic theory, here in particular by Fred Dallmayr, in terms of fostering democratic self-rule through practices of self-transformation and self-emptying (Dallmayr 2010; see above) are reflected in democracy promotion through statebuilding. In relation to the thesis' suspicion that democracy promotion capitalises on radical uncertainty about the world, the chapter investigates whether statebuilding itself is a democracy promotion mechanism – but crucially aimed at donors themselves. Could it be that through the intractability of informalised local contexts and the unintended consequences that must be assumed to occur, statebuilders are sought to be enabled to let go off their prefabricated assumptions and learn that doing less and being more concerned with the self is more statebuilding? Is statebuilding a practice of self-transformation and self-emptying? The chapter argues that for these questions it is important to take into account the particular epistemological crossroad at which statebuilding emerged as a positive epistemology and self-standing policy concern: after the declared hubris of institution-building. The chapter argues that statebuilding, from this point of view, emerges as a framework through which the rise of the social can be consolidated into a coherent critique of abstract and generalised mental and political

models. On the basis of the consolidation of a sociological critique, it suggests democracy promotion is turning into a self-centred governing mechanism that works through the essentialised difference of the other. The chapter seeks to highlight the crucial role of new institutionalist economics for statebuilding framings and problematisations. New institutionalism in asking why there is glaring disparity in the world argued that the reason rests in pervasive informal constraints on decision-making. Its centrality, it will be argued, however rests not primarily with the essentialisation of difference as such but with the subjectivisation and effective revocation of rationality. In new institutionalist rationalisations, reflected in statebuilding literature, reality is always already a subjective perception of reality coloured by social context. In thus suspending the separation of the rational subject and the external world, as well as the possibility of abstract, communicable knowledge, it forcefully opens socio-psychological processes as an alternative, or even primary, sphere of governing. In exploring whether and how new institutionalist rationalisations influence contemporary policy discourse on statebuilding, the chapter intimates that we do indeed see a Dallmayrian notion of democratisation at the core of statebuilding as a learning process based on the irredeemable embeddedness of the human subject.

Chapter 5 explores the extent to which democracy is being promoted in international policy discourses concerned with climate change. As a discourse, climate change not only frames problems in global and existential terms, but also offers a problem framing that is not directly human-centred in itself; that is, it does not address a particular human activity such as civil conflict or a man-made construct of governing, such as the state. Based on this observation the chapter asks whether climate change discourses demonstrate epistemological and ontological affinities with recently emerging radical posthumanist theories of democracy, here in particular new materialism. An engagement with this increasingly prevalent branch of democratic theorising suggests itself not only because of a shared concern with the environment but because new materialism's democratic promise is tied to the curtailing of human exceptionalism. New materialists contend that for a more egalitarian and genuine democracy the illusion of the human subject as separate from his environment must be overcome. As a democratic programme new materialism therefore suggests to embrace contingency, embeddedness and necessity as way of inculcating self-cultivation and self-experience in order to remove this illusion. The chapter, firstly, suspects that the dominant framing of the world as complex socio-ecological systems in

climate change discourses encapsulates absolute contingency and necessity and harbours at least the potential of problematising the human in terms from non-anthropocentric and non-autonomous view. It secondly intimates that the growing discursive emphasis on resilience and its programmatic deployment in climate change adaption policies can fruitfully be compared to the democratic self-cultivation agenda in new materialism. The chapter closely scrutinises the way in which the human subject appears in policy discourse concerned with climate change and is particularly interested in the sites of resistance that climate change problematisations discern. It will highlight that the way in which these sites of resistance are framed make the decision-making subject appear as an illusion as well as blockage to be unleashed. Based on this observation, the chapter further suggests that climate change framings and policy programmes are particularly well equipped for undoing the blockage of the human subject to activate novel forms of democratic agency because it can tie in the human between the extreme and the everyday. In between these two poles, humans are forced to make decisions without thinking from which the novel democracy promotion agenda can be retrieved. The contention of this chapter is that unlocking the resilient subject lies at the core of contemporary democracy promotion.

In short, it would seem that with the rise of the social the hidden nature of contemporary democracy promotion is not only a result of having been buried deep down in the policy programmes of other international policy fields but foremost a result of its radical reworking. The new role, complexion and understanding of democracy and its promotion works very differently in international policy-making than conventional framings allow us to grasp. Democracy promotion today appears to be offering a new problem solving mechanism in an uncertain, complex world. Without political meaning and means to cohere resources to authoritatively design agendas and policies, the internalisation of collective democratic self-governance, in which the contingency of the external world co-governs the adaptive inner world of the human, relocates the source of all problems into subjective states of mind. Since the new democratic subject emerges as one of great potential of making a difference by making a difference on the self, the realm of human agency and the root of problems to be dealt with once again converge.

Introduction

Not wanting to spill more ink over a well-established opening line in studies on democracy promotion, it suffices to say that democracy promotion as an international policy as well as an academic field of research soared in the 1990s, avowedly establishing itself as the new international principle for the post-cold war order (McFaul 2004; Kurki and Hobson 2012: 1; Magen and McFaul 2009: 5-8). As a result of its emergence at a particular historical juncture, democracy promotion literature shares a peculiar self-evidence with regard to the object of its study. The statement ‘We all know a democracy when we see one’ (Ayers 2008: 1) captures much of this field’s academic spirit. Recently, however, a pathological trait in democracy promotion studies has been noted: it has failed to produce knowledge (Geddes 2007). In other words, we are confronted with a growing discrepancy between self-evidence and knowledge. This review will ask whether one of the main reasons for this discrepancy rests in a distinctive failure to question self-evidence. Questions also arise with regard to the source, locale or extension of self-evidence. That is, the review queries if it is sufficient to question the nature and success of democracy or whether assumptions of power – and shifts in forms of power – in international relations also need to be put to question and scrutinised for their effect on the understanding of democratic forms of governance and their promotion. The central question therefore is whether aporias, gaps and contradictions revealing themselves in critical democracy promotion literature are indicative of a general epistemological and critical disengagement from the world that fails to equip us with critical tools to coherently understand the displacement and dispersion of democracy promotion.

Generally, it should be noted, democracy promotion is discussed in relation to particular actors, mainly the US, the European Union and, more recently, the World Bank. From its alleged inception in the aftermath of the cold war (Chapter 2 somewhat challenges the inceptive moment), the policy of promoting democracy has been criticised. These

critiques split into three dimensions: hypocrisy, empire and decline (or failure). Existing critical accounts will be scrutinised with regard to their conception and role of power in democracy promotion. The first position is part of the “normative turn” in foreign policy and is characterised by a noticeable aversion to power. In criticising the contamination of democracy promotion with interests, this group contributes to a perception of democracy promotion as the ethically or morally right thing to do and contributes to an understanding that the normative promise of democracy promotion could be theoretically realised if interest and power was abandoned. Shortcomings are seen to exist in the gap between rhetoric and reality, implementation or effectiveness and coherence. The second critique sees in democracy promotion various guises of Western hegemony and power projection. Critical investigations have particularly found in Foucault’s work on “liberal governmentality” a pertinent framework for approaching democracy promotion as part of a socio-economic regulatory regime which links back to very early neo-Grasmian critiques. The third branch, while not professedly “critical” problematises the explanatory power of available liberal democratic framings that seem no longer capable of producing substantive knowledge.

In order to develop its research problematique, the chapter begins with reviewing critiques of hypocrisy through contextualising and contrasting these normative critiques with very early neo-Grasmian studies that problematised a convergence between superpower interests and democracy promotion. The question is raised whether their aversion to power may have wider validity than mere idealistic naivety. The following section presents the main positions advanced in the more-left leaning critiques that mostly draw on the work of Foucault to frame their approach and asks whether these provide us with adequate critical tools and knowledge to capture the nature of contemporary democracy promotion. That this question might have to be answered negatively emerges from significant aporias, contradictions and misunderstandings that materialise in existing critical literature. Drawing out the main shortcomings, confusions and evasions, the review develops the research questions this thesis sets out to explain. These concern in particular the use and employment of Foucauldian framings. The concern is whether the reliance on governmentality studies, in the light of aporias that surface, provides facile and insufficient answers. By extension, it asks whether the contradictions and confusions are reflective of a paradigm shift that cannot be explained through applying Foucauldian notions of

governmentality. In this context, main points and concerns of the third group will be woven in to help clarify the research problematique.

From Superpower Moment to “Ethical Turn”: Contextualising Hypocrisy and Implementation Shortcomings

This section first briefly draws out the very early neo-Gramscian critique in the immediate post-Cold War period, and its limits, to highlight the changes that occurred with the “ethical turn” in democracy promotion scholarship. These two sets of literature reflect very well two developments or moments of a changed international environment: a unipolar moment with American supremacy and the liberal-idealistic interregnum of the early 1990s. This discussion thus also sets the stage for the revival of critical interventions along the line of empire and hegemony towards the turn of the millennium.

Low Intensity Democracy Promotion and the Hegemonic Moment

In the late 1980s and early 1990s a body of literature evolved that applied a Gramscian approach to international relations and sought to explain and criticise democracy promotion in relation to American supremacy through Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, world systems approaches and dynamics of economic globalisation (Augelli and Murphy 1988; Gill 1990; Gills and Rocamora 1992; Robinson 1996). The ascent of the US democracy promotion agenda was seen to constitute a core element of America’s supremacy and a vehicle for its maintenance. One of the most extensive studies within this critical school is William Robinson’s book *Promoting Polyarchy* (1996). Robinson argues that while the American foreign policy objective of securing its dominance remained the same in the transition from cold war to post-cold war era, the strategy adopted to achieve this goal changed from ‘straight power concepts’ to persuasion in terms of ‘new political interventions’ (Robinson 1996: 2). Democracy promotion, in the eyes of Robinson, represents this new form of political intervention. According to the author, it ‘is inextricably linked to globalization’ and ‘can only be understood as part of a broader process of the exercise of hegemony within and between countries in the context of transnationalization’ (*Ibid.*: 4). In order to fulfil its role as political counterpart to economic globalization, a

specific type of democracy was promoted: polyarchy or 'low intensity democracy' (Gills and Rocamora 1992). In this new epoch of global capital accumulation, low intensity democracy is said to substitute both 'development' (*Ibid.*: 501) as well as 'national security' (Robinson 1996: 16) as the strategy of US foreign policy to advance the economic interests of a newly emergent, US-led, transnational class.

Low intensity democracy or polyarchy, a term famously coined by Robert Dahl in order to break with normative notions of democracy and instead guide analysis towards "really existing" systems of democracy (Kurki 2013: 6-7), describes a system of elite rule in which popular participation is limited to leadership choice in carefully managed elections (Robinson 1996: 49). Analogous to US cold war strategies of low intensity warfare, the intent of promoting low intensity democracy 'was to pre-empt either progressive reform or revolutionary change' (Gills and Rocamora 1992: 505). Without changing the status quo this form of democracy bestowed new legitimacy to formerly authoritarian regimes, the support of which has become untenable in the changing international environment. According to Barry Gills and Joel Rocamora, these superficially democratic regimes function as an implementation mechanism of economic and social policies under structural adjustment programmes (*Ibid.*: 505). 'The paradox of low intensity democracy', Gills and Rocamora maintain, 'is that a civilianised conservative regime can pursue ... repressive social and economic policies with more impunity and with less popular resistance than can an openly authoritarian regime' (*Ibid.*: 505). It thus enables American foreign policy to legitimise and perpetuate an international order of socioeconomic inequalities (Robinson 1996: 55-6).

Several inconsistencies and problems plague these accounts, particularly Robinson's interpretation of the rationale behind (US) democracy promotion, some of which have led to its discrediting (see Youngs 2011). He, for instance, fails to explain why what he calls periphery assumes such a crucial importance in US foreign policy and its economic interests. Or, from the reverse side of democracy promotion, as Richard Youngs (2011: 8) has appositely countered, we would expect to see the most intense democracy promotion activities in countries central to US or Western interests, such as China or Saudi Arabia, where, in fact, the opposite is the case.

More important, and consequential for the present study, however, is the fact that Robinson stumbles on both the theoretical as well as the empirical account. The reductionism in the employment of Gramsci's theory of hegemony in IR theory has been

pointed out (Germain and Kenny 1998). Yet, Robinson's combination of a Gramscian notion of hegemony with the alleged smoothness of promoting low intensity democracy constitutes not just reductionism but indicates incommensurability. Hegemony in a Gramscian sense strikes as anything but "low intensity". That there may be more obstacles and difficulties than the argument allows is even inadvertently admitted by Robinson when he observes that '[US] policymakers often assess that authoritarian arrangements are best left in place in instances where the establishment of polyarchic systems is unrealistic, high-risk, or an unnecessary undertaking' (Robinson 1996: 112). Within his line of argument, it remains inexplicable why establishing polyarchy could ever be unrealistic, risky or unnecessary. It would appear that the opposite is the case: leaving in place authoritarian regimes would be unrealistic and risky and their replacement with polyarchy an absolute necessity. There is thus a rupture opening up between the perceived interests and the strategy allegedly necessary to achieve them.

In this light a further contradiction surfaces. Essentially, the goal 'to construct in intervened societies an exact replica of the structure of power in the US' (Robinson 1996: 105) is far less easily achieved or "natural" than Robinson – and possibly the US – envisioned it to be. As it turns out, Robinson's review of the democracy promotion agenda reveals itself to be about much more than just elections. Drawing on NED (National Endowment for Democracy) programmes, promoting low intensity democracy includes 'strengthening democratic culture, strengthening civil society; strengthening democratic political institutions' all of which 'ranged from support to trade unions, to creation of new business associations, women's, student, and youth organizations, and media outlets' (*Ibid.*: 324). In other words, while the objective may have been the establishment of low intensity democracy, the measures necessary to achieve this form of government obviously appear as rather high in intensity. If we accept the Gramscian nature of US-led global hegemony exercised through democracy promotion then quite logically a rather ambitious agenda ensues in which political structures, political societies, epistemic communities as well as civil societies would have to be transformed and induced to organically converge onto and "freely" consent to this regime. Such a deep-reaching hegemony, it appears, is costly in terms of political will and political power.

Rhetoric-Reality Gap and the Ethical Turn

After the neo-Gramscian critique, a fundamentally different branch of critical literature developed, effectively silencing the neo-Gramscian focus on international power structures. From the late 1990s onwards, the democracy promotion framework became starkly criticised for its hypocrisy. A rhetoric-reality gap opened up, or rather sprung from the new normative perspective. From this normative standpoint interests were now construed to subvert and undermine democracy promotion, reducing it, at times, to a rhetorical nicety. As opposed to the earlier neo-Gramscian approach on low intensity democracy, Western interests in stability, security and the opening of markets came to be seen to strain the democracy agenda rather than motivating it. In other words, while Western interest allegedly remained the same (securing resources, accumulating capital, averting migration and suppressing citizens' demands and participation), it was now argued that this imbrication with interests questioned the credibility of Western states in fostering democracy. This critique of democracy promotion as suffering from a rhetoric-reality gap thus was precipitated by a turn towards normative framings and understandings of foreign policy. The focus of analysis shifted markedly (albeit not exclusively as the following section shows) from structural conditions towards normative considerations which shaped the terms of critique.

The critique that operates within and is part of the "ethical turn" in international relations of the 1990s constitutes what is usually called a problem-solving approach. Critics along those lines, of course, do not solve many problems (as they largely ignore or fail to see them) and the label of "disenchanted idealists" seems to capture better the nature and position of their critical engagement. Disenchanted idealists mainly write out of a European Union context – with a flaring up of similar, and harsher, allegations amongst commentators of US democracy promotion during the Bush years (see Carothers 2009) and some exceptions with regard to the question of effectiveness (Crawford 1997; Hook 1998). This EU focus is tied to the construction, perception and self-portrayal of the European Union as international actors of a "different kind" (Sjursen 2006: 172). Void of any European military capacities, the Union was first described as a 'civilian power' by François Duchêne in 1972 (see Sjursen 2006: 169), which importantly, still harboured the idea of being able and willing to exercise economic power. This idea has gained currency during

the 1990s, in the course of which it also became reworked in terms of ‘normative power’ (Manners 2002). In other words, the European Union had mutated from an actor without military capacities into a force for good. So successful was this identity construction that, instigated by the rise of social constructivist theorising, the “good” eliminated the aspect of “force”. This pronounced normative framing has thus been woven deeply into the terms of critique of disenchanted idealists, which is rarely made subject of critique. Instead, the normative element is established, maintained and further consolidated beyond questioning by the very critique that emanates from those commentators disconcerted by hypocritical tendencies in democracy promotion.¹⁴

Critical interventions concern two, at times inter-related, allegations: first, the subversion of democracy promotion by interests (Burnell 2008; Boonstra 2008; Pace 2009; Reynaert 2011; Hollis 2012) and secondly, shortcomings and ineffectiveness in implementation (Crawford 1997; Youngs 2003; Pridham 2007; Bicchi 2010; Youngs 2010). One of the more sophisticated but still paradigmatic allegations of hypocrisy is raised by Michelle Pace in her investigation of EU democracy promotion in North Africa and the Middle East. Her contribution reflects well the indignation in democracy promotion scholarship with the EU’s dealing with the Palestinian elections of 2006 (these were initially heavily supported by the EU but it withdrew its support after the victory of Hamas). After making sure the EU is set up as a promoter of liberal democracy with instruments at its disposal ‘for serious engagement in political, economic and social reform processes’, Pace goes on to show the ‘flaws when unpacked and exposed to empirical enquiry’ (Pace 2009: 42). It emerges as the main flaw that the EU’s ultimate objective is not ‘*clearly and explicitly* democracy in itself’ but is undermined, polluted and overridden by ‘stability and security goals’ (*ibid.*: 45; emphasis in original). Next to the inconsistency and incoherence in the implementation of its democracy agenda, a second point of critique concerns what Pace, like many others, perceive as an inappropriate universalisation from particular Western experiences and models (*ibid.*: 48; see Chapter 3). Despite this undue universalisation, Pace concludes her rather scathing account in berating what emerges as the real shortcoming: ‘the EU limits

¹⁴ There are two notable exceptions: Kristi Raik (2006) observes a discrepancy in the discourses and practices of EU enlargement which centre on effectiveness, speed and inevitability and the dynamics of democracy. She links this discrepancy back to the democratic deficit at the heart of the European Union. Gorm Rye Olsen, while highlighting the realist limits to idealism, highlights that EU democracy promotion is therefore not necessarily ineffective. Rather, democracy promotion, according to him serves to enhance the EU’s international profile as well as internal coherence/identity (Olsen 2000).

itself in a policy area where it could potentially have normative impact' (Pace 2009: 40). Not only does it limit itself by pursuing interests understood to be at odds with democracy promotion, but also by a lack of agreement internally and controversies over the rationale and design of external policy. Democracy promotion, it appears, while inherently desirable is clearly polluted, obstructed and limited by politics, interests and lack of consensus.

It seems that discarding interests quickly leads to a hollowing out of democracy promotion as an object of study. This is noticeable in the confusion created by the search for the substance of democracy promotion purified from what are considered "other" objectives. Jan Orbie and Anne Wetzel (2011a), albeit less openly critical, also start off from the assumption that the EU is a promoter of democracy and that the kind of democracy promoted is liberal. Interestingly, however, they see a research gap with regard to the actual substance of EU democracy promotion. Somewhat more attentive to trends unfolding since the mid-1990s, Orbie and Wetzel note a heightened focus on civil society as the target of democracy promotion, while, at the same time, there has been a marked de-emphasis of elections and political rights (Orbie and Wetzel 2011b: 714). Summarising the findings of a special issue they underline that '[w]here the EU has put much emphasis on civil society in its external relations, this has often aimed at other objectives than democracy promotion' such as development or market-based reforms (*Ibid.*: 715). As a result of the separation of interests, understood as anything that smacks of power projection, from democracy promotion they end up searching for liberal democracy promotion's substance beyond development, market reforms, elections and political rights. Unsurprisingly they do not find much (much talk is about narrowness and shallowness). Little has been achieved in terms of alleviating the "'lack of overarching systemic thinking" and "'arbitrary accidentalism"' (Youngs, cit. in Burnell 2008: 418).

Another subset of normative critiques takes on the question of political conditionality's effectiveness. The unanimous verdict is that political conditionality is ineffective and has, at least in third country contexts, failed to contribute to political change (Crawford 1997: 81; see also Hook 1998; Pridham 2007). Equally as unanimously commentators see the shortcoming on the implementation side and blame the lack of political will, on the one hand and the primacy of economic and strategic interest, on the other. (Crawford 1997: 81 & 87; Hook 1998: 170; Pridham 2007: 460; see Bicchi 2010: 977). While intellectually uninspiring, what the challenge of conditionality's effectiveness tells us is that

“conditioning” subjects for inserting them into liberal global hegemony, as the neo-Gramscians would have it, turned out to be less straightforward which raises questions about the means actually available in a changed international environment with its prevalence of normative concerns (and critiques) for establishing or maintaining such hegemony.

A noteworthy recent twist on the monotonous comments on ineffectiveness is provided by Federica Bicchì's (2010) contribution. It is noteworthy because, again, we seem to be witnessing a similar trend unfolding in implementation critiques as in the subversion-by-interests criticisms that leads from allegations of hypocrisy to a loss of substance. Bicchì for her part sees the dilemma of implementation not as a result of the normative agenda's pollution with other interests: 'the EU would not have been successful even if there had been a strong political will' (Bicchì 2010: 977). This impossibility of success is tied to the fact that democracy promotion as a policy field is 'fraught with ambiguities and uncertainties concerning the causal chain of democracy promotion, as well as with complications due to the conflictual nature of the policy' (*Ibid.*: 977-8). Decisively, however, despite the politically controversial nature of the policy, implementation failures have nothing to do with politics. Rather, the controversies permeating the field lead Bicchì to view the EU's 'failure to deliver' as 'unintentional' (*Ibid.*: 978). What once may have been understood as a contestation over interests and priorities now becomes a case of complexity. Responsible for implementation failures, according to Bicchì, is the process: several choices by individuals amount and contribute to an emerging result that was not intended. 'A series of small "tyrannical" steps evade control mechanisms while at the same time affecting the final size of the gap [between policy goal and implementation outcomes]' (*Ibid.*: 982). Bicchì's contribution thus focuses much on the "tyranny of small decisions" as the main explanatory variable for shortcomings in democracy delivery. Without disputing the existence of such unintended consequences and exigencies of policy processes, the fact that this "tyranny" of the "tiny" has come to be understood as the main reason or explanation for overall policy failures indicates that there may be a loss of political, or even normative, purpose with regard to the overall rationale for pursuing policies such as democracy promotion as conventionally understood. It is certainly not a new development that individuals are involved in implementation processes and that they make decisions. What is different instead in Bicchì's account is that policies fail *because* individuals involved in implementing them make decisions. As the following chapters will seek to highlight, this

challenge of intentionality and objectives through the prism of the real is an important epistemological and political trend that has had a decisive impact on the reworking of democracy promotion from institution-building to democratic self-governance. In this sense, the rise of the social is effectively a rise of the real.

Drawing from these accounts, three aspects begin to emerge from the idealist critique in relation to the contentions of neo-Gramscian critiques that have bearing on the present study on democracy promotion. First, liberal internationalism begins to reveal itself to be less “organic” and more costly and intensive. Secondly, neo-Gramscians may have overestimated the effectiveness and self-evidence of means to transform societies for this global project. In turn, they seem to have underestimated epistemological, ideological and political constraints of liberal imperialism and how this project could be perceived and pursued. Thirdly, there appear to be severe problems arising out of seeking to converge idealism and realism, “normative” and “power” in the wake of which “power” loses its place and ceases to make sense. What disenchanted idealists inadvertently show is that the exercise of power in normative guise is difficult to harbour politically and epistemologically. Giving purpose to politics and interests is easily frustrated by normative framings of foreign policy. Coming from a realist perspective, Adrian Hyde-Price succinctly notes:

As should be evident ..., there is a fundamental contradiction at the heart of the EU’s identity and role as an international actor. On the one hand, it serves as a vehicle for the collective pursuit of common or shared interests [...] On the other hand, the EU sees itself as an “ethical” power ... In this way, the EU is regarded as a “force for good” in the world, championing values and principles that have universal applicability and reflect cosmopolitan norms. (Hyde-Price 2008: 32)

This fundamental contradiction turns out to be far less self-evident. It may appear from the portrayal of disenchanted idealists that economic and strategic interests retain or gain primacy. Yet, what the double move of first separating normative objectives from interests and then re-combining them in form of a rhetoric-reality divide, in fact, demonstrates is the opposite. From the disenchanted idealist’s perspective, signs and expression of interest and power can only be conceived of as interference and interruption. In other words, while interests and power are considered to exist, in their secondary function to constantly frustrate power, a meaningful engagement with power seems to be disabled.

As part of a wider thesis problematique of understanding democracy promotion within the shifting nature of power in international relations, one of the questions to be explored thus is whether this inability to meaningfully study and engage with power has

more fundamental reasons than idealistic naivety. In other words, it asks whether the understanding of power as interference and the ensuing inability to attach meaning to power can be understood as a central rationale of contemporary democracy promotion. One example, for instance, is the way unintended consequences are understood in statebuilding discourse as a necessary but unknown effect of having interfered with the complexity of social processes and how these consequences become reworked as a governing mechanism for self-restraint and adaptive self-governance. For instance, as will be discussed in Chapter 4, the increasingly dominant framing of the limitations of statebuilding from of a sociological view of real-life processes criticises any intervention in terms of interference into these processes and dynamics. From the perspective of intervention as interference, policy practices are problematised as necessarily producing unintended consequences.

While critiques of democracy promotion seeking to improve democracy promotion by ridding it of its infestation by interests represents a dominant branch, critical interventions that engaged with the construction or maintenance of hegemony or neoimperialism through democracy promotion never quite disappeared. It is particularly the introduction of Foucault's work into IR first produced scattered (but largely ignored) critical investigations of democracy promotion but has since become a prominent framing for many commentators, especially on the Left. The next section therefore not only critically reviews these Foucauldian (and post-colonial) critiques but also seeks to highlight how, in the trajectory this literature has taken, the understanding of democracy and its promotion experienced a substantial reconceptualisation.

Democracy Promotion as Power Projection: Foucauldian Critiques

A majority of mostly left-leaning critiques of liberal democracy promotion as Western power projection since the mid-1990s but increasingly since the mid-2000s is couched in Foucauldian terms. While the work of Foucault at first was referenced in passing, with the onset of "governmentality studies" Foucauldian critiques became more mainstream and numerous. The difference, however, is not confined to the intensity of engagement with Foucault's work. A split runs through Foucauldian critiques that separates these two groups in a distinctive manner. The early employment took recourse to Foucault's work on the

power-knowledge nexus and critically scrutinised democracy promotion from a macro-perspective of North-South relations that created hierarchies through representation and “regimes of truth” (Doty 1996; Barkawi and Laffey 1999; Abrahamsen 2000). Later Foucauldian approaches in turn take a markedly more microscopic perspective. With the ascent of governmentality studies, liberal democracy and its promotion is also approached less as an independent policy in its own rights and more incorporated as a micro-practice of a liberal technology of governing. Rather than focusing on an immediate binary between “the North” and “the South” through knowledge regimes and representation, more recent Foucauldian critiques are concerned with practices and techniques of social control. In other words, the exercise and manifestation of hegemonic power is conceived of as less direct and visible but eventuated in a form of domination that is exercised in more mediated and invisible ways through complex systems of social and economic regulation *in situ* (Chandler 2006; 2010; Duffield 2007; Zanotti 2011; Joseph 2012; Kurki 2013). It is in relation to the dominance and employment of Foucault’s work that the review generates the main research questions that will be explored in the thesis.

The Empire of Foucault I: Power/Knowledge

Two ground-breaking and extensive studies that draw on Foucault’s power/knowledge framework are provided by Roxanne Doty (1996) and Rita Abrahamsen (2000). Doty’s work on *Imperial Encounters* (1996) takes a post-colonial stance. Previous explanations of North-South relations that centre on donors’ self-interest, Doty finds, ‘do not go far enough’ in extrapolating the full spectrum through which domination occurs (Doty 1996: 129). As a response, she critically scrutinises democracy promotion, among other concerns, through the discursive productivity of power at play in North-South relations. That is, she traces ways in which the South has been discursively constructed through practices of representation. Drawing on Foucault, this construction implies an understanding of knowledge and truth that goes beyond the accumulation of knowledge and asks for ‘ways in which regimes of “truth” and “knowledge” have been produced’ (*Ibid.*: 2).

These discursive encounters are imperial in the sense that ‘one entity has been able to construct “realities” that were taken seriously and acted upon and the other entity has been denied equal degrees and kinds of agency’ (*Ibid.*: 3). The truth regime she detects in relation to democracy promotion concerns the construction of the Southern Other as

childlike, still lacking the capacity to distinguish for themselves between good and evil, and thus warranting Northern parenting (*Ibid.*: 124-5). Associated with this paternalism is the production and representation of subjects in the South as irrational as opposed to the rational subject in the North (*Ibid.*: 125-6). In her close reading of an important US advisory report from the late 1960s, she finds an interesting display of this reason-irrationality divide in the report's problematisation of third world leaders for "'rarely mak[ing] the sharp distinction between politics and economics'" (MIT, cit. in *Ibid.*: 136). As Doty adds: 'the implication is that politics is the realm of passion and ideology and economics the realm of reason and rationality' (*Ibid.*: 136). The Southern Other was thus constructed as missing and lacking in capacities to live up to the requirements of rational agency. Doty rightly concludes that this democracy-development discourse 'was directed not toward the disappearance of poverty and inequality but toward the elimination of difference' by way of transforming the Southern subject of passion into a Northern subject of reason 'compatible with international order' (*Ibid.*: 136). With this finding, Doty is not alone. Others have also observed the imperialistic tendencies inbuilt in democracy promotion instigated by the idea of the democratic peace as a (lethal) means for eradicating difference (Dillon and Reid 2009), as a violent way of securing order and expanding liberal spaces based on modernization thinking (Barkawi and Laffey 1999) and as a form of establishing a new civilising mission (Hobson 2008). A critical question arising out of Doty's account, however, is whether the arguments made with regard to "other-construction" and "other-transformation" assume a too smooth and successful Western hegemonic project.

Rita Abrahamsen's study on development, good governance and democracy promotion in sub-Saharan Africa in *Disciplining Democracy* (2000) concurs with Doty that conventional critiques 'ignore the power of discourse and its role in the construction and maintenance of Western hegemony in the third world' (Abrahamsen 2000: ix). Like Doty, she draws on Foucault's insights in the 'irreversible relationship between power and knowledge' which allows and legitimises particular forms of hegemonic intervention by way of constructing certain subjects and locking them in into hierarchical relationships (*Ibid.*: 14-22). The purpose of these relationships, according to Abrahamsen, is to 'intervene and control, to adapt and reshape the structures, practices and ways of life of the South' (*Ibid.*: 22). With this framework she investigates democracy promotion by the World Bank, reflected in its good governance agenda. According to the author, the failure of the World Bank's structural adjustment programmes – which had focused primarily on open and free

competitive markets as well as privatization – together with the breakdown of the communist bloc have resulted in the emergence of the good governance agenda. The new good governance framing not only provided a novel justification for development assistance but also espoused a new *mission civilisatrice* and led to an undisputed hegemony of the West over the third world (*Ibid.*: 36-42). Discursive representations of good governance, understood to be predicated on liberal democratic regimes, allowed for an apologetic portrayal of a lack of liberal democracy to be responsible for the ineffectiveness of structural adjustment and foreign aid (*Ibid.*: 25).

Abrahamsen argues that the reconceptualisation of development discourse in terms of democracy enables Western dominance and interventionism on the cheap. In her words, 'Good governance enables the West to maintain its hegemony over the third world with even fewer resources and less resistance'. As a result, 'democracy became a powerful tool that could be used to appease African demands for change' (*Ibid.*: 43-4). Resource-efficiency was achieved, Abrahamsen maintains, by making its democracy agenda work through civil society as a way of problematising the state and interpellating civil society as the realm of freedom, pluralism and democracy (*Ibid.*: 53-4). This focus on participation and empowerment of civil society, she argues, functions well within a liberal economic framework and serves to prevent any 'challenge [of] existing power structures ... through excess demands' (*Ibid.*: 59).

The Foucauldian power/knowledge framing understands hegemony in broad, abstract terms. Critics are concerned with the constitution of large geographic and epistemological entities and their representation. Power is (critically) perceived to work through discursive representations. This macroscopic approach changes with the turn towards liberal technologies and techniques of governing in critical literature. The change in approach, however, did not incite a modification of the overall argument and critique with regard to hegemony. What we see instead is an emerging trend, also from more mainstream literature, to criticise the lack of knowledge and understanding of democracy and its promotion. As an academic field, it is bemoaned, it has relied too heavily on the self-evidence of conventional liberal democracy promotion and hence failed to develop conceptual and analytical tools for the study of democracy promotion (here in particular Kurki 2013; see also Hobson 2009; Wolff and Wurm 2011). It is in particular the influential and ground-breaking contributions of Mark Duffield (2007), Laura Zanotti (2011), David Chandler (2006, 2010), Jonathan Joseph (2012) and Milja Kurki (2013) which provide a

conceptually rich critique of democracy promotion through recourse of Foucault-inspired (neo)liberal governmentality approaches.

The Empire of Foucault II: Liberal Governmentality

One of the seminal applications of the emerging governmentality school for international development efforts is provided by Duffield (2001; 2007). Duffield is a leading critic of the security-development nexus and in his 2007 work offers a powerful critique of contemporary development discourse and practices with its emphasis on sustainability. For theorising this nexus and highlighting its connection to sustainability he draws on Foucauldian ideas of liberalism and emerging “governmentality studies”. He accords the development-security nexus and its further merging with sustainability to advanced liberal governmentality. What makes this liberal form of governing advanced is the centrality of biopolitics. Biopolitics describes the shift in the reference object of liberal governmentality from individualised ‘human-as-machine’ to collectivised ‘human-as-species’. Thus informed, Duffield understands ‘liberalism as a technology of government that supports freedom while governing people through the interconnected natural, social and economic processes that together sustain life’ (Duffield 2007: 6).

He puts forward a critique of liberal democracy promotion that denies the actual existence of such a policy by underlining the non-essential relationship between democracy and liberalism. Consequently, the key, albeit somewhat implicit, point of Duffield’s work is that whereas democracy is not being promoted, liberalism is all the more so in development contexts. The reason why, ‘as a design of power’, liberalism exerts itself without democracy, he contends, is that the government of freedom recognises and requires the regulation of the ‘disorder that excess freedom can bring’ (*Ibid.*: 6-7). This disorder is represented by people or populations in the developing world (see also Zanotti 2011). Development, Duffield hence suggests, resolves ‘the enduring paradox of liberalism’ that, on the one end, it supports the rule of law and democratic reform ‘at home’ while, on the other, it accepts ‘the necessity of non-representative and despotic forms of imperial rule overseas’ (Duffield 2007: 7). In this light, development policies and practices in advanced liberal governmentality, constitute a way of addressing increasing “surplus life” that capitalism produces (the growing number of marginalised people and groups that become superfluous in a capitalist system). As part of advanced liberal governmentality

development therefore produces, reinvents itself and intervenes in terms of a global divide between those “valuable” for capitalism (the developed world) and those that fall out as a “waste product” (the underdeveloped world) (*Ibid.*: 16). The latter, by indication, are subject to liberalism’s despotic, disciplinary regime. Thus Duffield argues that in post-cold war development discourse of ‘liberalism’s recurrent dichotomy between civilization and barbarism reappears’ as humanitarianism and statebuilding (*Ibid.*: 80).

Understanding liberalism as a technology of governing life through freedom, he argues, allows us to see the ways in which this despotic and disciplinary underside of (global) liberal governmentality is exercised in development today through the practices and techniques of biopolitics. Couched in Foucauldian terms, ‘[b]iopolitics is a form of politics that entails the administration of the processes of life at the aggregate level of population’ (*Ibid.*: 5) through generating and employing knowledge of dynamics that ‘sustain or retard the optimization of the life of a population’ (*Ibid.*: 6). Biopolitics, thus, requires ‘complex systems of coordination and centralization associated with the state’ (*Ibid.*: 6). Drawing on Mitchell Dean’s seminal study on liberal governmentality, he mentions that liberalism and biopolitics are not the same but contends that the latter is a necessary condition of the former. One of the central themes of the book’s case studies through which this argument is developed is human security. In order to demonstrate the liberal-biopolitical nature of human security, Duffield suggest a reversal in perspective: ‘Rather than look at human security from a humanistic viewpoint ... it is examined here as a relation of technology of governance’ (*Ibid.*: 113-4). Approached as a technology of governance, then, human security is a ‘mobilizing, integrating and colonizing concept of post-Cold War international governance’ (*Ibid.*: 114). What he seems to be arguing, in sum, is that through refined, advanced and modified techniques of governing – reaching from disciplinary to regulatory through to biopolitical governing mechanisms the divide between the hegemonic Global North and the subaltern Global South is maintained and reproduced.

A similar problematique underpins Laura Zanotti’s work on *Governing Disorder* (2011), which like Duffield, adopts a governmentality perspective for a critical investigation of international interventions and democratisation (Zanotti 2011: 7). In contrast to Duffield, however, she considers “empire” as an unintentional consequence of micro-practices of governing conduct (*Ibid.*: 11 and 75). In other words, she reverses Duffield’s rationale of empire as employing techniques of liberal governing in order to sustain itself and argues that, empire is a result of ad hoc practices of the “conduct of conduct”. Also, in contrast to

Duffield, she takes states rather than populations as the reference object of international governmentality. For her, democracy promotion is part of an international normalisation regime that has two poles: 'On the one hand, it works by setting in place saviors and regulations regarding the whole [the international]. On the other hand, it fosters techniques for the transformation of individual states in order to make them similar to the "model group" (*Ibid.*: 18).

She argues that this regime operates, and inadvertently ends up dominating, through techniques of power along '[d]isciplinarity, governmentalization, biopolitics, and carceralization' (*Ibid.*: 21). Her central claim is that these techniques of democracy promotion produce a divide between a group of normal (democratic) states and a group of abnormal (undemocratic) states through which power is reproduced by opening up and subjecting the latter group to coercive interventions (*Ibid.*: 19-20). Through the construction of abnormality, interventions can be legitimised that seek to standardise 'a variety of local processes so as to make them legible to state administration through codification, record keeping, and unification procedures' (*Ibid.*: 22). According to her, therefore, the main rationale for international "statebuilding" is to discipline local state practices and state behaviour according to a universalised Western norm.

While Duffield sees Western hegemony to be explicitly exercised through advanced liberal governmentality that employs disciplinary, regulatory and biopolitical means, Zanotti sees the same mechanism and practices to form part of an inadvertent empire. A third twist to the take on empire is developed by Chandler (2006). Chandler, like other critics of empire albeit less explicitly "Foucauldian", sees democracy promotion as part of Western hegemony over the non-West. He particularly focuses on the growing emphasis put on the promotion of agency-centred forms, such as participation, empowerment, capacity-building and governance. Chandler importantly highlights that, different from the past when notions like participation and empowerment were radical democratic claims of social movements, there is no strident demand of the excluded and marginalised for empowerment and inclusion today. Rather these radical democratic notions are formulated as central tenets of governmental (foreign) policy-making (Chandler 2006: 91).

In crucial difference to other accounts, hegemonic power in Chandler's analysis is not conceived to be wielded as instrumental self-interest with normative window dressings. Instead, the essence of today's empire is the denial of self-interest. By denying its power and exerting itself through "other-regarding", Western and international decision-making

elites dodge responsibility and accountability. '[T]he new framework of domination', Chandler argues, 'has been built on the basis of the denial of Western power and responsibility' (*Ibid.*: 9). The decisive enabling condition for exercising hegemonic power through the 'abnegation of self-interest' is 'the professed concern to empower and capacity-build others' (*Ibid.*: 10). It is through empowering others, promoting participation and seeking to capacity-build that a hierarchy of power is both maintained as well as legitimised (*Ibid.*: 15).

One of the most important contributions Chandler makes to the debate on Western hegemony and democracy promotion is his engagement with the (internal) changes in the framework of hegemony. Chandler pinpoints the post-cold war era as a problem rather than an opportunity for power, a constraint rather than enabling condition, resulting from waning political purpose and meaning. In his words:

It would be no exaggeration to say that approaches to the international sphere have never been less future-orientated than today. It seems that the end of superpower competition has left the remaining power exhausted, without a mission or a sense of purpose. There is little doubt that the absence of great power conflict appears to have removed the framework of meaning in which the international sphere was highly politicised [...] Without a cause, a sense of purpose or political meaning it is difficult to engage in the life of society, in political life in its broadest sense. (*Ibid.*: 18-9)

Chandler considers the mechanisms of this novel form of empire to be technical and regulatory more than moral(ising) and representational practices. Denial, he claims, does not mean that less regulatory power is invested; to the contrary: more regulatory control is exercised by clothing itself 'in non-political, therapeutic or purely technical, administrative and bureaucratic forms' (*Ibid.*: 10-11). Therefore, this empire in denial, in Chandler's understanding, while sounding nicer, is 'no less elitist and patronising and, in its consequences, no less divisive, destabilising and restricting' (*Ibid.*: 9). In the end then, like for Duffield and Zanotti, for Chandler nothing much has changed. Despite all the nice rhetoric, 'there has been little change in the basic policy approach of international institutions or, of course, in the power relations involved' (*Ibid.*: 90). The shift towards participatory approaches serves to legitimise technocratic agendas of external regulation and hence must be understood as little more than a 'decorative' measure to conceal the top-down nature of participation promotion (*Ibid.*: 94). As the more context-oriented and agency-centred approach is but a window dressing behind which interventions occur in a traditional top-down fashion, he problematises that empire's approach is inattentive 'to how societal pressures and demands are constitutive of stable and legitimate institutional

mechanisms' (*ibid.*: 48). Empire in denial thus spreads instability. However, he admits more than criticises that legitimising an empire in denial through democratic institution building quickly finds its limits: the 'artificial nature of these regimes is highlighted by the fact that their governments' writs seldom extend outside the protected security zone of the capitals' (*ibid.*: 41).

After Duffield's postcolonial empire of advanced liberal governmentality, Chandler's regulatory empire in denial and Zanotti's disciplinary empire by default, very recent publications offer a tweaking in the Foucauldian critique of promoting democracy. Joseph raises the possibility of a failure of liberal governmentality (2012), whereas Chandler himself argues that current international democracy promotion is better understood in terms of post-liberal governance (2010) and Kurki observes that current practices of promoting democracy unravel in very different ways (2013).

Tweaking the Empire of Foucault: Failure, Post-Liberalism, Hiddenness

Jonathan Joseph's (2010; 2012) recent work on global governmentality and hegemony which deals with central tenets of contemporary democracy promotion such as civil society support, empowerment and participation, adds an intriguing aspect to the debate. While Chandler's work draws out the predicaments and shifting nature of post-cold war hegemony, Joseph's work, combining Marx, neo-Gramscian approaches to hegemony and Foucault, is instrumental in raising the possibility of global governmentality's failure. Together with empire in denial, the idea of "'failed governmentality'" (Joseph 2012: 50) can contribute much to understand the nature and role of democracy and its promotion in a post-political world.

Joseph defines governmentality as a form of power 'exercised through a network of institutions, practices, procedures and techniques which act to regulate conduct' (Joseph 2012: 12). Only in a second step does he add a neoliberal dimension to governmentality. Neoliberalism is of course many things but one of its most prominent features highlighted by Joseph is "'responsibilisation'". In a regulatory regime of responsibilisation 'the governed are encouraged to adopt an entrepreneurial attitude towards themselves' (*ibid.*: 13). The main emphasis of neoliberal governmentality of freedom hence 'is on the "rational subject" taking individual responsibility' (*ibid.*: 13). This form of governing is therefore a rather specific form associated with free, responsible and rational subjectivity, predicated

on particular 'social conditions' that allow governance to take place 'from a distance' (*Ibid.*: 50). Consequently, its particularity raises questions where and whether it applies or can apply internationally (*Ibid.*: 49-50). If it does not apply, Joseph correctly notes 'then we have to consider alternative description of what is going on' in the context of which 'we could perhaps talk of "failed governmentality"' (*Ibid.*: 50). Global neoliberal governmentality fails because and when it 'does not ... work itself all the way down' (*Ibid.*: 180).

Having raised this pivotal point, Joseph suggests that such an alternative form emerges as an *imposition* of neoliberal governmentality. According to Joseph, this imposition manifests itself largely as coercive and hierarchical disciplinary power (*Ibid.*: 71-2). In this depiction, it appears, Western powers and international institutions employ whatever means necessary to impose neoliberal governmentality. Such governmentality, Joseph argues, is imposed on states and local elites with the aim of 'getting them to agree to a monitoring process that subjects them to governance through the exercise of their agreement to abide by certain norms of behaviour and responsabilised self-conduct' (*Ibid.*: 226). The idea of promoting empowerment and participation that permeates much of donor discourses take on a crucial role in this regime of imposing neoliberal governmentality. According to Joseph, it emphasises social norms 'while promoting individual self-maximising behaviour' (*Ibid.*: 223). In other words, where global neoliberal governmentality fails to reach all the way down to the level of the individual in order to transform its subjectivity in line with the rational exercise of free agency, international power resorts to hierarchical forms that coercively imposes these norms on states and individuals by promoting empowerment and participation with the objective to force them to abide to "certain norms" of responsabilised self-conduct.

Similarly, in Chandler's later work the main thrust of democracy promotion in what he considers to constitute a post-liberal paradigm revolves around the responsabilisation and capacity-building of non-Western subjects. Drawing on Foucault's investigation of governing rationalities developing in relation to the German question after World War II, post-liberal democracy promotion, Chandler argues, no longer conducts its policy interventions based on assumptions about the rational subject and hence no longer focuses on government institutions of democracy. Instead, in the framework of statebuilding, democratisation seeks to responsabilise subjects to use their autonomy 'safely and unproblematically' (Chandler 2010: 3-4). He explains the term post-liberal to

refer to an inversion of liberal, rights-based understanding of juridico-political frameworks: rather than autonomy being the starting point, it is the goal to which non-Western subjects and societies are sought to be capacity-built and empowered, in order to live up to the requirements of autonomy in a responsible way (*Ibid.*: 4-7). What has allowed for this problematisation to emerge is the rise of sociological approaches which argue that 'preferences and interests are not pre-given or exogenous to the political system of the institutional framework, but rather are products of these frameworks and of social interaction' (Chandler 2010: 80). As a result, interventions in a post-liberal paradigm follow a deeply interventionist logic that profoundly penetrates civil society (*Ibid.*: 192). He argues,

Interventionist civil society policy has become central ... as a framework in which political and social collectivities are understood and engaged with as products of irrational mind-sets shaped by institutional legacies of the past but nevertheless as potentially open to transformation. (*Ibid.*: 192)

As a result of post-liberal ways of exercising of power, Chandler therefore seems to be suggesting that the relations between West and non-West have turned more imperialistic. The colonialist civilising mission is looming larger than before with the problematisation of autonomy. With the rise of more sociological understandings of the world, it appears, we are confronted with a revamped moral divide between the universal rational Western and the local irrational post-colonial subject.

In fact, Kurki makes a very similar argument on democracy being promoted through practices and techniques of responsabilisation. As a result of also drawing on a combined Gramscian-Foucauldian approach, she largely concurs with Joseph (Kurki 2013: 216-223). The interesting point of her approach and argument, however, emerges when seen in relation to the context of the study, its rationale and the trajectory of the book. Her study is a response to an increasingly felt epistemological uncertainty with regard to the nature and study of democracy promotion (*Ibid.*: 3). While the field seemed to have been doing fine for twenty years with a broadly Dahlian framework of representative democracy, recent commentators have begun to problematise what is now considered a lack of conceptual and analytical tools (see Hobson 2009; Wolff and Wurm 2011). Having a hunch that democracy promotion today is different, Kurki posits that it has "gone into hiding" (Kurki 2013: 18) and consequently sets out to look for it. However, her initial attempt, guided by the assumption that the situation we are confronted with is one of 'conceptual contestation over democracy's meaning' (*Ibid.*: 3, see also Hobson and Kurki 2012), is through an engagement and application with David Held's models of democracy (1996).

Running these by different democracy actors she finds that the US is promoting liberal democracy and that despite heightened emphasis on empowerment and inclusion the World Bank has not turned into a fervent advocate of Marxist-socialist democracy. Apparently not only unimpressed herself with analytical insights gained from a models perspective, donors (even when interviewed directly for that purpose) seemed either unwilling or unable to associate what they were doing in terms of democracy with a particular model. Mostly, actors stated that they did not work with any specific model (Kurki 2013: 19). Unable to make sense of democracy promotion through a models perspective, she proclaims that democracy promotion was a 'rather unconscious, unreflective' reflex in international policy-making (*Ibid.*: 225). It is in discarding the models perspective for not yielding any meaningful knowledge that she turns to a Gramscian-Foucauldian approach that allow her to focus exclusively on techniques and practices (*Ibid.*: 216-223). This Gramscian-infused liberal governmentality framing leads her to argue that independently of all rhetoric (and consciousness) there is a global common sense in which democracy promotion manifests itself increasingly 'in an "implicitly liberal" manner' that makes democracy promotion a hegemonic project (*Ibid.*: 18-9).

These Foucauldian critiques have been invaluable in sharpening our analytical senses to scrutinising and understanding democracy promotion in relation to governing rationalities and turn our attention to the importance of techniques and practices that locate democracy promotion in policy documents rather than in grand declarations – an approach that is also adopted in this thesis. However, the thesis critically asks whether contemporary governmentality framings provide us with adequate tools to capture the trajectory of democracy promotion and can help us make coherent sense of the "hiddenness" of democracy. For instance, can a (neo)liberal governmentality approach think through self-allegations of hubris in exporting Western knowledge and institutions and the shift from "best practice" to "best fit" approaches that accompany the turn to more agency-centred understandings of democracy as anything but rhetorical (see for instance Fukuyama 2005 [2004])? Do such approaches compel us to discard these changes as window dressings rather than comprehend them as a radical challenge to knowledge or truth regime based on universals, abstractions and generalisations? Can (neo)liberal forms of knowledge, power and subjectivity reflect upon the implications of the rise of local contexts, the turn to organic forms of governing and the emphasis on relationships towards the end of 1990s

(see, for instance Chapters 3 and 4)? The concern here is that the kind of relational power of the social through which democratic or participatory self-governance is promoted and lived does not operate within a liberal or neoliberal paradigm with its focus on individuals, rationality and autonomy, either as the foundational assumption or the aim of intervention, and can therefore not be comprehended through (neo)liberal governmentality framings. The question here is whether arguments based on the promotion or exertion of (neo)liberal governmentality overestimate the capacity of liberal forms to “create” conditions for such governmentality and underestimate the difficulties of reverting to pre-liberal forms of power out of a liberal episteme. Secondly, literature on the failure of liberal governmentality in the context of democracy promotion may not go far enough or open up the analytical space to comprehend and conceptualise the radical reworking of democracy as a continuous process of participatory self-transformation(see Chapter 4) and a way of overcoming the illusion of the subject (see Chapter 5).

The final section will engage with some of the concrete gaps, aporias and misunderstandings within and between Foucault-inspired critiques. As the section seeks to show, some of the central critical positions are, in fact, undermined by less professedly critical investigations that are more concerned with the failure or decline of democracy promotion. In working through some aporias and gaps, the review will develop a final set of research questions for this thesis.

Foucauldian Aporias and the Rise of the Social

One of the main problems, it seems, is that while Foucault-inspired critiques are very good at undermining democracy promotion as commonly understood, they are considerably less able to question the nature (or even actuality) of liberal hegemony and power. Critical scholars have observed changes in techniques, mechanism and practices employed for maintaining and reproducing liberal empire and Western hegemony without ever questioning whether such changes may have an impact on the understanding and exercise of power in international relations. The question is if there are important shortcomings and omissions in closing off the possibility that it may be modifications in the understanding and exercise of power that have effected changes not only in mechanisms and practices of

democracy promotion in international policy-making but, by extension, also (largely ignored) changes in the conception and role of democracy itself.

It appears that in various ways, Foucauldian critics are generating contradictions through precisely that which they critically see as manifestations of liberal governmentality's hegemony. Metaphorically speaking, they seem to collectively stumble over their own object of critique. Abrahamsen's study, for instance, quite obviously sets off with the purpose of *proving* Western imperialism through investigation rather than inducting such results from analysis. Hence she is forced to argue that empire exercised over sub-Saharan Africa through democracy and good governance promotion is empire on the cheap (as it does not employ the same mechanisms of direct control as colonialism). At the same time the argument compels her to assume and maintain that these new effortless and resource-efficient mechanisms of hegemony over Africa are equally as capable of exerting social control as 18th century imperialism. Where the argumentative shortcoming of this construct becomes most apparent is when after seeking to draw out the effortlessness of social control through liberal democracy promotion policies, the study ends up criticising the self-same policies in their reproduction of poverty and inequality for being unable to prevent or even seem to 'cause widespread social and political protest and unrest' (Abrahamsen 2000: 141). How this political unrest could be apprehended through the success of empire on the cheap is questionable. The argument is also weakened, for instance, by more mainstream studies on the ineffectiveness of political conditionality to incite the desired behaviour. The fact that Abrahamsen's own critical observations may indicate that the disciplinary regime of liberal democracy promotion is, at least, beginning to form cracks, is unthinkable from the particular critical perspective that informs the argument. The implications of her observation seem to weigh even heavier since no reason is provided as to why the West or the international community have such a heightened interest in dominating sub-Saharan Africa in a post-cold war era.

In a very similar way, Duffield's critical framework of advanced liberal governmentality is challenged by the very object that incites the critique: the turn in development policies from modernisation to sustainability. He critically observes that

Sustainable development is opposed to the ideas of modernization based on material advancement and closing the economic gap between rich and poor countries. It is more concerned with introducing new forms of social organisation than encourage homeostatic conditions of self-reliance. (Duffield 2007: 25)

This change in the objective of development seems rather substantial. However, inserted in the neo-colonial liberal governmentality framework of biopolitically governing “surplus life”, all this change attests to once more is a continuation of imperialism of old. The main argument of the study thus reads: while the mechanisms of sustaining empire may have changed, Western hegemony remains the same. No explanation is offered why these mechanisms have changed, particularly in respect to the biopolitical turn in development enveloped in sustainability. As Duffield himself suggests, sustainability is underpinned by a very different rationale regarding its objective and the ensuing forms of subjectivity and social organisation than the modernisation paradigm. In this context, it is also peculiar, or indicative, that Zanotti, with the same integrated framework of combining different Foucauldian concepts of power, can argue something very different: that Western or international hegemony exerts itself unintentionally and through standardisation that seeks to democratise non-Western states to live up to a universal(ised) norm.

Likewise, Chandler’s earlier work (2006) appears to execute an unwarranted conceptual move at the heart of empire in denial. While first the central point and purpose of the investigation is presented to revolve around the substantial changes in the nature of empire that exerts itself through other-regarding and democracy promotion, the argument changes to democracy promotion as window dressing, leaving in place empire as it always was. In the wake of this argumentative displacement a distinct incongruence seems to open up with regard to the critique of empire: on the one hand, empire in denial is condemned for the pervasiveness of social control mechanism, on the other hand, Western power is problematised as rather ineffective with limited reach as a result of imposing artificial forms of governance. The present study intimates that the latter observation with regard to the limitations of exporting artificial constructs is correct. These limitations have, in fact, been acknowledged by democracy promoters towards the end of the 1990s. The argument that respective social control mechanisms remain available and continue to be exercised, however seems to underestimate the fundamental uncertainty this recognition provoked, impinging upon the knowledge required for such mechanisms. In this light, Kurki’s study on the applicability of models of democracy to the way democracy promotion is approached and conducted by international actors is indicative of epistemological difficulties for both practitioners as well as analysts in understanding policy practice in terms of abstract political frameworks. If there is no model sitting behind the kind of democracy being promoted that provides the foil according to which policy interventions

are designed, it would seem difficult to envision and exercise respective goal-oriented social control mechanisms. Here the analytical recourse to Foucault taken by Kurki to understand democracy promotion through its programmatic practice seems to make up for the lack of coherence that opens up between the practices of governing, on the one hand, and the prefabricated assumption about Western power and control, on the other.

These contradictions and inconsistencies, which present themselves as a consequence of the insistence of hegemony or empire in conjunction with an undifferentiated use of Foucauldian conceptions of power, seem to fundamentally undermine and obstruct a critical engagement with “real world” observations made in a coherent manner. In the face of these circularities and elisions, it seems necessary to ask and explore whether there is a link between the internal incongruences and the obvious difficulties of capturing the paradigmatic changes indicated above in regard to the ability of Foucauldian accounts of (neo)liberal or moral empire to provide adequate critical tools. The thesis thus examines whether the inconsistencies in critical Foucauldian scholarship stand in relation to difficulties of coherently understanding contemporary forms of knowledge, power and subjectivity in which the conception of democracy is embedded and according to which democracy is promoted. To put it differently, what this thesis is interested in is the question whether democracy is being promoted without liberal attachments and whether this question allows us to understand contemporary international policy-making more coherently. Do contemporary forms and rationalities of promoting democratic of participatory governance even radically frustrate the fundamentals of liberal forms in terms of individuality, rationality and autonomy?

In this context, a development in recent Foucauldian scholarship is interesting. Both Chandler and Joseph seem to consider it necessary to question the nature of liberal governmentalised hegemony in order to understand rationales of promoting empowerment, participation and inclusion. Importantly, observing governing trends and policies that appear to resist a rationalisation through logics of liberal governmentality both authors allude to a social dimension.

However, while sensing important shifts in the set-up of governing, Joseph’s failed neoliberal governmentality ultimately resurfaces as new neoliberal governmentality: where the responsabilisation of the neoliberal subject has not succeeded, Joseph seems to argue, such responsabilisation is imposed. The disciplinary, however, can hardly be said to

constitute an alternative to failed governmentality: hierarchical disciplinary regimes are the dark underside of Enlightenment's discovery of liberty (Foucault 1991: 222) and hence not the dark underside of its failure. This is because the disciplinary is predicated upon modern notions of human perfectability, progress and absent ideals (Foucault 2009: 11-2). The rationale and modality of exercising disciplinary power, therefore, appears to be rather fundamentally tied to liberal modernity. In Joseph's work, it seems that the circularity that consequently emerges between failed governmentality and alternative forms of governing (liberal and disciplinary), results from an analytical and argumentative reluctance of drawing what might be uncomfortable conclusions from a Marxist perspective. As a critical perspective, (neo)liberal governmentality is equated with Western interests and global capital accumulation. If indeed today we were confronted with its failing, this would have major ramifications for presumptions about Western interests, international hierarchies and the logic of the market.

While the failure of neoliberal governmentality is closed off as a possibility at the locale Joseph has placed it to reveal itself, it emerges again at an unexpected and unintended point in his argument. He considers neoliberal governmentality as an imposition because it does not correspond to local conditions. 'The absence of [respective social] conditions means that governmentality can be imposed, but it cannot develop deep roots and thus fails in its immediate aims' (Joseph 2012: 71). It 'lacks an organic relationship to the particular social conditions' characterising local contexts. Joseph's argument thus revolves around the following: 'By highlighting the importance of social context' we are able to 'see the disparity between the governmentalising impulse of international institutions, which inevitably reflects the rationality of the countries where they are based, and the actual social conditions where deployment takes place' (Joseph 2012: 219). It seems, neoliberal governmentality's failure lies here: in finding its limits in the overpowering social conditions of local contexts (similarly Chandler 2006: 41, see above). In the light of this critique, it is interesting that recent, more mainstream, studies on democracy promotion find that donors seem to be no longer approaching their target context from a goal-oriented perspective. As Jonas Wolff's case study on Bolivia reveals, democracy promotion policies are characterised by their 'adjustment to Bolivian "realities"' (Wolff 2012: 127) – which Wolff interprets as a waning of liberal democracy promotion and growing resistance on the ground. In other words, Joseph's critique may have been overhauled by policy approaches to democracy promotion.

Drawing on Foucault's analysis of the governance state, Chandler's post-liberal paradigm of democratisation as the reversal of individual and societal autonomy from the starting assumption to end-goal also pays (limited) attention to international statebuilding's growing concern with social and local contexts. He suggests that the increasing wariness of 'any "one size fits all" understanding of state-society relations' and the statebuilders' cautioning against 'any assumptions that institutional solution can just be imported from outside' speaks of a 'privileging of difference over universality' (Chandler 2010: 190). He concludes that the centrality of difference is 'not the natural or essentialized difference of colonial ideas of race' but a 'contingent open-ended reproduction of difference' that is the result of a frustration of universal "truth" (Chandler 2010: 190). This indeed appears to be a pivotal and consequential observation (see Chapter 4). Yet, while there is much to be gained from this point made in the concluding chapter, the book itself does not lend itself for this conclusion. To the contrary, the critique of statebuilding as producing the post-colonial subject as irrational would speak precisely of the existence of universal truth of reason epitomised by the production of irrationality which statebuilders set out to transform. Despite drawing conclusions along a line that would carry the argument into a very different direction, post-liberal governance indicates once more the persistence of traditional hierarchies in international politics.

These studies, in other words, are carried out in an almost self-limiting manner in which the problematisations appear to be necessitating different conclusions or the conclusions different problematisations. In both cases the line of investigation is leashed and roped in again through recourse to Foucault's studies on liberal forms of governing. Arguments hence fall back onto maintaining that the nature of power in international relations remains fundamentally unchanged. Instigated by these shortcomings, a pressing question to be raised is whether Foucault is essentially holding us back. The question immediately following is whether this is a problem to do with the work of Foucault itself or whether it is the way he has come to be activated in critical democracy promotion scholarship. With regard to the former it appears that rather than enabling critical investigation, in critical literature the recourse to Foucault and governmentality studies seems to serve the purpose of justifying and legitimating an argument and a critical knowledge that was in place before conducting the investigation. As a result, it seems that much more of a global liberal hegemony has developed in Foucault-inspired governmentality studies than in contemporary democracy promotion. With regard to the

former, in his turn away from disciplinary power to relational power Foucault himself seems to impose on us a human incapacity of ever understanding power in a meaningful and anchored way as a result of the irrevocable fact that we are embedded into the world (and are thus not God-like creatures in an elevated, privileged position separated from our environment (Foucault 2003: 29). This thesis's intuition is that the disengaged common sense in Foucauldian critiques on democracy promotion and Foucault's imposition of a lack of human capacities to anchor and localise power are linked. Moreover, it intimates that contemporary democracy promotion works precisely through this incapacity. As will be traced throughout the following chapters democracy promotion does not work in a linear way between the donor and the target but rather describes a subjective and ongoing process through which the globally embedded subject, as a general human condition, comes to realise and thrive on its incapacity to understand and make sense of reality. In other words, democracy has very little to do with the way society is governed but much more with socio-psychological processes and the inner life of people.

The suggestion certainly is not to discard the work of Foucault. But the hunch is that in order to see these novel developments and reconceptualisations in democracy promotion we may have to move beyond liberal governmentality. In order to make sense of the displacements we may have to let go of a rigid employment of Foucault's historical findings as theory and rather engage with Foucault as an invitation to ask new questions about power and governing and ask them differently. It may be more genuinely Foucauldian to lessen our intellectual dependency on critical work conducted with a particular historical focus for understanding a particular moment in time.¹⁵ Instead, as Foucauldians we should perhaps do the same and explore, speculate and engage with our current condition (see Chandler 2013). For enabling us to do so Foucault has certainly laid a crucial foundation. One way, the thesis suggests could be useful, is through adding some aspects and intimations from Arendt's works on the implications of Cartesian doubt for the modern subject to supplement Foucault as an alternative to more established Gramscian or Marxist combination.

¹⁵ As Nancy Fraser (2003) has pointed out, Foucault's great studies on the disciplinary to have emerged, 'like the Owl of Minerva, at the moment of its historical waning. From this perspective, it is significant that his great works of social analysis ... were written in the 1960s and 1970s, just as the OECD countries abandoned Bretton Woods, the international financial framework that undergirded national Keynesianism and thus made possible the welfare state. In other words, Foucault mapped the contours of the disciplinary society just as the ground was being cut out from under it. And although it is only now with hindsight becoming clear, this was also the moment at which discipline's successor was struggling to be born.' (Fraser 2003: 160; see also Deleuze 1992)

Conclusion

This review chapter on critical literature on democracy promotion found three types of critique: The first concerns a normative critique which largely conceived of democracy promotion as a desirable goal but considered the policy polluted by interests or weakened by implementation shortcomings. The second group consists of Foucauldian critics who seek to highlight the imperialistic and hegemonic trends in democracy promotion – as part of a regulatory regime of practices, democracy promotion here (re)produces Western empire. The third group is less openly critical but has come to be unsatisfied with the field's generation of knowledge – or as it is now perceived: lack thereof. The review was conducted with the purpose of clarifying the research problematique through generating research questions the following chapters seek to engage with. Hence, centrality has been accorded to the discussion of Foucauldian literature.

In relation to the normative critique, the review observed that their problematisation along a rhetoric-reality divide can only perceive of power as an inference or interruption. As part of the wider concern of understanding the shift in democracy promotion from a concern with the formal public sphere to a concern with a novel sphere of self-governance, the question has been posed whether the perception of power as interference can be understood as a central rationale of contemporary democracy promotion. That is, whether the promotion of democracy as a contemporary governing rationale could be understood to circle around and modify its problem-solution nexus in relation to perceiving human and political power as interference.

The question of the nature and role of power for democracy promotion especially gains in importance in the light of Foucauldian studies' insistence on Western hegemony exerted through disciplinary mechanisms and practices. Foucauldian framings have been invaluable in opening up the field's stunted methodological and analytical approaches and are instrumental for developing conceptual insights into democracy promotion through the study of policy practices and discourses. What these studies thus enable is an examination of democracy promotion in relation to and as practices, techniques and broader rationalities of governing. However, the chapter critically raised the possibility that in their one-sided focus on practices and mechanisms of governing they may have failed to interrogate hegemony at the other end. A central characteristic of Foucauldian critiques is that they critically observe changing practices, mechanisms and techniques of governing.

Yet, these changes are never scrutinised with regard to their effects on the nature of hegemony and forms of power. Foucauldian critiques of democracy promotion, therefore, not only adopt a certain methodological framing. It seems that with that framework the argument is pre-given. The question that emerges therefore is whether such Foucauldian approaches provide a framework through which we can coherently apprehend forms of knowledge, power and agency in contemporary governing rationalities emerging in and underpinning the promotion of democracy.

It has been intimated that one of the reasons may lie in the incommensurability of the hegemonic-disciplinary modality of power and its epistemological edifice with the emerging social-relational modality of power and its reworking of knowledge and the way we understand reality. The emerging modality would question whether we can still speak of international relations as a realm in which power is exercised through man-made concepts and constructs and in this context, whether democracy promotion is the promotion of a concept. Democracy promotion today seems to be underpinned and work through a radical reversal in the way we understand our relationship to the world. Democracy in this way is not promoted in the conventional sense between the donor with authoritative knowledge and the target that is lacking certain features of societal organisation and respective subjects. Rather, this thesis seeks to highlight, that democracy promotion is better understood as the facilitation of adaptive learning processes that do not discriminate between donors and targets in a world with little political meaning that seems to longer amenable to our understanding and actions.

The next chapter therefore explores whether the reason why analytical framings have developed and persist that seem unable to capture the trajectory and displacements of the role and understanding of democracy promotion as a rationality of governing and increasingly display argumentative inconsistencies rest with their historicisation of democracy promotion itself. The origin of the policy is usually accorded to the end of the cold war. A pivotal inspiration for posing this question in the thesis comes from Foucault's observation that the failure of socialism is a failure of developing an autonomous form of governmentality, a way of doing things. Inferring from this observation, it will be asked whether liberal forms in turn do not dispose of mechanisms of creating the conditions for its way of governing out of their own episteme of limiting public authority. The next chapter therefore asks whether the promotion of democracy as way of instilling political

change is better understood to originate in the epistemological and political setting of the cold war. The chapter traces the development of democracy promotion as a containment strategy within the context of ideological rivalry. In asking what allowed for democracy promotion to constitute a feasible and viable Western or American foreign policy practice, it seeks to highlight its parasitic dependency on communism. Crucially, democracy promotion reveals itself to not only be dependent on the wider political context as such, which gave meaning to the policy, but also on forms of political organisation and mobilisation not immediately available out of a governing rationality that focuses on limiting political authority rather than constituting it. Based on these observations and findings, the chapter then can explore post-cold war developments as a rather fundamental reconfiguration in context and understanding of democracy promotion and political change rather than its inceptive moment. What this allows, the chapter seeks to highlight, is an analytical attentiveness to the rise of the social – the turn towards civil society and an understanding of democratisation as socialisation – as the result of a loss of political meaning and means.

CHAPTER 2

STAGING DEMOCRACY PROMOTION'S MISSION CREEP: COLD WAR, CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOCIAL

Introduction

The previous chapter has raised several questions with regard to the adequacy of available framings for understanding the trajectory and rationalities of democracy promotion. It has shown that the main critical trends on democracy promotion either see democracy promotion to be polluted by power and interests or consider democracy promotion to be the apogee of liberal hegemony. While the former display an aversion to power and wish to eradicate power from the international democracy promotion agenda, the latter seems to be essentialising power into international hierarchies (re)produced through democracy promotion as part of global (neo)liberal governmentality. Both critiques, the review chapter observed, display a tendency to rely on prefabricated assumptions and put forward standardised arguments. The former, normative, critique does so more in relation to the nature of democracy (promotion) which assumes liberal democracy to underpin democracy promotion. The latter, political, critique does so more in relation to the nature of power (relations) which assume some form of liberal hegemony exerted through liberal governmentality to drive democracy promotion. It has been suggested that this ready-made critical knowledge speaks of a disengagement which questions the relevance of these framings and arguments for the contemporary study of democracy promotion. This impasse seems to be what a third group is pointing to when problematising that the field has not produced adequate conceptual and analytical tools (thereby indicating that the available ones no longer can be considered to generate knowledge). By extension, the previous chapter further observed that it is precisely in the reliance or fall-back on readily available critical knowledge where the greatest aporias and inconsistencies are produced. This seemed to be particularly the case in Foucault-inspired scholarship. With noticeable

regularity, contradictions open precisely at the moment in which the framing is applied to the “real life” events, phenomena or developments. It is these instances that the critical substance seems to dissipate and the critical content and foundation put to question. It seems that when applied to critically observed phenomena, the Foucauldian disciplinary-hegemonic framework produces more contradictions than explanation. The fact that Foucauldian tropes, notions and concepts of power are used and integrated in rather unreflective and undifferentiated ways in order to main the hegemony of the liberal seems to substantiate this further; the blurring appears to attest to growing epistemological difficulties in accommodating contemporary forms of democracy, power and governing within a liberal framing. The chapter thus asked why Foucauldian liberal governmentality framings that sought to unearth and criticise hegemony in international relations were seemingly unable to capture and explain contemporary democracy promotion coherently.

The question that the thesis seeks to explore then is whether a conceptual analysis of the rise of the social cannot only reveal and give coherence to the displacements and dispersion of democracy but also whether the rise of the social must be understood as a new paradigm that is incommensurable with frameworks of governing and meaning of the hegemonic-disciplinary. In this context it has been suggested that new approaches, including a more critical rereading of Foucault, may be necessary to capture the changing nature of power, knowledge and governing in order to comprehend contemporary democracy promotion that may not be recognisable or amenable to conventional understandings. This thesis suggests two such ways – an analytical one and a conceptual one. The first concerns the study of different policy fields rather than different policy actors (which will become subject of analysis in the following chapters); the second concerns supplementing Foucault with elements of Arendt’s work with regards to the importance of laws and institutions for power, politics and meaning.

This chapter wishes to demonstrate how this supplementation can lead to new perspectives and analytical insights on the nature of (political) power and democracy (promotion) not available in normative and Foucauldian critiques. It investigates the understanding of democracy promotion and political change during the cold war and compares this to post-cold war conceptualisations with the aim of unearthing and contextualising the conditions of the “discovery” of the social in the early 1990s. Crucial for this objective is the relocation of the “birth of democracy promotion” into the cold war period. This chapter therefore challenges somewhat the common wisdom that locates the

inceptive moment of democracy promotion at the beginning of the 1990s. Instead, it engages with cold war rationalisation of political change, representative democracy and democracy promotion. While cold war democracy promotion is usually considered to be a stunted policy goal, the chapter suspects this contention to be premature and again constitute a self-evidence not to be immediately accepted. Leaning on Arendt and detecting a blind spot in Foucault's critique of socialism, the chapter seeks to elucidate the epistemological and political conditions that made democracy promotion both a meaningful and a feasible project, as a way of governing of societies as well as an international strategy. For this purpose, the chapter focuses on the conception and locale in cold war democracy promotion with a particular interest in how this conception approaches local context, on the one hand, and on how it operates in the wider international context, on the other hand.

The key point the chapter seeks to highlight is that democracy promotion was fundamentally dependent on the political and epistemological context of the cold war. It suggests that cold war democracy promotion was meaningful and feasible for two reasons: First, domestically as well as internationally, democracy and democracy promotion were means to an end that rested outside the political form as well as the promotion as a foreign policy goal. That is, domestically, representative democracy was considered the best form of ensuring the rationality of decision-making and relatedly, internationally, the promotion of democracy was seen as a containment strategy. Secondly, conceptually and practically (policy discourses), mechanisms of promoting democracy incorporated forms of political organisation and mobilisation that were alien to the liberal episteme of limiting political authority. In other words, the constitutive power of democracy (promotion) was parasitic on communist forms of exercising authority.

The chapter then explores how these findings can be employed to interrogate and analyse post-cold war developments with regard to conceptions of political change as well as democratisation and its promotion. It observes that the rise of social constructivism and the emergence of the concept of consolidation are crucial developments in the post-cold war era. The chapter asks whether their emergence can or even must be understood as a response to the rather sudden loss of significant political, ideological and epistemological factors that had given meaning to the project of democracy promotion as a way of fostering political change and societal transformation. The notion of consolidated democracy, in problematising an institution-centric view on democracy, begins to view

democracy in terms of behavioural and attitudinal questions. Social constructivism, in problematising rationalistic worldviews and theorisations, turns the focus to more sociological understanding of structure as intersubjective and of institutions as socialisation environments. It seems that social constructivism seeks to bring about political change without or in the absence of political means, while consolidation emerges as democracy without political content. These observations are then conceptualised and contextualised in regard to the rise of the social. The suggestion will be made that the discovery of the social in democratisation studies reflects the loss of constitutive power of political frameworks whereas the discovery of the social in IR theories reflects the loss of constitutive power of theoretical frameworks.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section investigates the role and understanding of democracy in the cold war context. Sections two and three deal with changes in the post-cold war context as an immediate reaction to the demise of communism. Section two is dedicated to the emergence of the concept of consolidation in democratisation thinking and the concomitant turn from political to civil society in democracy promotion. Section three relates the consolidation problematique to the rise of social constructivist understandings and interrogates the critical and emancipatory promise of social constructivism.

For the conceptualisation of cold war democracy promotion, the chapter draws on the notion of constitutive and constituted power presented in the methodology. Political change and democracy promotion are thus interrogated in terms of constituting part of an intentional, political project through which power and meaning can be cohered that allows an approach to existing contexts and conditions with a goal-driven transformatory agenda. Here transformation means reorganisation through the creation of new political forms of organisation and new political institutions. Laws and institutions are thus a “violent” intervention into and disruption of dynamics that already exist, imposing on these an artificial construct that, as an artificial construct, needs to be maintained and taken care of in order to persist (Arendt 2005: 181). Liberal ways of governing in contrast, as Foucault reminds us, are always defined via their limits. Its governmental rationality is that of limiting public authority and power. These limits have two forms, one from the perspective of the rights of man (*de jure*) and one from the perspective of a defined and thus limited agenda of governing (*de facto*) (Foucault 2009: 37-42). In this context, Foucault criticises

that the problem and ill-success of socialism is that it failed to develop an autonomous way of governing; in other words, that it lacks a governance dimension (Foucault 2008: 93-5). With Arendt in mind and, maybe somewhat surprisingly, drawing upon Huntington it will be asked whether we can reversely infer that liberalism has not developed a way of “creating” governmentality; that is, whether it lacks constitutive power.

Rationality, Democracy and the Cold War

It goes against conventional wisdom and periodisation to begin with the cold war era for a discussion of democracy and its promotion. Acknowledged in passing with an eye on “Wilsonianism” (S Smith and Stockman 2011: 22-3), democracy promotion is usually considered to not have been democracy promotion “proper” due to the constraints imposed particularly on US foreign policy. Principles had to yield the harsh reality of superpower rivalry and the overpowering interest in containing communism. For instance, leading experts on US democracy promotion Michael Cox and colleagues affirm:

Though fought under the banner of democracy, after 1947 America's principal objective was not to promote political freedom but to contain the Soviet Union, and in the rough and tough world of the cold war policymakers tended to judge their friends not by their liberal credentials but by their loyalty to the larger cause of anti-communism’ (Cox et al. 2000: 4)

Cautioned by the alleged destructiveness of utopianism and idealism – in whichever colour – it is certainly the case that “liberal internationalism” was silenced after World War II (T Smith 1994: 269). And while this chapter agrees with Tony Smith that democracy promotion represented only one foreign policy goal among an array of other priorities (*Ibid.*: 118), it argues that without tracing the logic and understanding of democracy promotion during the cold war, we cannot make sense of developments – the euphoria as well as the ensuing disillusionment – in its aftermath. The cold war, here, however, is not just viewed as grand geostrategic setting but read as a distinct epistemological context which was very much based on the “truth” of rationality and interest.

This section thus is interested in the context in which it made sense to promote democracy and, related to this, in the understanding of democracy – as well as of target societies – to perceive of its feasibility. The discussion is signposted by several key accounts and

documents around which others can be grouped. The starting point is provided by the Reagan administration's 1983 *Democracy Program* in which the goal of promoting democracy becomes a priority. Hence, this document itself provides crucial insights into the conceptualisation of democracy as well as its early operationalisation. The *Democracy Program* mentions to have been greatly influenced by William Douglas's *Developing Democracy* (1972), which is one of the first monographs explicitly devoted to democratisation. Themes and rationalisations provided by Douglas mirror the more in-depth analysis offered in Samuel Huntington's classic study on social change, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (2006 [1968]), in which he focuses on the question of effective government. Furthermore, since the goal and template of democracy promotion is the establishment of Western-style representative governments, the influential 1975 report for the Trilateral Commission on the *Crisis of Democracy* proves to be a crucial source for working through the rationale of democracy as a form of government. The authors, Samuel Huntington, Michel Crozier and Joji Watanuki, are concerned with the growing question of governability which liberal representative democracies were confronted with arising out of social diversification and the loss of traditional mechanisms of social control.

The section argues that neither democracy promotion nor democracy itself was believed to be an end in itself: as a foreign policy concern it became part of containment; as a form of government it was a way of ensuring rational public decision-making. Democracy made sense and was desirable because it was considered the best way to achieve a given goal. In this context, it will be demonstrated how democratisation was understood as a question of establishing effective, stable government institutions able to accommodate new social forces and the ensuing need to establish their limits. This question, it is suggested, needs to be viewed as inextricably linked to the existence of an acknowledged ideological alternative: on the one hand, communist overthrows in the Third World were perceived to be a threat to US national and security interests; secondly, and more importantly, it was socialist political institutions – and here particularly the party – that was believed to wield the kind of power necessary to radically transform societies.

Democracy Promotion as Containment

Democratic control, as Stephen Krasner argues, is critical for ensuring the propagation of national rather than particularistic or arbitrary interests (Krasner 1992: 48). In this sense, the main objective of democracy is not participation of the populace but rationalising potentially arbitrary state power to prevent 'quixotic policies that fail to promote the national interest' (Krasner 1992: 48). Democratic checks and balances served the purposes of countering 'the two great mistakes in the conduct of foreign policy': 'doing too much and doing too little' (*Ibid.*: 42). Based on this rationalistic understanding, the policy of promoting democracy was rather confined but clear with regards to tactic, strategy and purpose and the understanding of democracy itself 'minimal' but tangible. In this sense, seeking to influence the political system of states constituted a feasible instrument or tool to pursue Western or American objectives of containing communism – i.e. democracy promotion was a policy based on clear and prior interests, which was meaningful because of its understanding of democracy based on rational decision-making.

The necessity for a democracy promotion agenda is explained by Michael Samuels and William Douglas – whose article is later on referred to and quoted in '*The Democracy Program*' leading to the foundation of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) – as follows:

The United States does not have sufficient programs to assist the development of democracy in the Third World. Clearly, U.S. interests are more secure in nations with strong democratic pluralist movements. U.S. security analysts are not agonizing over any shift to the Soviet camp by Venezuela, which has two strong major democratic parties, or by democratic Costa Rica, or Singapore. [...] The presence of strong democratic pluralist movements is crucial to U.S. interests, yet the U.S. government has not developed the means to strengthen such movements where they are already powerful. Lacking such a capacity, the U.S. international position suffers accordingly. To proclaim the value of one's ideology and yet fail to promote it does not enhance that cause. (Samuels and Douglas 1981: 52)

Democracy promotion, in other words, was no longer considered to be a policy concern that had to yield to the more pressing one of containment. Rather, with the Reagan administration, the widening of the capitalist "democracy camp" became a means precisely for communist containment. Democracy promotion was considered to be particularly relevant as an anti-communist strategy in the Third World. *The Democracy Program* of 1983 mentions four purposes the democracy promotion serves: The first one is 'ideological' about the universal applicability and validity of democratic principles. The second one is

‘economic’ because social turmoil in the Third World has crushed development efforts and hence aid should have a more distinct ‘political focus’ which closely links to the third purpose, ‘national security concerns’. The *Program* considers it vital to ‘strengthen democracy abroad in order to compete with America’s adversaries, especially Soviet-operated or inspired programs.’ Lastly, democracies make the world a safer place since they are inherently more peaceful (The Democracy Program 1983: 17-19).

In relation to the question of how it was possible to perceive of democracy as a way of preventing the further spread of communism and what allowed for its promotion to be considered a feasible policy goal, two interrelated points are important: the fact that democracy was understood in the context of a prevailing rational worldview and the role of an adversary, who was acknowledged as having found an alternative way of ensuring the rational government of society (Przeworski 1991: 7). Democracy promotion was thus underpinned by a clear friend-adversary distinction in pursuit of respective interests. Pitched against the communist universality, the universality of the Western – American – vision gained meaning and purpose. Consequently, ideology, leadership and purpose are clearly and unproblematically linked. In *competition* with its communist adversary, democracy promotion presents an opportunity for the US to exert its political power internationally: ‘Expanding the American political presence in the world affords increased opportunities for the direct and exemplary expression of American leadership’ (The Democracy Program 1983: 32). Its own system of government, in this perspective, constitutes ‘the most stable “export industry” of industrialized democracies’ (*Ibid.*: 45).

In this respect, the two positions of power politics and leadership on the one hand, and democracy promotion on the other hand, are conceived of as two sides of the same coin. The key for this understanding lies in rational assumptions in which the democracy promotion agenda becomes operative, which have a ‘fundamentally behavioral conception of both process and institutions: they change behavior but not identities and interests’ (Wendt 1992: 392). From a rational perspective, change is sufficient when it happens on the surface. So long as this notion of change, based on assumptions of rational decision-making that need no further consideration, is not challenged, a change in the formal institutional framework logically can bring about societal transformation. The coercive or hierarchical aspect of such top-down approaches are, as we shall see, also justifiable or legitimate because it is not primarily concerned with the individual but rather aims to change the political and institutional environment in which decisions are made. This is

important for the link between the ideologically-driven grand strategy and democracy promotion as a way of containing communism. It was not only the international arena that was considered to be based on the premises of strategic interests pursued by defined actors but these were also seen to constitute the structural principles of societies.

Democracy as Limited Government and the Political Party

The Democracy Program's definition of democracy highlights the interplay between public authority and its limitation whereby democratic political and civil rights as well as the rule of law indicate the modality and space within which such authority governs, and beyond which political authority has no right to intervene (The Democracy Program 1983: 27).¹⁶ 'To the extent that states exhibit these features, then they are democracies; to the extent that these features are absent they are undemocratic' (*Ibid.*: 27). The notion that democracy is a strategic "export industry" hinges upon such a limited conception of democracy as an institutional framework of government (Lipset 1959: 71; Przeworski 1991: 11). By extension, it is motivated by the idea that the creation of effective national political institutions restructure political processes in a way that would transform traditional political behaviour rather than be obstructed by it (Huntington 2006 [1968]). While democracy was undeniably a value, too, it was valued for its provision of rational decision-making and its provision of stability for democracy's institutional framework of elections, civil and political rights. Representation was also considered capable of accommodating new social and political forces arising out of modernisation processes (Huntington 2006 [1968: 21]; Dahl 1971: 17-32; Douglas 1972). As Michel Crozier, one of the authors of the 1975 *Crisis of Democracy* report, asserts: 'For the elaboration of decisions, democracy can be viewed as both the least evil and the most ideal embodiment of rationality' (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975: 40-1). Democracy's mechanisms of checking and balancing government was perceived to ensure that the inevitable gap between 'ideal objectives' and 'the muddy, messy world of reality' (*Ibid.*: 41) remained within acceptable, reasonable and manageable boundaries.

¹⁶ The four characteristics of a democracy mentioned in the document are: '1. Freedom of adult suffrage and non-governmental political organization and expression to exercise political judgement and control concerning the governance of society. 2. The recognition that within their societies individuals and minorities have unalienable rights, although their definition will vary with time and place. 3. Free information media constantly scrutinizing the domestic and foreign policy of their governments. 4. Security of life under a just and equitable rule of law enforced by agencies responsible to and controlled by legitimate authority answerable to the majority' (The Democracy Program 1983: 27).

This gap and its management are decisive for the governability of society through representative governments. While the problems diagnosed in the *Crisis of Democracy* report will be addressed towards the end of this section, what is crucial at this point is the necessity to create artificial spaces of government in which this “muddy, messy world of reality” is artificially reduced through aggregation of interests, the creation of political meaning and vision, as well as social control. In this political and epistemological context the lifeblood of liberal, representative democracy, as a form of government defined by its *de jure* as well as *de facto* limitation, are political parties in their mediating function between society and government. It is not surprising, thus, that democracy promotion in *The Democracy Program* is synonymous with democratic institution-building. And, in this context, the emphasis is markedly on political parties. Inspired by the concept of German political foundations (associated with a particular political party) chairman William Brock maintains: ‘only ... party-related foundations have the motivation and expertise to help critically important institution-building in the political arena that other foundations shy away from’ (The Democracy Program 1983: 3). As the Program further elaborates: ‘[T]he presumption underlying all such political foundations in democratic societies is that organized political parties in most democracies provide a pivotal mechanism for institutionalizing the paramount freedoms of expression and choice, however defined’ (*Ibid.*: 29).

Political parties are crucial for the formulation of public interest (Schmitter 2001; Daalder 2001). This aspect features prominently in Huntington’s work on social change and political order: ‘Without strong political institutions,’ he argues, ‘society lacks the means to define and to realize its common interests. The capacity to create political institutions is the capacity to create public interests’ (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 24). Not dissimilar to Arendt’s idea of the public and politics (1998), he warns of the destructive subordination of political values and institutions to economic ones since this necessarily leads to a reorientation of the core purpose of politics from the ‘achievement of public goals’ to ‘the promotion of individual interests’ (*Ibid.*: 67). Partisanship, he concludes, is vital to prevent this subordination as it ‘tends to establish a connection based upon avowed public obligation’ (*Ibid.*: 71). The crux, however, is that the viability of transforming the political artifice of governing – the creation of effective institutions from which authority could be exercised and within which the contestation for such exercise can take place – seemed to be fed by the availability of the communist “way of government”: its capacity to transform the way

society is governed through political mobilisation and political organisation embodied in the mass party. Here it is acknowledged that communist government appears to be superior to liberal-democratic government. The power to create new frameworks of exercising public authority seems to be absent from the liberal-democratic episteme of limiting the exercise of public authority.¹⁷

A key enabling condition for the policy goal of democracy promotion as the political restructuring of third world countries to become an attainable goal was thus the availability of a palpable mechanism of planned political transformation provided by an element alien to democracy as a representative form of government. Given its ostensible efficiency and speed of modernisation the communist path posed a substantial threat as a viable alternative with regards to the third world. This perception prominently frames William Douglas' 1972 work on *Developing Democracy*, which, in turn, is praised by the initial US Democracy Program as a 'sourcebook for all students of the subject' (The Democracy Program 1983: 5). Douglas is highly concerned with the Soviet Union and communism since 'such regimes have at least some of the features suited to the requirements of the underdeveloped countries.' Therefore, it is imperative that '[m]odern systems of developing democracy must also have those features if they are to compete successfully with Communism' (Douglas 1972: 84). The main feature, if we follow Huntington, is the creation of public authority. Huntington argues that the true scarcity "modernising" societies are facing is power and authority – a legitimate public order. He concurs with Douglas that the strength of communist movements rests in their ability to overcome this problem (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 8). While certainly not a communist, Huntington concedes: '[T]he one thing communist governments can do is to govern; they do provide effective authority. Their ideology furnished a basis of legitimacy, and their party organization provides the institutional mechanism for mobilizing support and executing policy' (*Ibid.*: 8).

What constitutes the strength of communist governments, in Huntington's view, is the weakness of liberal democratic governments' approach to political development. The latter

¹⁷ While, as Foucault has demonstrated, *de jure* and *de facto* limitations of the liberal way of governing are fed by fundamentally different rationalities, as an institutional form of government it logically cannot govern everything; its competence is necessarily limited (Foucault 2008: 37-42). Such a form of government needs the artificial creation of subjects and spaces suitable for limited governing intervention. As an artifice it cannot govern the full spectrum of societal realities. From this perspective, it is no coincidence that the alleged "overburdening" of governments with issues requiring decision-making (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975), the erosion of institutional authority, the rise of "postmaterial" social and cultural values (see Inglehart and Wetzels 2005: 311), and the decline of parties to provide political leadership and cohesion (see Schmitter 2001) coincide.

have no institutional or organisational means for creating political power. Nor do they dispose of epistemological means for understanding that such power is a man-made product endowing subjects with the capacity to change the external conditions they live in rather than understanding power as ‘something which may be lying around on the floor of the capitol’ (*Ibid.*: 144). Liberal government lacks the constitutive power to create the public but at the same time fundamentally rely on the constituted power of the public. ‘The communist approach,’ in Huntington’s view,

on the other hand, ‘emphasizes the “collective” or expandable aspect of power. Power is something which needs to be mobilized, developed, and organized. [...] The problem is not to seize power but to make power, to mobilize groups into politics and organize their participation in politics. This ... usually requires struggle, and these are precisely the terms in which the communist elites view political change. (*Ibid.*: 144-5)

In effect, what communist parties or states had understood about governing was the ‘priority they have given to the *conscious* act of political organization’ (*Ibid.*: 400; emphasis added). Huntington argues that the expansion of participation in order to have transformatory and constitutive effects on the way collective life is organised and to create political power requires institutional means to organise such participation. The principal means for its organisation – and therefore the principal field into which democratic interventions had to invest – were believed to be political parties and the party system (*Ibid.*: 397-8; Douglas 1972: 58-9). What Huntington and others had thus understood was that for political participation to be meaningful it requires the artifice of institutions, organisations and political purpose(s) that give permanence to such participation.

For elitist, representative government to be effective and for elections to keep it within rational and responsible limits, mass political parties are deemed vitally important. ‘[T]he common theme is that democracy can be effective only if modern political institutions in the form of mass parties can be built. This clearly emerges as the crucial factor. Efforts to build democracy in developing countries should concentrate on building modern mass parties. [...] Party structure is key’ (Douglas 1972: 58-9). As intermediary organisations between society and state they ensure the legitimacy of decisions as well as their implementation through state bureaucracy (*Ibid.*: 5 and 85-7; Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975) as it is through these institutions that the content and goals of decisions

are shaped and defined. Parties are considered to generate governable – public – interests that do not simply exist in society but need to be created.¹⁸

In turn, they are also thought to be an important mechanism for exercising social control. Democracy and social control – a certain extent of “persuasive coercion” – are positively linked: ‘[B]y definition, representative institutions seat individuals, not masses. A relation of representation is ... imposed on the society by the very nature of democratic institutions’ (Przeworski 1991: 11-2). In this conception, a certain form of coercion is perfectly legitimate to ensure the working of the democratic system. ‘Democratic societies are populated not by freely acting individuals but by collective organizations that are capable of coercing those whose interests they represent’ (*Ibid.*: 12). The question of democracy in this context was approached as a question of how to ensure the effective but limited government of society that is responsive to the public interest. In this sense, decision-making power – the power to govern – is exercised through relations of authority, hierarchy and disciplining. This does not exclude the participation of citizens, but rather refers to a notion of participation in which the inconsequential and contingent participation in everyday life and in the private sphere is aggregated and mediated into broader, public and permanent interest through which a political agenda can be pursued (Dahl 1971: 223-5). Moreover, in the broader conception of constitutive power employed here, the prevailing understanding underpinning such an approach to democracy and government is that building institutions and creating interests of permanence that go beyond individual everyday life is *possible*. That is, possible in the sense that they are perceived and approached as a product of collective human creation (including struggle). Concomitantly, democracy and its promotion operates in a context in which there are political/ideological and epistemological means available that allow for mastering, changing and transforming the external conditions of societal organisation.

In the notion of democracy as an institutional form as well as a foreign policy goal it is not only the creation of a public – the artificial realm between society as it really is and government – through limitations but also giving that public a body or substance. In a sense, the availability of communist forms of mobilisation and organisation, fully acknowledged to be linked to its ideological pull, served to give content to the form. Form and content are, of course, mutually dependent and both hinge upon artificiality. While the prevailing

¹⁸ As Foucault observed: ‘The production of the collective interest through the play of desire is what distinguishes both the naturalness of population and the possible artificiality of the means one adopts to manage it’ (Foucault 2009: 73).

understanding is expressive of an elitist notion of democracy, the combination of effectiveness and limitation was perceived to necessitate an institutional framework and, crucially, the political party as an intermediary mechanism for mobilising, organising and aggregating interests so that they would appear as public interests. It appears that both, the understanding of democracy as representative government and the feasibility and desirability of its promotion, are fed by a context in which an alternative, rival, modern form of government was perceived to exist. One needed not only to compete against government effectiveness provided by communism but it also proved to be a source to be drawn upon.

The two aspects that emerge as consequential for the shift in the meaning of democracy and the trajectory of its promotion are the explicit understanding of the political party as the source of disciplinary political power and as the agent of artificiality. As Douglas (1972), Huntington (2006 [1968]) and Przeworski (1991) among others have pointed out, the constitutive, transformatory power of political parties consists of their ability to exercise social control as well as to aggregate interests. In conceptualisations prevailing at this time, the disciplinary power of political parties flows top-down but not only in terms of control but also in terms of providing political meaning and goals. Out of their programmatic agenda, their role was to create or construct public interest that neither exists yet nor is natural. Public interest does not exist in society as the private agglomeration of individuals. As Robert Dahl explains in the postscript of this seminal work on *Polyarchy* (1971): ‘Because of the way in which party systems have evolved in the theory and practice of representative democracy, they are often thought of as “natural” institutions that develop spontaneously and faithfully mirror the “natural” cleavages of the society. According to this view of parties, deliberate attempts to relate and control the nature and number of parties in a polyarchy are either doomed to failure or must violate the democratic rules of the game. Neither of these assumptions seems to me to be valid’ (Dahl 1971: 223). If the public is to appear as a governable space of contestation then this “naturalness” or “complexity” of the private sphere needs to be transformed into an “artificial” aggregation and creation of the public arena. The political power of the public does not exist in society as social relationships and personal interests but is an artificial

construct. As such, political power – to construct, to reorder and to transform the organisation of collective life – must be produced through “top-down” frameworks.¹⁹

Political parties, in extension of being a vehicle for public contestation (Dahl 1971), hold and give substance to the gap between ideal objectives of government and the “muddy, messy world” of reality as it really is. It is in this function and their inherent artificiality as it was presented during the cold war that they embodied the potentiality of changing political order (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 417). Huntington, however, warns that once a mass political party actualises its potentiality ‘it deprives itself of social enemies to justify existence ... its ideological drive falters and it comes to terms with the society it governs, then it is likewise deprived of a *raison d’être*’ (*Ibid.*: 426).

Perception of Society and Local Context

Early conceptualisations of democracy and democracy promotion are not ignorant of social customs and local conditions. Both society and local context feature in these early accounts of democratisation and democracy promotion, including in the *Democracy Program* (1983: 33). However, the primacy these accounts accord to political institutions reflects the way society and social order is understood in relation to them.

Underpinned by an understanding of rational progress, democratisation was closely associated with modernisation. The role of the mass political parties for the creation of public authority and the reordering of society as drawn out above logically implies that what exists locally would give way to new forms of societal organisation and political government. Once more, it is the mobilising, organising and transformative role accorded to political parties that plays an important role. It is again Huntington who captures this well. In fact, his analysis of the communist approach to effective government is predicated on both the need *and* the possibility of changing the way in which society and local contexts work. He argues:

Traditional social forces, interests, customs, and institutions are strongly entrenched. The change or destruction of these traditional forces requires the concentration of power in the agents of modernization. Modernization is associated with a marked redistribution of power within the political system: the breakdown of local, religious, ethnic and other power centers and the centralization of power in the national political institutions. (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 142).

¹⁹ Dahl suggests therefore that ‘the important point ... is that in a rational strategy of liberalization the number of parties can and should be regulated’ (Dahl 1971: 225).

Thus, the question is not primarily to change norms, customs and identities that frame the way people relate to their environment but how to overpower these forces politically. In fact, what Huntington considers to be local context and traditional customs were not ingrained features and intangible processes determining individual's existence but part of a political arrangement that could be overcome through new political means or power (*Ibid.*: 144).

Douglas likewise approaches local societies and contexts as conditions that can be understood and known, but to the extent that they are "backward" or "undemocratic", also are subject to transformation through new political structures and forces and would eventually become irrelevant. While he considers "traditional societies" to be permeated by irrational behaviours and patterns, the source of problematic or undemocratic social structures is also less irrationality as a quintessential characteristic than it is the result of ignorance. What is considered necessary in this situation – and this translates into the access point of democracy promotion – is to educate future local political elite in 'democratic ideologies and methods' (Douglas 1972: 139) 'which can then staff the political parties, the bureaucracy, and the nations' social instruction' (*Ibid.*: 6; see also Huntington 2006 [1968]: 141). Certainly driven by an belief in rational progress and the universality of liberal, representative democracy (against the enemy universality of communism), he ascertains the compatibility of democracy promotion with local cultures:

The danger of imposition of unsuitable political forms is further lessened by the fact that political aid by its nature must be given through the channel of political leaders and parties of developing nations themselves. The cultural backgrounds of local activists will lead them to serve as natural filters, screening out those Western suggestions and models which local activist instinctively feel will not "fit". (Douglas 1972: 140)

This focus on elites must be seen in the context of the kind of political power accorded to political parties to both mobilise and create public interests as well as ensuring the effectiveness of limited, representative government. A strategy of promoting democracy could hence be centred on issues around educating or training political elites without this necessarily reflecting a specious version of low-intensity democracy or a thinly-veiled sign of hypocrisy. Rather it follows logically from a rationale of democracy as an institutional edifice concerned with the mobilisation, organisation and representation of public interests.

In sum, while the question of society and local context is not ignored in these early accounts of democratisation and democracy promotion, local social order constitutes the object of political transformation. At the end of the process towards democracy, local

customs and traditional patterns of social order would have been superseded and become irrelevant. Prevailing social processes and local context, in a sense, were the precondition of political development and the object of transformation through new political artifices and powers. Rather than constituting the limitation of democratic intervention, local conditions provided the inducement of such intervention. Not least because of the availability of communism as both a serious competitor as well as a provider of transformatory political mechanisms.

This section has examined the conceptualisation of democracy and democracy promotion in the context of the cold war. The cold war here was not merely understood as a geopolitical setting but as a distinct epistemological configuration revolving around rationality and interest. It has argued that this context played a vital role. The understanding of democracy that became operative in democracy promotion was fundamentally based on an institutional framework of governing coalescing on the artificiality of the public sphere. Drawing upon early democratisation and democracy promotion discourses, it emerged that this sphere needed to be created, maintained and occupied. Here communist approaches and movements – particularly their perceived superior capacities to create constitutive power absent in the episteme of limited representative government itself – turned out to be pivotal. Democracy as well as its promotion had a purpose – as an international strategy it was a means of containing communism and as a form of public government it was concerned with combining effectiveness, rationality and limitation of public authority. In the existence of a notion of mass political parties its public sphere also had substance and thus provided for public interest as the limited object of government and the equally limited field of government intervention. In this respect, knowledge about democracy and strategies for its promotion was relatively unproblematic to attain.

The inhabitation of the public sphere by political parties was held to enable liberal-democratic regimes to govern effectively but within juridical, practical and rational limits. The central role of the constitutive and disciplinary power associated with political organisation is reflected in the way societal relations and local context do not directly appear in understandings of democracy promotion: both were to be transformed and hence knowledge about their specific workings and characteristics was not required. While the cold war world of democracy promotion was permeated by clear (and affirmative)

notions and relations of hierarchy, at the same time, it seemed to be a human-centred world. That is, human in the sense that there was a clear belief in the power of human and organisational capacities to effect political change and societal transformation consciously and intentionally into a desired direction. This seemed to be predicated upon the availability of political resources (ideologies). Based on their availability, abstraction and model thinking were possible through which political programmes could be designed. In other words, in the cold war understanding of democracy promotion, in its hierarchical nature, there was a sense of artifice, permanence and purpose in both the frameworks of politics as well as the frameworks of meaning.²⁰

From this perspective, the next section investigates the shift from political society to civil society in democracy promotion with the end of the cold war. This shift now appears much less natural than it is usually understood to be. The section investigates whether this shift is really just a strategic choice or must be understood to be underpinned by a fundamental rethinking of democracy – and hence in the rationale of its promotion. The section suggests that the rethinking and the conception of civil society’s democratisation potential can be more clearly seen when contextualised within the concomitant shift from understanding democratic change as transition to understanding democratisation as consolidation. While this section focuses on the hollowing out, and even loss, of political means and content of democracy, the last section engages with the second major epistemological development: the rise of social constructivism. It briefly highlights the affinity between consolidation and constructivism and proposes that in order to get a full picture of the conditions of the discovery of the social it is helpful to examine the rationalisations of social constructivism as an emancipatory and critical approach to world politics. Based on this foundation, the chapter concludes, we may be better equipped to trace and understand the displacement and dispersion of democracy promotion into other policy fields.

²⁰ We may, as good anti-Americans, disagree with the particular model of democracy or the political reasons for promoting it. However, the key point here is that within a framework of human and organisational capacities and political meaning, questions about forms or models of democracy and reasons for promoting these, reasons for resisting their promotion or reasons for rejection then seem to be indeed a question of politics.

Norms, Democracy and the End of the Cold War

The prevailing euphoric mood in the early 1990s suggested that the world had finally been liberalised from the shackles of cold war power politics. As Amichai Magen and Michael McFaul assert: ‘The triumph of democracy as an ideal and system of government – and the commensurate declining appeal of alternative modes of government – constitute what is arguably the most important basis for the new normative consensus between Europeans and Americans.’ (Magen and McFaul 2009: 5). The European Union – a “post-Westphalian” entity – allegedly emerged as a “normative power” (Manners 2002) and the European Commission adopted an array of reports dedicated to democracy promotion (1995a; 1995b; 1998; 2001); the UK – former empire – declared ethics to be its guiding principle of foreign policy and maintained democracy was irreducible part of this new approach (M Frost 1999; Smith and Light 2001);²¹ the World Bank – avowedly a non-political organisation – discovered the missing link of development: governments need to be accountable to their citizens (World Bank 1989; 2001); Anthony Lake, National Security Advisor to the Clinton administration, in his famous ‘From Containment to Enlargement’ speech,²² declared the replacement of containment by democracy promotion to constitute the US’s new grand strategy; the – avowedly impartial – UN discovered the missing link of peace: promoting elections (Boutros-Ghali 1992); the OECD – according to its mission statement concerned with the economic and social well-being of people – likewise joined in and found that its primary objective in development co-operation was the promotion of ‘popular participation in democratic processes’ (OECD 1997a: 3); the African Union – successor to OAU’s mission to support liberation movements and decolonisation struggles – established a ‘Democracy and Elections Assistance Unit’ in 2002;²³ the Commission for Global Governance (CGG) – an immediate product of the post-cold war era – not only pioneered this new dimension of governance but diagnosed a democratic deficit on this scale (CGG 1995). And crucially, global civil society – the alleged people’s power of globalisation “from below” – emerged as the new epitome of “glocal” democratisation. Democracy was clearly in the air.

²¹ ‘Robin Cook’s speech on the government’s ethical foreign policy’, Guardian online, 12 May 1997, available at <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/1997/may/12/indonesia.ethicalforeignpolicy>>

²² Anthony Lake, ‘From Containment to Enlargement’, Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies, Washington, D.C., September 21, 1993, available at <<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>>

²³ http://www.africa-union.org/root/AU/AUC/Departments/PA/ELECTION_UNIT/AU_Election_Unit.htm

Despite the – in fact, short-lived – euphoria giving rise to a growing number of actors and institutions involved in democracy promotion in the 1990s, an aspect that became marginalised quickly in the emerging international agenda was a concern with political parties. While elections, representative government, rule of law and human rights featured prominently at the time (World Bank 1989: 61; OECD 1997b: 37; UN 1992); European Commission 1998; Sartori 2001), political parties and party structure have almost overnight turned from a key element of democracy (promotion) into near oblivion.²⁴ The European Union, for instance, never even incorporated a party dimension into its external democratisation efforts. From its initial ‘“hands-on approach ... to actively supporting the transition to democracy’ (European Commission 1995b: 20), it swiftly shifted towards a civil society approach which deliberately circumvented the question of political parties with the initiation of the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in 2006 as the Union’s democratisation flagship (European Commission 2007; see Kurki 2011).²⁵ The US-based National Endowment for Democracy (NED) which had been founded in the wake of the 1983 *Democracy Program* discussed above markedly reworked its understanding of political parties and their role in the democratisation process. While being established on the basis of political party foundation and thus unable to let these off the agenda, the new objective is to enmesh political parties into a global civil society network. As such, the latest

²⁴ This is not to say that there was no concern with political parties, but to the limited extent that they were part of the agenda their role has shifted from an emphasis on their transformatory capacities to their role in curbing political authority (on the UN, for instance, see Farer 2004: 38; on US self-assessment see NED 1992: 4).

²⁵ The 2007 consultation paper on scope and nature of the new instrument highlights that one of the urgent questions to be posed is ‘how far the new programme should put priority on supporting initiatives designed to improve the links between civil and political actors, in order to enhance political participation and representation and generally help to instil democratic values among political elites.’ While it envisages a more explicit engagement with ‘political society’, such engagement has little to do with the acknowledgement of the role of parties in domestic political processes (European Commission 2007: 9). Rather than the solution, political parties are the problem which civil society and its support is tasked with rectifying:

‘Lack of interaction between civil society and political parties and the weak sense of accountability or responsiveness by parties are among the factors which undermine the efforts of civil society on human rights and political reform, give impunity to political elites and lead to contempt for politics. [...] As a result, there may be little in the way of sustained improvement in democratic processes or impact on the political culture. Encouraging civil society organisations to focus more attention on political processes, sharpening their demands for representation, participation (including the empowerment of women and other underrepresented groups), responsiveness and accountability could be a suitable priority area for the future.[...] However, direct support for party development would not be envisaged.’ (European Commission 2007: 9)

strategy document announces that political parties are and need to be further ‘linked with global networks of human rights and youth organizations, civic and women’s groups’ (NED 2012: 7)

The realisation that political parties were in decline – and not only since the end of the cold war – has become something of a truism. Yet, in the context of democracy promotion, this constitutes an under-theorised aspect – and a crucial, but telling omission. This marginalisation appears to go hand in hand with a prioritisation of the international arena, particularly in terms of global civil society and norms diffusion, at the expense of domestic political processes (Chandler 2004; see Grugel 2003) and a shift from associating democratisation with political modernisation to associating democratisation with political liberalisation (see Brynen, Korany and Noble 1995; see Herbst 2001; see Sartori 2001; see Youngs 2002: 15-21). In other words, the understanding and promotion of liberal representative democracy became “differently liberal”: from an emphasis on having to constitute its sphere and object of governing to an understanding that a naturally existing space and object – (civil) society – was to be liberated in order to make democracy flourish.²⁶

While noticeably absent from cold war democracy promotion, from roughly the mid-1990s onwards, civil society became the new epitome of both democracy as well as democratisation. As Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers observe: ‘A term that was scarcely used within the aid community ten years ago has become a ubiquitous concept in discussions and documents about democracy promotion worldwide’ (Ottaway and Carothers 2000: 3). The 2002 UNDP Human Development Report concerned with deepening democracy concurs: ‘there has been an explosion in support for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other new civil society groups (UNDP 2002: 5). Instigated by the experience with Central and Eastern European democratisation processes, it has sometimes been suggested that this shift in democracy promotion from political society and structures to civil society was mainly driven by the idea that civil society support was a more resource-efficient way of promoting democracy and hence

²⁶ Few seem to have bothered to read Fukuyama’s *End of History and the Last Man* (1992) much further than to the word “history”. Rather than hopelessly naïve and imperialistic, he provides a very sceptical outlook for the future of representative democracy and particularly the future of the human as a political subject. He sees a similar predicament: ‘Liberal democracies ... are not self-sufficient: the community life on which they depend must ultimately come from a source different from liberalism itself’ (Fukuyama 1992: 326)

predominantly a question of strategy (for instance, Ottaway and Carothers 2000: 8; Burnell 2004; Kopstein 2006). At the same time, Ottaway and Carothers note that the focus on civil society had been preceded by two previous stages: first electoral support and then institution-building (Ottaway and Carothers 2000: 8). It is this observation that civil society emerged, if not as an alternative then, at least, as the new substance to elections and formal institutions, that questions the idea that we are merely confronted with a choice of strategy. In fact, the strategy approach fails to capture the problems that democratisation and democracy promotion were confronted with after the demise of communism and is inattentive to the rather fundamental rethinking that this development triggered with regard to the understanding of democracy and political change. As the UNDP report confirms: 'Civil society groups do not fit easily into traditional models of governance and accountability – which is part of their value to democracy' (UNDP 2002: 5).

Consolidation: Democracy without Content

The shift towards civil society correlates with the emergence of the concept of consolidation. This concept reflects the rather novel idea that a genuine or functioning democracy is not a question of the extent to which formal democratic institutions and procedures are in place (as for instance the case in the *Democracy Program*, see above), but rather the extent to which these are routinised. The question of making democracy “sustainable” is thus a fundamentally different question than the transition to democracy (Linz and Stepan 1996; Schedler 1998; Schmitter 1998; Diamond 1999). While in transition-thinking the democratisation process was considered to be complete with the drafting of constitutions and elections, in consolidation-thinking democratisation came to be understood as a process by which democratic norms become habitualised to the point at which the “rules of the game” are no longer questioned or even questionable (Linz and Stepan 1996; Schmitter 1998; Diamond 1999). Consolidation ‘in this sense involves more than normative commitment. It must also be evident and routinized in behaviour. Consolidation encompasses ... “habituation”, in which norms, procedures, and expectations of democracy become so internalized that actors routinely, instinctively conform to the written (and unwritten) rules of the game’ (Diamond 1999: 65). Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan confirm: ‘[W]ith consolidation, democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life’ (Linz and Stepan 1998: 50). It is important

to note that these two steps were considered sequential (Carothers 2002). In other words, once the – external – formal political institutions of representative democracy were established, an additional – internal – process of transformation was thought to be necessary for “making a democracy”.²⁷

What consolidation effectively describes is an understanding of democratisation and democratic governance that no longer occurs primarily in and through the constituted realm of the public. It no longer primarily describes political change as a reorganisation of society through the constitution of an artificial public sphere and object of governing. With consolidation, public government and the essence of democracy part way. The substance of democracy no longer rests in public appearance, but to the contrary: its substance is now accorded to the insubstantial and invisible processes of socialisation and routinisation of behaviour which lead to the internalisation of democratic norms. Since this is a rather fundamental change in understanding democracy, the question arises of what provoked this new thinking about democracy. Two interrelated and consequential developments seem to have sparked the novel approach to democratisation.

The first one is the perceived unavailability of the key agent of political transformation and democratic change in cold war democratisation. It is widely acknowledged by consolidation theorists that new (and old) democracies operate – have to operate – without mass political parties. With all other formal democratic institutions remaining the same, this element is held to have lost its political purchase. Larry Diamond in his contribution to the consolidation question notes:

[N]ewly emergent party systems (and even most established ones) will probably never have strong parties with committed mass memberships, vigorous local branches, and strongly defined social bases and issue orientation that characterized the developing and consolidating democracies of earlier eras in this century. (Diamond 1999: 97)

The new, and by extension, what are considered “established”, democracies are therefore different. Linz also believes that

the new political parties are not likely to be mass membership parties, parties anchored in homogenous and socially distinct electorates. They will be “catch-all parties”, parties less committed to integrate their supporters into a variety of mass

²⁷ It should be highlighted that many commentators on consolidation still were convinced about the viability of technocratic solutions to this problem (Linz and Stepan 1996; Diamond 1999; critically: Carothers 2002). Interestingly, these technocratic solutions revolve around administrative and security capacities. Today, we witness a shift away from technocratic solutions and an emphasis on politics instead; without, however, stepping back from the prevalence of the social (see Chapter 4).

organizations, and even less into an encapsulated subculture, as some socialist and Christian democratic parties did in the past. (Linz 1997: 416)

Now, as has been demonstrated in the previous section – and is implicitly acknowledged by consolidation scholars – political parties were not just one particular element in the political edifice of representative democracy, neither were they just one particular element on the democracy promotion agenda that representative democracy and societal transformation could easily do without. They were the epitome or the expression of something much more fundamental: they were the apogee, so to speak, of a paradigm of constitutive power. The mass political party was part of a much broader context of political understanding and political meaning that encapsulated the belief in human and organisational capacities to have formative powers to intentionally shape and change the way societal and political life is organised. This thinking considered the radical transformation of contexts and conditions through political means and political struggles a possibility within reach, and consequently approached context with a political purpose and with a goal-oriented idea of change. Without this edifice – without a meaningful political mechanism of mediation and without a political purpose that gives meaning to this mediation – democracy located in the public makes little sense. The problem has probably most succinctly been captured by the authors of the 1975 Trilateral report on the governability of democracy: ‘What is in short supply’, the authors pinpoint, ‘is ... not consensus on the rules of the game but a sense of purpose as to what should be achieved by playing the game’ (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975: 13). This is crucial: without such supply, there is no power associated with the public; and formal democratic institutions and procedures, it appears, are quickly becoming hollowed out. As a consequence the notion of consolidation seeks to put habituation in the place of purpose. The second, and related development, or rather question that came up as a consequence of the unavailability of political purpose and political means for mobilisation, is of the substance of democracy: what explained the existence, persistence or success of (established) democracies? Without politics, what was and where was this democracy? It appears that by being almost compelled to ask this question democratisation thinking discovered the social. The question and the ensuing “discovery” is manifest most clearly in Philippe Schmitter’s depiction of democratisation-as-consolidation. He explains:

It may not be difficult to agree on what Robert Dahl has called the “institutional guarantees” and others have called the “procedural minimum” without which no democracy could be said to exist – secret balloting, universal adult suffrage, regular

elections, partisan competition, associational freedom, and executive accountability. Yet underlying these accomplishments and flowing from them are much *more subtle and complex relations* which *define both the substance and form* of nascent democratic regimes. (Schmitter 1998: 32-3; emphasis added)

The substance, in other words, did not appear on the surface but rested in much more subtle relations. And it appears that this is the context for the shift in democracy promotion towards civil society. As Ottaway and Carothers explain the civil society turn: ‘initial experiences with other types of democracy aid and the political shortcomings of many unfolding democratic transitions ... encouraged the United States and donors to turn to civil society strengthening as a means of promoting democracy’ (Ottaway and Carothers 2000: 7). These “initial experiences” with electoral and institution-building support reflect well the dilemma spelled out by Schmitter. Formal political institution and processes are still considered to be the *sine qua non* – but not much more. Without politics there is something “underlying” the rules of the game that is much more subtle and complex: social relationships, interactions and patterns of behaviour (see further Chapter 3).

The Nongovernmental as the Site of Democracy

The UNDP’s observation that civil society did not fit the representative framework of democracy seems to be on the spot. The crucial difference is pointed out by Diamond: ‘[I]nterest groups cannot aggregate interests as broadly across social groups and political issues as political parties can. Nor can they provide the discipline necessary to form and maintain governments and pass legislation’ (Diamond 1999: 97). From this perspective they would seem rather powerless. However, with the dissociation of democratic substance from public government, the power of democracy appears to no longer rest in the formation of government and the maintenance of the public sphere. Only in this context does it make sense to think about nongovernmental agents as the primary site of democratisation. By definition, (transnational) civil society groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in their democratic mission ‘tend to be sceptical about politics’ in general (Kaldor 1999: 89) and about political society as a form of ‘politics fostered from above’ in particular (*Ibid.*: 78). These groups and organizations are more comfortable with portraying and perceiving of their democracy work as ‘anti-politics’ (*Ibid.*: 89).

Moreover, when democratic change is not the constitution and exercise of public authority but rather the socialisation into democratic norms beyond or deeper than

normative commitment, then this indeed requires an “interactive”, relational agent. Civil society need not be “political” and can be ‘anti-politics’ for democracy thus perceived. The emphasis in the context of consolidation is logically much more on ‘fostering norms’ (Ottaway and Carothers 2001: 10) and network-building (see Kaldor 1999). This relational aspect inculcates civil society as a network through which democratic change understood as an internalisation of democratic norms (such as tolerance and trust) can be fostered. This approach to democratisation is then construed to bear a strong element of collective and shared experiences – a solidary enterprise of norms socialisation: ‘To endorse a norm not only expresses a belief, but also creates impetus for behavior consistent with the belief. While ideas are usually individualistic, norms have an explicit intersubjective quality because they are *collective* expectations. The very idea of “proper” behavior presupposes a community able to pass judgments on appropriateness’ (Risse and Sikink 1999: 7: emphasis in original).

Once democracy is not about the political power of government per se, those that never aspire to public – visible and communicated – power, those that are explicitly “non-government”, acephalous and even “global” – can become the new epitome of democracy. As this section has sought to demonstrate, however, the civil society turn and the “discovery” of the social in the consolidation debate must be understood as a result of a loss of political meaning and purpose – a loss of an idea regarding what we might want to “do” with or achieve through democracy. The last section seeks to sketch out yet another – and consequential – dimension of the “discovery” of the social that will help to evaluate central developments in post-cold war democracy promotion and, most importantly, will serve as a stepping stone for the line of inquiry pursued in the remaining chapters. The section investigates the conditions of the rise of social constructivism as a new theory (not only) of international relations that is concerned with rethinking political change and re-establishing agency. It briefly highlights the close epistemological affinity between constructivism and consolidation and the concomitant turn to civil society. Arising after the end of the cold war, social constructivism presents itself as a radical critique of prevailing rationalistic theories and worldviews and an emancipatory framework for human agency. The section asks whether this critique is really a rejection of rationalistic framings or whether it is expressive of a more fundamental critique of theorising as such. Furthermore, it asks whether this debate must be situated in the context of the end of the cold war.

Social Constructivism's Critique: The Discovery of the Social as Late Modernity's Cartesian Anxiety – Some Intimations

The Constructivism-Consolidation Nexus

Social constructivism slightly precedes the emergence of consolidation (see Wendt 1992; Finnemore 1996). Constructivism seeks to shift the focus away from material and structural factors in international relations theory and instead emphasises the (empowering) ideational dimension for world politics. The growing influence of social constructivist perspectives has not only been noted in relation to the rise of global civil society (Chandler 2004) but also for its epistemological resemblances with the international democracy promotion agenda of the 1990s (Youngs 2002: 6-8). The way social constructivist thinking has silently been worked into democratisation studies, however, has been spelled out most clearly in a review article by Mark Peceny (1999). What is interesting to note, however, is that social constructivism was presented as a great liberation from the constraints of mainstream IR debates on structure and agency, whereas the affinity of democratisation studies with constructivist understandings springs out of growing pessimism with regard to the “victory” of liberal democracy and its global spread.

Referring to Diamond's paradigmatic predicament – that while democracy has spread and many political systems dispose of all surface features of Dahlian polyarchy these are not really democratic as we understand it – Peceny observes: ‘The way in which the mainstream literature of democracy has framed the puzzle of democratic consolidation bears a striking and heretofore unrecognized resemblance to constructivist approaches to understanding international relations’ (Peceny 1999: 96). What the two approaches share most broadly is the contention that rather than acting predominantly in environments of material constraints, actors are to an important extent also influenced by cultural conditions and informal institutions (*Ibid.*: 96). It is the important shift that occurred in democratisation scholarship from understanding transitions in terms of institutional change and strategic decision-making to perceiving of processes of democratisation as ‘a “practice” of politics under new rules [that] becomes embedded in the actors as norms for appropriate behavior’ (*Ibid.*: 98) that moved democratisation studies close to constructivist perspectives.

Social Constructivism's Promise

Social constructivism has been helped to prominence by scholars such as Alexander Wendt, Friedrich Kratochwil, Martha Finnemore and Thomas Risse-Kappen, among others, and greatly influenced the field of international relations in the broadest sense (or rather contributed to its dissolution in the conventional sense). It presents itself as radical critique of the epistemological dominance of rationalistic theorising based on given interest, rational choice and fixed or material notions of structure and agency (Wendt 1992; Finnemore 1996; Checkel 1998). Hence social constructivists seek to offer an alternative to what they see as the 'relentless pessimism' at play in IR theories and its outlook on the world due to its overemphasis of structure (Wendt 1992: 409). Crucially, constructivism's objective is to re-establish man as the author of the human world (Wendt 1992: 410). Even more crucial is the way social constructivists envision to reclaim human authorship: by elevating what they consider the most human dimension of life into the heart of their theorising: 'the social fabric of world politics' (Checkel 1998: 324), which had thus far been ignored in rationalistic understandings. What makes this focus a more human-centred framing, from a constructivist perspective, is the emphasis that our political, theoretical and juridical frameworks are not structures external to human social life. In the words of Rey Koslowski and Friedrich Kratochwil:

Instead of conceiving the international system in terms of distributions of tangible resources and of "invisible" structures working behind the backs of actors, constructivism views this system as an artifice of man-made institutions ... In general, institutions are settled or routinized practices established and regulated by the norm. (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994: 222)

Out of this emancipatory intent '[i]nternational relations scholars have become increasingly interested in norms of behaviour, intersubjective understandings, culture, identity and other social features of political life' (Finnemore 1996: 325).

In other words, returning authorship, reinvigorating the world as a human artifice and providing a more optimistic outlook for the conduct of political life is thought to be warranting, even necessitating, attention to the social fabric of life. In declared juxtaposition to rationalistic determinism and structural stasis (e.g. "anarchy"), the element of "constructivity" refers to the idea that the external world is a product of socially and intersubjectively acquired meaning rather than constitutive as a material constraint on

agency. Institutions and structures are understood as discursive constructs that “materialise” through intersubjective meaning and internalisation providing for specific ‘standards of appropriateness’ (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 888). At the same time, these institutions are treated as environments of socialisation in which identity-formation takes place (Wendt 1992; Johnston 2001).

Constructivists not only challenge a material and constitutive notion of structure but also the idea that the interests of actors are ‘exogenously given’ (Wendt 1992: 391). Instead, they focus on the ‘sociological’ dimension of identity-formation (Wendt 1992: 393) which is the ‘basis of interests’ (Wendt 1992: 398). That is, there is no interest prior to interaction and intersubjectively created meaning or knowledge. Decision-making, constructivists contend, is still a matter of choice (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994: 225). Choice and interests, however, are perceptions based on identities which are the product of socialisation. As Jeffrey Checkel has usefully drawn out the novel proposition of social constructivism in contrast to previous understandings:

To illuminate these differences between constructivists and other schools, it is helpful to explore their understanding of ... “norms”, a concept that has gained much currency in IR scholarship over the past decade. While realists see norms as lacking causal force, neoliberal regime theory argues that they play an influential role in certain issue-areas. However, even for neoliberals, norms are still a superstructure built on a material base: they serve a regulative function, helping actors within given interests maximize utility. Agents ... create structures... For constructivists, by contrast, norms are collective understandings that make behavioural claims on actors. Their effects reach deeper: they constitute actor identities and interests and do not simply regulate behaviour. (Checkel 1998: 327-8)

Logically, it follows that decision-making changes if intersubjectively created meaning – i.e. norms – change. Liberated from alleged determinism, political change is possible because of this primacy of ideational factors over material factors and of process over structure. The alleged benefit of such prioritisation rests in opening up a line of political change that can occur without confronting political or material power on its own terms. That is, political change can be effected by the nongovernmental and can happen without problematic agents being aware of such change – they come to freely will so thanks to a new norms set-up: ‘even if not intended as such, the process by which egoists learn to cooperate is at the same time a process of reconstructing their interests in terms of shared commitment to social norms (Wendt 1992: 417: see also Schimmelfennig 2001: 63-4). Put differently, though norms diffusion, political transformation happens by and is the eventual outcome

of enveloping actors in new processes of interaction in which a different intersubjective meaning is created through internalisation.

Ostensibly reclaiming the world as man-made edifice, in other words, means that what was previously held to constitute the external, visible and knowable world – institutions and interests – is now portrayed to be a product of human relationships and interaction. There are therefore no external structures – no formal institutions – that can be thought of as a necessary or even intelligible site of political change. The political artifice is rendered irrelevant (even non-existent) for political change. To caution against this alleged emancipatory reclaim of agency, it is worthwhile to recall Arendt's problematisation of an understanding of laws and institutions as continuously reiterated links and interactions rather than an intervention into always already existing dynamics. The former it would seem constitutes a withdrawal of the potential for emancipation (Arendt 2005: 184-7; see Introduction). In order to elaborate on this point, this final subsection challenges the idea that the discovery of the social and the new site of effecting change below the level of surface appearance (publicly made or publicly displayed decision and interests) has developed out of a new emancipatory ambition and rather suggests that we must better read constructivism as a reaction to the deep anxieties created by the way the cold war ended. The contention here is that both the narrative of constructivism as a critique of IR pessimism as well as the declared objective of reclaiming human agency needs to be qualified.

Social Constructivism's Critique

Constructivism's self-proclaimed eagerness to reclaim human agency from structuralist and rationalistic thinking appears as much less of a direct critique with the depoliticising tendencies of IR theories (neorealism and neoliberalism) when the context out of which it emerged is taken into account. Hence, when we look at the problem that seems to have contributed substantially to the refocus on agency, constructivism is much less of a genuinely emancipatory agenda out of a belief that "a different world is possible" based on an idea of what it should look like. The problem social constructivism has with IR theories is not their worldview per se but rather that they failed to predict or fail to make sense of the end of the cold war. This makes a difference with regards to the reasons for social

constructivism's re-invocation of agency, the human, and the world as a man-made edifice and sheds a different light on the conceptual relocation of political change.

It quickly emerges that the initial spur for according primacy to ideas, perceptions and norms stems from the failure of available framings to foresee or conceptualise the peaceful and unilateral dismantling of the Soviet Union. Renowned cold war historian, John Gaddis, for instance, diagnoses a complete failure of established theories to even rudimentarily anticipate 'any of [the] developments that ended the cold war' (Gaddis 1992: 18; emphasis in original). Much soul searching ensued as to this utterly unexpected and ungraspable course of events resulting in a demise of what had been held to constitute the foundation and truth of international, foreign and, by extension, domestic politics: power structures and rational decision-making. Richard Ned Lebow, for instance, in investigating the end of the cold war, states:

Soviet foreign policy under Gorbachev is outside the realist paradigm. To explain it, the analyst must go outside that paradigm and look at the determining influence of domestic politics, belief systems, and learning. (Lebow 1994: 268)

Koslowski and Kratochwil offer a similar rationalisation of their approach:

Since we believe the dominant school of international politics, structural neorealism, does not provide a coherent explanation for these transformations, the development of an alternative theoretical framework becomes necessary [...] First we criticize neorealism's theoretical treatment of change by showing that the changes of the recent past did not occur in accordance with its propositions and that the assumptions of neorealism ... [W]e develop a constructivist approach to change that emphasizes the institutional nature of social system, domestic as well as international (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994: 216; see also Kratochwil 1993).

The inability to capture the peaceful retreat from territory, the demise of the Soviet Union and the systemic change in international relations, also drives Thomas Risse-Kappen's constructivist agenda:

These theories need to be complemented by approaches that emphasize the interaction of international and domestic influences on state behaviour and take the role of ideas ... seriously. Ideas intervene between material power-related factors on the one hand and ... interests and preferences on the other. (Risse-Kappen 1994: 186)

In other words, rather than an emancipatory drive that gave rise to social constructivist theorisations, it was great epistemological uncertainty. This uncertainty, it appears, concerns the realisation that the foundational theoretical and mental frameworks through which we thus far had rendered the (cold war) world intelligible and amenable to our understanding, had little to do with reality. Reality had unfolded on its own accord, without

us. What we had been observing – or what we thought we had been observing – and inferring about political and systemic change so far was fundamentally undermined by the end of the cold war (from none of these descriptions does it emanate that Gorbachev – or any of his influential advisors – had intended or wanted to dismantle the Soviet Union, or had this factored in as a possibility).²⁸

What we had thought we could infer about change based on strategic calculation predicated on structural principles of the cold war was thus put substantially to question. End-of- cold-war constructivists hence find that we must assume ‘a more fundamental type of change’ that occurs in the ‘social system’ which shapes interests and identities of actors (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994: 222-3). It thus appears that the discovery of the social emerges out of an insight that reality unfolded in ways that questioned available frameworks of meaning and the deep epistemological uncertainty this brought with it with regard to our ability to capture and represent (international) reality in theoretical constructs. As Gaddis castigates, the failure of available international theories to come anything close to reality is due to their delusional objective of rationalising human affairs (Gaddis 1992: 53). In this light, he suggests finding new ways of providing an account of human affairs that is closer to the complexity of the ‘real world’ (*Ibid.*: 58). ‘We may not gain greater clairvoyance as a result ... [b]ut we will learn more about the limits of our vision, and hence about ourselves’ (*Ibid.*: 58).

Since the insight of “1989” manifests itself as a concession that there was obviously more truth and power to reality than abstract and artificially imposed theoretical frameworks could reveal or generate, the discovery of the social in social constructivism seems to be a rather conservative move: there undeniably *is* a social fabric underpinning human life. This fabric does not need any in(ter)vention or maintenance in order to exist. It can neither be constituted nor does it require political attention to exist. Nor will it prove

²⁸ In a speech delivered at the UN in late 1988, Gorbachev still seems to assume much of the international system and the ideological rivalry to constitute fundamental ordering and truth principles. He explains his outlook thus: [E]ach should prove the advantages of his own system, his own way of life and values, but not through words or propaganda alone, but through real deeds as well. That is, indeed, an honest struggle of ideology.’ The context of this struggle, he further explains, is: ‘In the past, differences often served as a factor in pulling away from one another. Now they are being given the opportunity to be a factor in mutual enrichment and attraction. Behind differences in social structure, in the way of life, and in the preference for certain values, stand interests. There is no getting away from that, but neither is there any getting away from the need to find a balance of interests within an international framework, which has become a condition for survival and progress. (excerpts available at ‘Gorbachev’s Speech to the U.N., December 7, 1988’, http://isc.temple.edu/hist249/course/Documents/gorbachev_speech_to_UN.htm).

itself wrong or unviable.²⁹ But it seems not really a realm accessible to conscious and intentional human agency either. Rather, it appears that in the new human-centred world of social constructivism, agency and the possibility of consciously and intentionally effecting change are dwindling. With structures and institutions understood as routinized practices established and regulated by the norm as Checkel appositely observes, ‘constructivism lacks a theory of agency’ (Checkel 1998: 325). Moreover, it appears that for the same reason social constructivism lacks a theory of agency, it resists theory building more generally (*Ibid.*: 342). Abstraction from process is close to impossible: its ‘causal arrows’ pointing both ways to structure and agency (Koslowski and Kratochwil 1994: 225). Neither can be established as the foundation from which to construe the other. Understood in terms of intersubjective meaning and norms internalisation, neither agency nor structures or institutions can be said to be constitutive, external or primary – process is irreducibly circular. With its inescapable circularity and mutual constitutedness of actors and institutions, the possibility of establishing an abstract and constant set of principles for designing and testing means for analysis is substantially frustrated. Without an external, abstracted framework, then, all the “social” as the determinant of interests and decision-making *as well as* the generator of institutions and structures provokes is a deepening of epistemological problems. Nagging questions arise as soon as interests and decision-making *and* institutions and structures are relative rather than constitutive: ‘But where should the causal regression end? Should we try to unpack the decisional process and decipher psychological roots of perception?’ (Herrmann 1993:)³⁰. ‘How deep within a policy does one need to go with a constructivist analysis? How is such analysis actually carried out?’ (Checkel 1998: 343). Unsurprisingly, in his comment on the shared emphasis on intangibles that brings democratisation studies close to constructivist approaches, Mark Peceny is also left disoriented. With regard to the insertion of “consolidation” into the thinking about democracy and democratisation, he notes: ‘This literature helps build our understanding of those crucial aspects of democratization that do not flow purely from material conditions, but from cultural norms, identity politics, and political practice. In the end, however, it is difficult to *know* precisely *what knowledge* has been gained’ (Peceny 1999: 99; emphasis added). These questions seem to indicate that, rather than creating an

²⁹As one of the leading constructivists has put this: ‘Fundamental to constructivism is the proposition that human beings are social beings, and we would not be human for our social relations. In other words, social relations *make* or *construct* people – ourselves – into the kind of beings that we are’ (Onuf 1998: 59).

³⁰ Published online: <http://www.ciaonet.org/book/lebow/Lebow10.html>

alternative analytical framework that could make up for the perceived failure of previous ones, social constructivist perspectives and its democratic consolidation twin produce uncertainties all the way down.

In other words, while the consolidation debate expresses the loss of constitutive power of political frameworks through which the world could be changed, the constructivism debate expresses the loss of constitutive power of theoretical frameworks through which the world could be understood. As a consequence, both discover, or lay bare, the social – the social fabric of the world, the social as determining interests and decision-making, the social as productive of norms and socialisation, the social as processes through which attitudes and behavioural patterns change, the social as interaction and intersubjective meanings that consolidate into (political) structures and institutions – as a new site of veridiction: this is where things happen and this is where things that appear on the surface are produced. This discovery, as the following chapters seek to demonstrate, not only has consequential effects on (liberal) ways of governing but is also central for understanding the afterlife of democracy – its displacement, its dispersion and its radical reconceptualisation – in international policy-making.

Conclusion

This chapter had a simple concern: it was interested in the understanding of democracy promotion and political change during and (immediately) after the cold war. This seemingly straightforward approach, however, differs from a conventional narrative on democracy promotion which locates its inceptive moment at the end of superpower confrontation. The cold war period is usually bracketed out in studies on democracy promotion due to the (alleged) primacy of security and containment concerns as well as the overshadowing of international politics by ideological rivalries. This narrative, the chapter found, needs to be challenged. What enabled the challenging of the conventional story was an understanding of the constitutive nature of institution-building as artifice informed by Arendtian ideas. In addition, it reversely inferred from Foucault's point that socialism did not develop an autonomous governmentality that liberalism may not have developed a mechanism for establishing the conditions for governmentality. The chapter highlighted the essential importance of examining cold war rationalisations of democracy promotion and the

underpinning understanding of democracy itself as well as its association with notions of political and societal transformation. It has been suggested that only from this vantage point can we conceive of the fundamental epistemological changes with regard to democracy promotion as well as the locale of democracy and (political) change in the (public) decision-making structures. That is, what a cold war perspective enables is an analytical receptivity not only towards the “discovery” of the social but also an understanding of the conditions of this discovery.

The chapter showed that during the cold war, democracy promotion and democratic change were perceived as a profoundly political project and struggle. It formed an important part of the grand international strategy of containing communism. This made sense only because associated with democracy promotion was an idea about political change that would fundamentally transform the way target societies were organised. It was understood that political or democratic change meant political modernisation. In this rationale, radical change was to be achieved by way of building or creating political institutions and supporting political organisations that would impose an artificial framework onto given contexts. This, it has been noted, is an important point: democracy was promoted precisely through imposing and constituting a political structure and a sphere that was alien, absent and artificial: by thus creating new political subjects, new interests and new ways of expressing interests, it was believed societies could be changed in the desired direction.

At the same time, the feasibility and meaningfulness of democracy promotion as a way to radically and intentionally transform or modernise target societies was fundamentally a product of the existence of communism as an ideological rival against which the democracy agenda was pitched (and filled with meaning) and the availability of communist forms of government as a source from which one could draw in order to design the means. In other words, democracy promotion was also fundamentally a product of political means and forms of organisation and mobilisation alien to the liberal episteme of limiting public authority. In cold war understanding of democratisation, it was recognised that before such authority can be limited it must be created. It was also recognised that with regard to creating such authority communism was superior to liberalism. That is, there was a recognition that liberalism lacked in constitutive power. Instead of emerging as a concern in itself, however, the particular logics and meaning derived from ideological and

political bipolarity as the permanent structure of politics also rendered communist forms of mobilisation a natural source not only to be rivalled but also to be drawn upon.

Centrality was thus accorded to political parties, through which leadership was to be exercised and through which, by extension, American influence was to be exerted. Crucially, in their function of aggregating interests from society and thereby creating and articulating public – governable – interests and their assumed ability to exercise disciplinary control over their constituency, democracy was understood as being firmly rooted in the public and its government. Based on the centrality of a mediating entity between government and society, democracy promotion could meaningfully be understood as a question of the public exercise of authority.

The point of this section was not however to argue for the “American way” but rather to highlight something more fundamental. The point was to highlight how a political and ideological context, which provided for some permanence and meaning, was one in which there was a belief in human and organisational capacities to have a formative and purposive role to create the world humans lived in – to change conditions and context through human and political artifice. This is important, because the chapter found that none of this should survive the end of the cold war. Or rather, it was the end of the cold war that finally frustrated this understanding. Even more radically, the end of the cold war, understood as a broader political and epistemological context, seemed to have been, if not decisive then, at least catalytic to an almost complete elimination of such an understanding.

Sections two and three were concerned with two respective and decisive, but ultimately linked, post-cold war developments with regard to the understanding of democracy promotion and effecting political change: the rise of consolidation in democratisation studies and the rise of constructivism in international relations theory which both “discovered” the social. The second section explored the shift from political to civil society in democracy promotion and the concomitant emergence of consolidation as a central tenet of democratisation. It is from the vantage point of cold war rationalisations that these developments emerge as noteworthy – i.e. the idea that an explicitly non-governmental sphere should come to represent the epitome of democracy strikes as peculiar. However, the chapter argued, inserted into the predicament that gave rise to the notion of consolidation this relocation can be understood more clearly. It has been observed that the idea that democracy needed to be consolidated reflects the

meaninglessness of the formal political institutions and procedures in the absence of a (political or progressive) reason why the democratic game should be played. It was widely acknowledged that democratisation no longer could rely on the organisational and mediating capacities of political parties as the agent and embodiment of public, on governable interests due to the absence of ideologies powerful enough to cohere meaning, support and discipline. Instead of a reason for playing, thus, consolidation captured the idea that the rules of the game need to be internalised. While formal structures were still considered an important precondition, the substance or essence of democracy is becoming increasingly relocated into behavioural norms and attitudes. Democracy as a question of socialisation is not only becoming detached from the idea of public government but also needs a new agent that has relational or socialisation capacities: civil society – increasingly understood as networks and self-professedly “anti-politics”.

While the second section was concerned with the discovery of the social as both the result and the deepening of a decline of politics, the third section on the rise of social constructivism explored the discovery of the social as both the result and the deepening of an epistemological crisis. Social constructivism presents itself both as a critique of prevailing rationalistic IR theories that ostensibly overemphasise structure as well as an emancipatory agenda that wishes to reclaim the human as the author of the world. Social constructivism claims to do so by centring on the social fabric of political life – which it considers the most central aspect of human life but which has allegedly been ignored in the pessimism of rationalistic worldviews. With a sociologically-infused understanding of interest formation, social constructivism sought to offer a way of effecting political change without political means or confrontation: if (problematic) political actors were enveloped in a different norms environment, their interests and decision-making would eventually follow different logics of appropriateness.

The section demonstrated that both narratives – the critique of rationalism as well as emancipation – need to be qualified. First, the human- or agency-centredness of social constructivism propels around a notion of institutions as the product of intersubjectively created meaning. In other words, understood as an expression or continuation of social interactions institutions are nothing more than informal norms regimes, organically linked to the social context out of which they self-produce. As Arendt, in her concern with the decline of the political subject, has powerfully argued, laws and institutions understood as interactions through which social regularities are established do not create a realm of

agency in which action and decision-making is meaningful or has any permanent effect. If institutions are already part of what exists because humans exist it would seem difficult to make a difference to the conditions we live in. The world can thus hardly appear as the sphere of political and collective achievement (Arendt 2005). Secondly, it quickly emerges that rather than a critique of rationalism, pessimism or anti-humanism, the critique of social constructivism with IR theories rests in the failure of available theoretical frameworks to foresee or capture the utterly unexpected and ungraspable way the cold war ended peacefully and through one-sided demise. Viewed from this perspective, it has been intimated that social constructivism's discovery of the social and the simultaneous human- or agency-centred turn is the result of late modernity's Cartesian anxiety: that what we assume to have made intelligible to us through theoretical abstractions and constructs may have nothing to do with reality and that reality therefore rolls on in the way it really is, not amenable to our frameworks of meaning. In this light, the social fabric as an irrefutable and non-falsifiable but also non-representable and non-abstractable dimension of human life emerges as a reaction to, but also deepening, of the fear of deception.

The remaining chapters therefore explore whether the "discovery" of the social in terms of a turn towards civil society as the site of democratisation without politics and the turn towards agency-centredness as an epistemological crisis play a role for the silent working of democracy across all major international policy concerns since the 1990s. It suspects that the root and the kernel for why democracy "stayed on" but has become radically reworked in its essence and role in international policy-making rests in the rise of constructivism (and the way it worked itself into the understanding democratisation). It further suspects that that the influence of social constructivist thinking for emerging policy problematisations and governing rationalities does not stop with the reworking of political change from reorganising societies to socialising the subject but extends into the discovery of the social as a hollowing out of and resistance to the authoritative creation of meaning through abstract constructs.

Taking the first of three steps in exploring this suspicion, the next chapter examines in more detail the trajectory from institution-centred to agency-centred conceptions of democracy. This shift will be examined in relation to the way democracy promotion became discursively and programmatically inserted into the problem of civil conflict management and post-conflict governance in the early and mid-1990s. It does so by focusing on an aspect that has only been dealt with briefly in this chapter: the two stages in

democracy promotion that preceded the turn towards civil society – namely the promotion of elections and democratic institution-building and looks at the reasons for discarding these approaches to democratisation. In this way, the main purpose of the next chapter is to explore the frustration of liberal trajectories and binaries of governing as the second stage of the rise of the social. It is therefore concerned with the role of local contexts and the understanding of the nature and causes of civil conflicts. The contention is that with the twofold discovery of the social – as a decline of constitutive power and meaning and as a determining factor of decision-making – the unmediated relations of the societal appear within the liberal artifice of governing. From there the social radically challenges liberal forms of governing and assumptions. Subsequently, a discursive turn towards empowerment is discernible. In the light of this development, the chapter asks which actors are sought to be empowered and what the objective and rationale is of such empowerment.

CHAPTER 3

IN THE ABSENCE OF ARTIFICE: COMPLEXITY, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC EMPOWERMENT

Introduction

The previous chapter has traced the meaning and role of democracy promotion and political change through the prism of the cold war context and its aftermath. In epistemological and political terms this period encompasses a shift away from constitutive power based on rationalistic understandings of decision-making as well as predicated on the availability of political ends and political means towards a new understanding revolving around the discovery of the social. The chapter began to sketch out some of the fundamental conversions that underpinned this discovery. These concerned the emergence of the novel ideal of consolidation as a habituation of democratic norms and the concomitant shift from political society to civil society in democracy promotion, on the one hand, and the rise of social constructivism as an emancipatory rethinking of political change without political means and the concomitant agenda of reclaiming agency. Both concepts reframe political or, in the case of consolidation concretely democratic, change from an external restructuring of (domestic or international) contexts to an internal transformation of subjectivities through immersion into new regimes of socialisation. Celebrated as a liberation from political, in the case of democratisation, as well as conceptual stalemate, in the case of social constructivism, the chapter suggested that the concomitant rise of the social – the primacy of norms and socialisation processes over rational choice and formal political frameworks – beg for more critical scrutiny. It has demonstrated that the turn towards the social is linked to a loss of political frameworks and fundamental epistemological uncertainties. Whereas the former question the human and organisational capacity to have a purposive formative role over living conditions the latter questions the human capacity to impose meaning or reveal something about human and political realities through representative models. In other words, while the 1990s were characterised by a

euphoric and triumphant mood, on the dark underside a political and epistemological crisis is unfolding.

In investigating the insertion of democracy promotion into civil conflict management, this chapter examines the manifestations of this crisis. Somewhat counter-intuitively, however, it asks whether it is justified to speak of a continuing crisis or whether we see the seeds of an emerging governing rationality in the current discursive and programmatic focus on empowerment largely ignored or under-theorised in critical democracy promotion literature. In other words, is this crisis in the process of becoming reworked as a positive governing rationality? Simply put it asks whether the problem is beginning to turn into the “solution” and whether this is becoming manifest in the way empowerment has become operative in conflicts that are no longer held to be amenable to political solutions. For answering this question, it is necessary to understand the nature of the problem in order to begin to see the role an agency-centred conception of democracy as self-governance plays within this emerging rationale.

For this purpose, the chapter scrutinises more closely the two stages of democracy promotion as electoral support followed by institution-building approaches that have briefly been mentioned in the previous chapter. In this context, it also explores the role, understanding and rise of local context in relation to these sequential approaches. These aspects are picked up again in this chapter and discussed more extensively because it is suggested that here the rise of the social becomes manifest in a further dimension with important implications for promoting liberal forms: the way individuals come to be understood as embedded into their socio-local context frustrates assumptions about universal, liberal trajectories that underpinned democracy promotion as political liberalisation in the early 1990s. As elections (as well as economic liberalisation) not only failed to pacify conflicts but, worse, seemed to exacerbate them, conflicts, it was concluded, were not driven by rational interests that could be pacified by channelling them into electoral competition. Instead, civil conflicts become understood as epiphenomena of dynamics originating deep down in the social fabric of societies below the level of visibility. From this point onwards, it seems, significant confusions and doubts arise not only with regard to conflict contexts and how to approach these but in extension with regard to the logics and limitations of the liberal edifice of governing and authority.

This chapter explores and orders these doubts in line with Foucault's observation with regard to the failure of socialism mentioned in the previous chapter.³¹ It hence asks: could it be that what became glaringly obvious but extremely problematic after the cold war is that, while liberal representative forms of governing are irreducibly tied to the constituted power of the public, they have no constitutive power out of their own episteme (which operates according to the limitation of public authority rather than its creation)? From this angle the chapter then examines the turn towards democratic institution-building as a mechanism of resolving deeply-rooted conflicts. It discerns and investigates two significant developments. On the one hand, the chapter explores the extent to which the liberal equilibrium based on a separation between the public sphere of governing and the private sphere, which need not be of concern, has been fundamentally impinged upon with the roots of conflicts deep in the lived relations of the societal. It is suggested that the institutional solution without the artificial sphere of the public is confronted with the messy and complex world of society which it ends up seeking to institutionalise – and thereby crosses the practical boundaries of liberal representative government. On the other hand, the chapter examines how, in the same context of institution-building, the understanding of formal frameworks of liberal representative government mutates from a presumed universal solution into an alien imposition that is now held to be inappropriate for other – local – contexts. In this light, the chapter asks whether this mutation is reflective of yet another doubt: that the gap between the local conflict realities buried in social dynamics below the level of visibility and the institutional model (and donor ideas of how it works) is growing to an extent that nothing can be safely and authoritatively inferred from either – neither context or nor model (and what it is supposed to do). Put differently, the interest here is whether the idea that externally designing institution is hubris effectively describes

³¹ To recapture, this refers to Foucault's critique of socialism as not having developed an 'autonomous governmentality', whereas liberalism did, which, by implication, accounts for its success (Foucault 2009: 93). It has been inversely inferred in the previous chapter that liberalism has not developed an autonomous mechanism to "create" governmentality (constitutive power). The question whether liberal forms can self-generate, of course, is not a "blind" spot" in Foucault's work itself. Foucault drew out the foundation or roots of liberal ways of governing in non-liberal forms of power and subjectivity (see for instance his work on sovereign power and the disciplines, Foucault 1991) and since he focused on a genealogy of European liberalism up to the twentieth century, there was little need to pay attention to the parasitic nature of liberal governance. What Foucault seemed to do, however, was to warn of light-handedly separating the analysis of liberal ways of governing from its revolutionary-judicial attachment to the rights of man (Foucault 2008: 40-2). In other words, we may need to be careful with regard to what extent liberal forms can simply revert to pre-liberal forms of power and governing and still be liberal (and to what extent this reversion is even possible if it must operate out of a liberal episteme). One contemporary example is the difficulties statebuilding was initially construed to be confronted with: its agenda would require the direct exercise of colonial power, while contemporary liberal ways of governing impose severe constraints on such exercise and its responsibilities, not at least in form of wide-spread critique (see for instance Chesterman 2004; Chandler 2006; Marquette and Beswick 2011).

a fundamental predicament with approaching context realities through models produced by the rise of the social. Hubris, in other words, may be the result of the insight that not much can be done because not much can be known. Thus far the crisis.

Thirdly, the chapter asks whether we see any difference in the problematisation of conflict in reaction to this predicament. It is suggested that conflict subsequently becomes understood foremost in terms of a problem of violence as expressed in the “New Wars” debate.³² Thus understood, conflicts can be approached in terms of violent behaviour which is a social condition and not a problem warranting a political solution. The chapter then investigates whether the ensuing agency-centred emphasis on empowerment can be understood as an emerging governing rationale that works through the very dimension that caused the crisis: the social. In this context, attention will be paid to the actors to be empowered, in which function they are empowered and with which purpose. What seems indicative here that the emphasis is on agents that are characterised by their political powerlessness but instead are inculcated with relational power as the embodiment of social networks.

The investigation proceeds in three sections. Since the interlinking of democracy and (civil) conflict is all but self-evident, the first section briefly highlights the relative novelty of “democratic peace” in contemporary international relations and the initially separate nature of violent conflict and democracy in modernisation thinking. Democratisation up to this point was considered the outcome of a political development, including violent struggles, rather than conflict resolution. While Western democracy itself as well as democracy promotion sought to pacify societal cleavages and co-opt emerging anti-systemic forces this goal was not considered to be one of liberalisation but a political project that needed to be engineered. The second section examines the two stages in democracy promotion for conflict resolution – elections and institution-building – in the face of the emerging problem of “deeply-rooted” conflicts. It focuses on the double undermining of central tenets of promoting democracy through liberalisation: the trajectory from political liberalisation to liberal democratic government and the separation of the public and private. The third section examines the problematisation of civil conflicts

³² To put it more precisely: Both notions of “deeply-rooted” conflict – in which marginalisation and other factors has led to an exploitation of socio-cultural traditions and ethnic identities (for instance, OECD 1997b) as well as in terms of bad socialisation processes (see for instance, CGG 1995; Lederach 1998) – exist simultaneously. The point here is more which understanding gains prevalence for policy problematisation and governing rationalities or interventions.

in terms of “New Wars” once donors had realised that with the unknowability of conflict realities little could be done. With its emphasis on violent behaviour, conflict emerges as a problem of misperception and attitude. As a problem with ways of thinking and ways of perceiving, it seems to become the socialising network itself through which conflicts need to be governed. Empowering agents that are held to embody the network, exercise their “power” through social relationships and interactions begins to emerge as a novel governing rationality in a reconfigured problem-solution nexus.

Conflict Resolution? Democracy Meets Peace

In order to enable the investigation of democracy promotion in the context of post-cold war civil conflict management, this section sketches out some prior understandings of democracy, democratisation and its promotion in relation to conflict. It highlights that both in international relations as well as in democratisation studies these were considered to belong to different planes. As far as conflict was an issue, it was either affirmatively acknowledged or a political project to accommodate rival or anti-systemic forces, such as labour.

Democracy and Peace in International Relations

As a mainstream trope, peace neither ranged prominently on the international agenda as a primary ordering principle nor in mainstream international relations as an academic subject area during the cold war. “The modern project of solving the problem of war, of eliminating the phenomenon of violence from within and between societies” (Reid 2006: 6) thus does not suggest itself to be as coherent a project as often assumed and narrated by commentators after the end of the cold war. Rather, as such, Julian Reid admits, it became discernible only “from the vantage point of a twenty-first century characterised by the apparent pacification and interdependence of societies globally” (*Ibid.*: 1).

Tellingly, one of the most influential researchers on the emerging ‘democratic peace theory’, Nils Gleditsch, wonders:

‘Democracies don’t fight each other’ – why was such a simple observation not made in the great classical studies of war? Richardson (1960) did not touch this topic at all. Wright (1965) dealt at some length with the relationship between democracy and war,

but did not comment on the lack of war between democracies. And why, when this striking regularity was noticed in the early 1960s, did it take nearly thirty years before it became widely acknowledged? (1992: 370)

His observation suggests, what, on the surface, seems to constitute a rather straightforward answer: theorists of war in the 1960s had little epistemological motivation for posing the question of “democratic peace” – or rather, the “democratic peace theory” is not concerned with the question of war. At this point, it is less the “nature” of democracy as such³³ but a shift in the perception of world politics that seemed to have contributed to the emergence of the democratic peace as something like an iron law.³⁴ This shift is aptly captured by Bruce Russett. In his much-cited study on *‘Grasping the Democratic Peace’* which, according to the subtitle, once grasped would provide *‘Principles for a Post-Cold War World’*, he explains:

So long as power realities pitted two great alliances against each other, and the differences between the political systems of most members of each bloc were ... evident, theory about whether the conflict would remain even if both orders were democratic was little more than idle speculation. But when all the basic parameters of Cold War politics changed at the beginning of the 1990s, theory became immediately relevant to policy. (Russett 1993: 126)

Mainstream IR theorising of and during the cold war was considerably more concerned with the (political) question of how peace and stability was possible under war and anarchy as the basic operational principles. With the end of superpower rivalry culminating in an “end of history” of some sorts, the question of violence and peace was being reposed. After the ideological struggle had disappeared, peace quickly seemed to have become the new normal, or what Richmond calls a ‘positive epistemology’ (Richmond 2006: 37) – and civil conflict turned into a central problem in the early post-cold war period (Lacina 2004). According to Oliver Richmond, the liberal peace thesis emerges ‘in favour of liberal constitutional frameworks for states’ as a more realistic version to the radical implications of the Kantian programme in terms of world government. The new liberal peace, he states,

³³ As Christopher Hobson reminds us, democracy as inherently peaceful is a fairly recent conceptualisation – neither the ancient Greek democracies nor those evolving out of the French revolution were considered or characterised by their peacefulness: “Today democracy may be closely associated with peace, but this is a historical rarity” which ‘is significant insofar as whether democracy is understood as warlike (as in ancient Athens), anarchic and violent (as in the French Revolution), or stable and peaceful (as currently understood), will have important consequences for threat perception, the chances of democratic zones of peace to exist, and more basically, what being a democracy means’ (Hobson 2011: 1917).

³⁴ It is worthwhile to keep in mind that Woodrow Wilson’s much-cited rally cry of “making the world safe for democracy” as an agenda for democracy promotion somewhat misses the point. He said *for not through*. And in the actual speech itself it remains ambivalent whether this refers to socioeconomic preconditions for democracy or the security of existing liberal democracies. The tendency points towards the latter (speech available at <<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/>>).

is 'defined by democratisation, the rule of law, human rights, development, in a globalised economic setting' (Richmond 2006: 74). In this changing context, the basic (ethical) question consequently emerges how war was possible under conditions of peace. Or to put it in a more nuanced way, in a pacified world, how are we to understand the phenomenon of conflict? The point for this chapter is not that conflict, violence and war were necessarily expected to disappear (this may or may not have been the case), but rather that the understanding of armed conflict and its origins as well as the character of peace experienced crucial shifts once the basic operational paradigm of international relations turned from confrontation and conflict to consensus and peace.

Democracy and Conflict in Democratisation Thought

Thinking together democracy and conflict resolution is a fairly recent phenomenon. In its international dimension, the problem of democracy promotion during the cold war was not primarily conflict as an aberrant of peace but communism as part of an ideological confrontation. With regard to the domestic politics of representative democracy, commentators and advisors concerned with democratisation and transitions to democracy, in one way or another, wrote out of a context in which the conflict and struggles around class cleavages, labour, socialism, and mass political parties still constituted a political reality that one could and needed to engage with (Schumpeter 2003 [1946]; Lipset 1959; Huntington 2006 [1968]; Rustow 1970; Douglas 1972).³⁵

In this context, rather than the pacification of society as such, the primary role of representative democracy was rational progress. While certainly reflective of an idealised version, the authors of the 1975 *Crisis of Democracy* report recapture the essence and purpose of democratic government as the 'ability to mobilize its citizens for the achievement of social and political goals and to impose discipline and sacrifice upon its citizens in order to achieve these goals' (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975: 7). To the extent that the representative democratic system of government was considered a mechanism of pacification this was in terms of the potential it held for dealing with the

³⁵ The later "transitology" school of the 1980s around Guillermo O'Donnell and colleagues deliberately refuted the idea of "pre-conditions". Against this structuralist determinism, they made a politically motivated case for agency: negotiated pacts, they maintained, constituted an alternative route towards democracy (O'Donnell 2007: 292-3). Nevertheless, even these scholars could only envision such an alternative by assuming that political elites exercised legitimate control over their constituencies. In other words, implicitly, some political, ideological and ontological mechanism that connected elites with society also lies at the foundation of such agency-centred conceptualisations.

'entry to politics' question of new social and political forces by de-radicalising them (Lipset 1969: 88; Huntington 2006 [1968]: 20-1). For this, however, it had been understood that democracy needed stable, and particularly autonomous, political organisations and institutions. As Huntington explains:

In every society affected by social change, new groups arise to participate in politics. Where the political system lacks autonomy, these groups gain entry into politics without becoming identified with the established political organizations or acquiescing in the established political procedures. The political organizations and procedures are unable to stand up against the impact of a new social force. (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 21)

This goes hand in hand with the understanding that specific types of conflicts were deemed to be the essence of the democratic system. Joseph Schumpeter, for instance, explains the *raison d'être* of contestation and representation in terms of opposing armies and conquest. What becomes clear from his analogy is not only the open reversal of Clausewitz's formulaic claim of war as the continuation of politics with other means but also the inherently materialistic understanding of the democratic system of government. Decisively, his understanding is prompted by the idea that the confrontation of politics is over the same – public – space and concerns the question of who and which political agenda gets to govern:

Similarly, the first and foremost aim of each political party is to prevail over the others in order to get into power or stay in it. Like the conquest of the stretch of country or hill, the decision of the political issues is, from the standpoint of the politician, not the end but only the material of parliamentary activity. Since politicians fire off words instead of bullets and since words are unavoidably supplied by the issues under debate, this may not always be as clear as it is in the military case. But victory over the opponent is nevertheless the essence of both games [the military and the political]. (Schumpeter 2003 [1943]: 279)

Without a fundamental conflict, Dankwart Rustow in his seminal article on transitions to democracy agrees, there is actually little need for developing a system that could address these in a non-violent fashion (Rustow 1970: 362). Interestingly, Rustow takes issue with the idea that there are socioeconomic preconditions for democracy. He contends that such a view relies on a 'tacit assumption that social and economic conditions are somehow more basic, and that we must look for the significant relations in this deeper layer rather than the "superstructure" of political epiphenomena' (*Ibid.*: 343). In this sense, while democracy is the result of a struggle of which it is a 'fortuitous by-product' (*Ibid.*: 352), it, at the same time, must be a conscious choice and an affirmation of this conflict. It is in this light that he

claims, 'what infant democracy requires is not a lukewarm struggle but a hot family feud' (*Ibid.*: 355).³⁶

Rustow, on the other hand, differentiates between political conflicts and "identity-based" conflicts. He concedes that democracy seems to have proven quite capable of addressing the former but less so the latter (*Ibid.*: 359). A momentary solution for identity-based conflicts, he suggests, is their de-politicisation by taking them out of the democratic game and into the pre-political (legal) structure through quota, plurality of official languages, education system and so on. 'Yet,' he warns, such a policy 'also entrenches the differences instead of removing them, and accordingly it may convert political conflict into a form of trench warfare' (*Ibid.*: 360).

Three aspects are therefore noticeable in these conceptualisations. First, representative democracy was not an end (point) in itself but a vehicle of achieving political and social goals. Secondly, certain types of political struggles were considered to constitute the *raison d'être* of democracy. While it was acknowledged that identity-based conflicts were detrimental to the viability of representative forms of government, it was not within the direct remit of political democracy to address them; as actualities armed conflicts and democratic forms of government were two separate worlds. Thirdly, to the extent that it was addressed as a societal pacification mechanism (in the conservative sense of de-radicalisation), democracy was not "naturally" so but required engineering and the constitutive power of creating artificial, autonomous and permanent structures.

Indicatively, Charles Call, of the International Peace Institute, and Susan Cook, in an article investigating the relationships between democratisation and peacebuilding refer to this conceptual separation as a gap or reductionism plaguing democratisation literature. They insist: '[T]he literature on democratization ... has paid scant attention to war and its aftermath. ... [T]he prominent works on democratization have acknowledged the role of war and its termination but have given it virtually no systematic treatment' (Call and Cook

³⁶ Rustow, like Schumpeter and Huntington, certainly had little communist inclinations. A Yale graduate, he has taught at Princeton, Columbia and Harvard and has frequently contributed to *Foreign Affairs*, a conservative US-based journal for foreign and international politics. The emphasis on politics and power, which in a very peculiar but indicative process today have become a dear position on the fringes of the intellectual Left, were considered a "normal" ingredient of questions surrounding the government of societies, irrespective of political orientation. The importance of political parties in the formulation of interests and in the government of society, the idea that there are political ends and interests to be achieved and that power is part of public decision-making represented as much a conservative as a progressive view. As such, it is not too far-fetched to say that this kind of public political life was part of a prevailing episteme, a way of understanding the world and doing things in this world. It seems equally fair to say that, given the "taboo" status of notions of politics and power as part of the human world to be embraced today, is part of an episteme passed.

2003: 239). Their critique is indicative as it takes stock of an emerging conceptual possibility or even necessity: democracy or democratisation can and should – and in a sense has become – more directly engaged with armed conflict (while ignoring the reasons for not advocating democracy directly as a conflict resolution mechanism). This is not least of all because the understanding of peace has also changed from negotiated settlements to a more “sustainable”, deep-reaching condition after the end of the cold war.

The next section is devoted to this more direct engagement of democracy as a conflict resolution mechanism. It traces the initial approach to conflict resolution via the promotion of elections and the construed reasons for the failure of this approach, before exploring the second stage of democracy promotion as institution-building that seeks to prevent deeply-rooted conflicts from appearing. While much policy and academic literature seems to accord the destabilising effects elections to the identity politics of socialised interests, the section asks whether we can also understand this problem as one generated by a notion of democratisation as political liberalisation that simply lays open the muddy, messy world of societal complexities as the sphere of governing instead of creating the public (on which, as a limited form, it is dependent on). Based on this question, the second part of this section examines the institutional solution, suggesting that this approach not only reflects the way the public-private divide and equilibrium has been impinged on. It also asks whether the ensuing declarations of “misfit” of model-solution for local contexts and the declaration of hubris is best understood as a problem of uncertainties resulting from “deeply-rooted” reality of conflict contexts.

Making the Social Public? The Universalist Aporia

In the immediate post-cold war era it was the problem of civil conflicts that moved into the focus of the international community and Western countries (UN 1992; European Commission 1996; OECD 1997; see Lacina 2004). As a pressing problem needing international attention, the initial solution was held to consist in political liberalisation, activated in terms of promoting “free and fair elections” and driven by the idea that liberal democracy was the only remaining and therefore universal form of societal organisation able to fulfil human aspirations. At the same time, civil conflicts presented themselves increasingly as identity-driven, ethnic and hence ‘deep[ly] rooted’ in the social fabric of

societies (Harris and Reilly 1998). The two combined soon frustrated the initial conflict resolution agenda.

Window of Opportunity: Promoting Elections to End Crises

A landmark redefinition of peace from agreement between warring groups towards pacifying societies through democracy has been the 1992 *Agenda for Peace* put forward by then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Civil strife and armed conflict are seen to constitute a rupture of normal proceedings; they are ‘a breakdown of peaceful conditions (UN 1992: §57). The traditional operations of peacemaking and peacekeeping were deemed insufficient for the new requirements of peace as a disruption of normalcy. The ‘restoration of order’ now described a project that was considerably more exacting, including ‘monitoring elections, advancing efforts to promote human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation’ (*Ibid.*: §55). The document, foreshadowing core issues about civil conflict that should strain the international community, explains that the rationale of ‘post-conflict peace-building is to prevent a recurrence’ (*Ibid.*: §21). Logically, thus peace could not remain on the surface of negotiated settlements but needed to enter deeper. The new consensus, the Agenda proclaims, rests on the belief ‘that social peace is as important as strategic or political peace’. In other words, ‘[t]here is an obvious connection between democratic practices ... and the achievement of true peace’ (*Ibid.*: §59; see also see UN 1996: §17; Annan 2002: 137).

In this period, the promotion of democratic practices and its peace potential were associated with formal frameworks of representative government. As an early OECD guideline on conflict management and peacebuilding explains. ‘An environment of structural stability is one in which there are dynamic and representative social and political structures capable of managing change and resolving disputes without resort to violence’ (OECD 1997b: 9; see also UN 1996: §17). The *Agenda for Peace* explicitly highlights: democratic interventions lead to the ‘construction of [such] a new environment’ (UN 1992: §55). The ‘promotion of democracy’ as a ‘peacebuilding strategy’ thus aimed at ‘building [individual’s and group] stake in the system and preventing their marginalisation and potential recourse to violence’ (OECD 1997b: 17). Elections – as they expressed the will of the majority – thus not only installed a legitimate government but also built people’s stake

in the system. In this way, the 2000 report by the UN Secretary-General recaptures: ‘in the early 1990s, the holding of elections was often a formal element of peace accords, providing peaceful means to determine who would hold power in a post-conflict government ... [T]he announcement of election results signalled the end of political crises’ (UN 2000b: §22). The underpinning rationale of this approach was a belief in a liberal (peace) trajectory that would lead from elections – and through them – to ‘the consolidation of peace structured by a durable democratic system’ (Pouligny 2000: 18).

As it turned out, elections did not hold what they were thought to promise in the face for civil conflict. In a seminal study, one of the first commentators to announce the failure of electoral democracy, Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder warned that the democratisation process itself fuelled nationalistic fervour. Elections rather than providing a non-violent alternative of addressing grievances and conflicting demands, according to the authors, were actually a catalyst for war, or worse, made countries more aggressive and belligerent (Mansfield and Snyder 1995: 7-9). Paul Collier, former director of the World Bank’s Development Research Group (1998-2003) summarising findings from many of his previous studies on poverty and conflict alerts: ‘[A]larmingly, to date democracy in the societies of the bottom billion has increased political violence instead of reducing it’ (Collier 2010b: 11). Drawing on her experiences as a practitioner and UN advisor on peacebuilding, Béatrice Pouligny likewise concludes that post-conflict elections largely have failed ‘in actually grounding democracy and peace’ (Pouligny 2005: 496). ‘As an end in themselves’, the European Union agrees, ‘elections alone will not necessarily make a country a democracy or give it the political stability necessary for it to flourish’ (European Commission 1998: 5). A report by the AU (African Union) Panel of the Wise drafted for the International Peace Institute recaptures political developments in Africa during the 1990s and goes as far as to suggest that elections had *replaced* other, more “historical” causes of violent conflict. It asserts: ‘With the steady decline of some of the historic causes of African conflicts, elections have emerged as one of the major recent sources of conflict across Africa’ (AU Panel of the Wise 2010: 1). An increasing number of scholars, advisors and policymaking circles have since joined the tune (Lake and Rothschild 1995: 60; World Bank 2001: 126-7; Bastian and Luckham 2003b: 1; Paris 2004: 159; Donais 2009; UNDP 2009a: 1-6).

Together with the idea that political liberalisation leads to peace and democracy the same assumptions about economic liberalisation came under assault (Belmont, Mainwaring

and Reynolds 2002: 2; Paris 2004). As one of the seminal studies on peace transitions and democratisation processes summarises its findings: ‘the liberalization process produced unanticipated problems that threatened to destabilize – or did destabilize – the fragile peace’ (Paris 2004: 153-4). Consequently, it was understood that the firm belief that there was a universal and linear trajectory from liberalisation to peace (now necessarily democratic) underpinning early approaches to peacebuilding through democracy promotion had been significantly shaken and, effectively, disproven. It is in this context that Thomas Carothers thus proclaims the ‘end of the transition paradigm’ as a result of the ‘crash’ of linear assumptions (Carothers 2002: 14-7; see Introduction). Given the profoundness of this realisation, naturally, academic and policy circles began to search for reasons for what they saw as the failure of this universal and linear progression to materialise. The answer emerged as bifurcated. In one way, the problem was the type of conflict and its subjects. In relation to the nature of conflicts and the way actors operated within them, the second, more implicit, problem then also involved assumptions about the system promoted itself.

With regard to the nature of conflicts and its actors, the problematic issue, as it was perceived, was that these conflicts were propelled by ethnicity and ethnic identity (OECD 1997b; Belmont, Mainwaring and Reynolds 2002; Bastian and Luckham 2003; Chesterman 2003; Paris 2004; UNDP 2009a) ‘rather than by ideology or the conquest of territory’ (International IDEA (1998): 1).³⁷ In these terms, an International IDEA handbook for negotiators explains: ‘A striking characteristic of such internal conflict is its sheer persistence. And this arises, above all, because its origins often lie in deep-seated issues of identity. In this respect, the term *ethnic conflict* is often invoked. [...] But at bottom, these are all *identity* issues. (International IDEA 1998: 9; emphasis in original). ‘Ethnic identities’, as Pippa Norris in a study on electoral systems for deeply divided societies further explains,

can best be understood as social constructs with deep cultural and psychological roots based on national, cultural-linguistic, racial, or religious backgrounds. They provide an affective sense of belonging and are socially defined in terms of their meaning for actors. (Norris 2002: 206)

Crawford Young adds:

³⁷ The International IDEA handbook on *Democracy and Deep-Rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators* (1998) is edited by Peter Harris and Ben Reilly, and has multiple authors that have in various combinations contributed to the handbook. In order to avoid confusion and make it clear to the reader which source is drawn upon it will be referred to as: International IDEA 1998.

ethnicity has psychological properties and discursive resources which have the potential to decant into violence. No other form of social identity, in the early twenty-first century, has a comparable power, save for the closely related forms of collective affiliation, race and religion. (Young 2003: 9)

From this understanding of ethnicity as a deep psychological property, the fundamental problem, however, was not only that [e]thnic, religious and cultural differences' played a role (OECD 1997b: 12). Rather, what turned these conflicts into a problem for universal assumptions was that they seemed to determine the entire social, economic and political edifice: patterns of internalised identity provided the material for politics and mobilisation (OECD 1997b; Paris 2004: 162), they produced constituencies (Horowitz 2002; Norris 2002), they established logics for economic organisation (UNDP 2009a: 11). In other words, it came to be understood that it was patterns of deeply internalised and socialised identification that determined individual interests and decision-making and accounted for their violent clashing. For Paris, for instance, political leadership is exercised through 'traditional cultural networks based on a common religion or language' that 'provide convenient channels to mobilize backers' (Paris 2004: 162; see also Norris 2002). This is not simply a problem of elites – in fact, an 'especially acute problem' is the 'mass responsiveness' of the ethnically divided population (UNDP 2009a: 13). The issue at stake is not simply the fronting of ethnic interests, but that rather than being rational all interests are articulated – or are understood to be articulated – through identity (see Horowitz 2002: 26-8).

The second answer for the failure of political liberalisation to establish peaceful, democratic systems is linked to the primacy of identity for (conflictive) decision-making and interest-formation. The reason why the promotion of elections failed in the face of post-cold war conflicts rests in their powerlessness as political mechanisms. As Simon Chesterman, for instance, laments: elections in ethnically-propelled societies amount to 'little more than a census on ethnicity' (Chesterman 2004: 207).³⁸ Identity conflicts based on identity politics logically lead to 'identity voting' (UNDP 2009a: 12). People, in other words, vote what they are – and thus have much at stake. All that elections then reflect is "social constructs with deep psychological roots" (Norris 2002, see above). Conceived as revolving around identity and ethnicity – and as such deeply rooted in the very fabric of people's existence – elections and representation could only reproduce and exacerbate such conditions rather than offering a political solution or establish legitimacy. The

³⁸ I am grateful to Aidan Hehir for the reference.

universal, linear trajectory is thus undermined because elections do not produce the common good but rather seem to bring out into the open the common bad. Examining cases of post-cold war conflicts, Sunil Bastian and Robin Luckham observe that democracy understood as representation established through elections ‘can also ... reinforce inequalities, penalise minorities [and even] awaken dormant conflicts’ (Bastian and Luckham 2003: 1; see also Pouligny 2000: 19). In the same vein, Timothy Donais critically highlights that ‘elections reproduce the very socio-political cleavages that peacebuilding hopes to overcome’ (Donais 2009: 13).

Put differently what these authors and advisors have become aware of is that liberal forms of governing were not self-generating. Elections therefore did not represent public interests but instead represented those social dynamics, hierarchies and realities that already existed in an unmediated manner. What had therefore been ignored in the promotion of liberal, representative forms of government through liberalisation was their irrevocable dependence on artificiality and artifice. As a limited form of government, they are dependent on mediation between what exists naturally and the object (and space) of governing.³⁹ Out of their own rationality, liberal forms, concerned with limiting the reach as well as agenda of government (Foucault 2009: 8-12), are parasitic on public authority already created (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 8; see Chapter 2). Liberal forms of government need the public artifice but dispose of little means or power to create it. As Huntington succinctly puts the problem: ‘Elections to be meaningful presuppose a certain level of political organization. The problem is not to hold elections but to create organisations’ that are not fully congruent with society, not simply an extension, but function with a certain autonomy (Huntington 2006 [1968]): 7). For political organisation it needs political meaning and purpose that lies outside of what already exists.⁴⁰ As it has been suggested in the previous chapter, and confirmed by many consolidation scholars, the 1990s were characterised by a loss of these forms of political organisation, meaning and purpose.

³⁹ Even if we speak about the liberal subject or individual rather than liberal government, the former, in Foucault’s work, seems to surface as an artificially crafted and carefully maintained “product” as well. In his work on the disciplinary, for instance, the liberal individual is ‘a reality fabricated’ by a specific technology of power (Foucault 1991: 194) that produces such subjects as multiplicity (rather than population).

⁴⁰ This “autonomous” element is also alluded to by Arendt when she defines political organisation as a process that abstracts ‘from an absolute chaos of difference’ (Arendt 2005: 93; see Introduction). For Arendt, this absolute chaos of difference characterises the kind of social dynamics, processes and interrelationships that always already exists in human affairs (Arendt 1998: 190). Seemingly influenced by the work of Arendt (it appears in the bibliography), Huntington works with a similar notion of political liberty as an extraction from these contingencies that always already exist in social life when he adds: ‘Organization is the road to political power, but it is also the foundation of political stability and thus the precondition of political liberty’ (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 416; see also Chandler 2013).

The problem of understanding (and “doing”) conflicts in terms of identity politics, while clearly a problem, is therefore not a problem of identity and ethnicity as such, but the way “social constructs with deep psychological roots” crept into the political artifice. From this, two further interrelated points follow, one with regard to the frustration of universal trajectories made above and one with regard to the shift to institution-building approaches that will be examined below. The rise of the social – ethnic, cultural and identity dynamics and attachments – seems to frustrate universal and linear progress(ion) because such progress(ion) has come to be understood in terms of political liberalisation rather than achievement. In regard to the second point, in “bubbling” onto the liberalised public sphere the social thereby emerges in the realm of governing. That is, as epiphenomena of social and socialising dynamics, deeply-rooted identity politics simply surfaces through the hollowed out mechanism of public government rather than being transformed into the artifice of the public. As such, they have revealed themselves as a concern for governing (rather than being a “private” feature).

The following subsection on the shift towards democratic institution-building to address deep-rooted conflicts therefore asks whether this surfacing into the realm of governing concern has an impact on the institution-building agenda that stipulates its unviability or even failure. It will be suggested that with the rise of the social, on the one hand, the balance or separation between the public and private has been fundamentally impinged upon and on the other hand, gaining certainty about conflict realities is aggravated to the point where institutional solution turn into “hubristic imposition” due to a concern with unintended consequences.

*Deeply Rooted Conflicts and Democratic Institution Crafting: The Paradox of the Leninist Option*⁴¹

The promotion of democracy as a conflict resolution or peacebuilding approach has not been discarded after the electoral fallacy. Instead, faced with the dangers of elections, international actors have resorted to regulating the rules of the game to eradicate the possibility of (identity) politics from the system of government. In other words, the question was to find the right kind of institutional set-up in order to prevent the eruption of violent conflict. As Norris states, ‘[a]gencies concerned with the peaceful amelioration of

⁴¹ I borrow this term from Marina Ottaway’s 1997 article on ‘Democratisation and the Leninist Option’.

such [ethnic and identity-based] antagonisms have increasingly turned towards “constitutional engineering” or “institutional design” to achieve these ends’ (Norris 2002: 206).

As the editors of a volume titled *The Architecture of Democracy* highlight, this approach is ‘predicated on the idea that institutional design makes a difference in how effectively political leaders are able to manage conflict democratically in divided societies’ (Belmont, Mainwaring and Reynolds 2002: 3), and, by extension, on the idea that political institutions are able to regulate socio-political dynamics with deep psychological roots. Having established this, the editors’ rationale for focusing on institutional design for conflict management is rather compelling:

It is probably in divided societies that institutional arrangements have the greatest impact. In societies that do not have profound ethnic, religious, or national cleavages, institutional choices are probably less relevant for democratic stability because they do not readily skew the political system to favour or adversely affect different groups. (*Ibid.*: 3)

In the International IDEA handbook for negotiators and practitioners, the authors provide a similar outlook. As they explain: ‘The choice of appropriate institution – forms of devolution or autonomy, electoral system design, legislative bodies, juridical structures and so on – designed and developed through fair and honest negotiation processes are vital ingredients in building an enduring and peaceful settlement to even the most intractable conflict’ (International IDEA 1998: 16). According to this view, for instance, the recurrent violence in Angola in the wake of holding elections as part of the 1991 peace agreement and the failure to produce inclusive power-sharing mechanisms was to be blamed on constitutional provisions that tilted too much towards presidentialism (International IDEA 1998: 16). Underpinning this understanding is thus a distinct notion of institutions, their rationality, “knowability” and position vis-à-vis society. Democracy from this perspective literally represented an architecture and society with its conflict the ground onto which it was to be built. What this depiction ignores, however, is a problem with assumptions about the “firmness” of the ground onto which these institutions are to be built; or, to put it differently, where the reality of deeply-rooted conflict is produced. In fact, as we shall see in a moment, the authors themselves provide an understanding of the essence of deeply-rooted conflict that puts the viability and reach of this approach to question.

An interesting analogy provided by Ottaway in describing the institutional approach is helpful for drawing out the emerging shortcomings and difficulties. Ottaway makes out a

noticeable similarity between Lenin's belief that missing underlying or historical conditions could be bridged or compensated by political organisations (Ottaway 1997: 19) and the 'democratic reconstruction model' advanced by the international community (Ottaway 2003: 315). Ottaway, however, diagnoses failure. The "Leninist" approach failed because it 'focused above all on institutions, and not on social transformation' (Ottaway 1997: 11). From the vantage point of conflict resolution through institutional engineering, there is an obvious problem attached to this failure. This concerns the lack of constitutive power: obviously, Lenin's vanguard party did not make it on the agenda of the democratic reconstruction model and its replacement with the nongovernmental sphere of civil society cannot make up for this lack (see *Ibid.*: 6-10). The problem is exacerbated by the locale or root of conflict. As the authors of the International IDEA handbook emphasise:

What makes this kind of [identity-driven, deep-rooted] conflict so prevalent, so pervasive, so durable and so insoluble, is the way in which the issues of the dispute are so emotionally charged. They go right to the heart of what gives people their sense of themselves, defining a person's bond with her or his community and defining the source of satisfaction for her or his need for identity. (International IDEA 1998: 11)

If this is the site, depicted as fundamental to life, which warrants regulation through formal institutional arrangements then institutional saturation needs to be extremely pervasive, reaching all the way down to the bottom of existence. In other words, the same way ethnicity as a social construct with deep psychological roots bubbled into the hollowed out sphere of public government, the same way an attempt to institutionally suffocate these sites of conflict would need to reach deep down. Simply put, ever more aspects concerned with social cohesion need to be addressed through institutional provisions (see Bastian and Luckham 2003a). This mission creep haunts the negotiator's handbook. The by far largest part of the guideline – over 200 pages – is dedicated to 'Democratic Levers and Conflict Management' which discusses complex power-sharing arrangements for identity groups, institutionalised reconciliation instruments, gender issues, and an array of language and education provisions from the national to the communal level (International IDEA 1998: 133-342 (!)).

In other words, the complexity of social dynamics and processes that have forced themselves into the field of governing attention in the absence of mediation, demand an equally complex saturation of society with institutional arrangements. We can briefly refer to some of Foucault's remarks on *de facto* limitations of liberal governing rationalities (including its neoliberal variant) to highlight how the liberal edifice revolving around a

public-private divide as well as limited government has been fundamentally, and perhaps irreparably, unhooked with the rise of the social.⁴² A crucial characteristic of liberal forms of governing, according to Foucault, are practical limits. These concern the self-limitation of government through defining its agenda, crucially against what is not on its agenda. If liberal forms of governing fail to define their concern or agenda, that is, if they overburden themselves, they become inadequate, inappropriate or 'clumsy' (Foucault 2008: 8-12). This overburdening seems to be precisely what is taking place with the institutional approach to deeply-rooted conflicts. Democratic institution-building, out of a liberal episteme, becomes clumsy and inappropriate because the governing space that it can regulate no longer converges with the site that has opened itself up for requiring or warranting governing: the social. This site of power, including the power to produce conflict, yet, has opened up as the site at which forms of governing need to employ themselves.

However, like in the previous chapter, in order to grasp the full implications of this development with regard to an emerging governing rationality we need to go beyond "overburdening" for understanding the increasing unviability of formal institutional forms of governing. That is, it is helpful to look at the conditions for the rise of local context and the sudden shift in thinking about institutional building from a universal model to an hubristic imposition of alien models. It is suggested to investigate this shift from the vantage point of knowledge and conflict realities.

Reckoning with Unknowns: The Hubris of Frameworks

One problem that is often invoked in early problematisations of deeply-rooted conflicts is that these contexts are permeated by a 'culture of violence' (CGG 1995: 16). Implicitly the same contention is held by the OECD in problematising the ready availability of small arms which 'enhanc[es] the propensity to resort to violence' (OECD 1997b: 13).⁴³ As a culture, the spread of violence, not only in terms of territory but also in terms of the social, of which civil conflict is then but one expression of an underlying reality that extends potentially indefinitely. 'The culture of violence', the report warns, 'is perpetuated in everyday violence. Violence at home ... has long been an underestimated phenomenon,

⁴² There is another, correlating, type, juridical or *de jure* limits (Foucault 2008: 8-12). I will come back to these in the last section on the shift to agency-centred forms and empowerment.

⁴³ Later, the problem is reframed as an indistinguishability of conflict from post-conflict environments (UNDP 2009b; World Bank 2011: 2; see final section)

both widespread and tolerated, and part of both the roots and the consequences of violence within and between societies' (CGG 1995: 17). The issue here is that once conflict as a culture – the dimension of subjective and deeply embedded perception – is the question to be addressed for conflict interventions, an institutional solution can no longer reach the locale of conflict. Moreover, and importantly, the position of external authority is being questioned by an understanding of conflict as culture, crucially by outsiders themselves. In other words, a further problem that emerges in the context of deeply-rooted conflicts then is that outside interveners, theoretically having to take into account the full spectrum of social and socio-psychological dynamics, may know very little.⁴⁴

Having to infer from the way people “tick”, how they perceive of themselves in relation to their environment and which role the environment plays for the eruption of violence or its absence, to the best institutional solution is an impossibly long way to go in the course of which complexities enter for which the capacity for outsiders to know anything for sure and hence authoritatively intervene or “solve” a problem with a particular blueprint solution in mind are diminishing (and the constantly growing need or demand for more context-knowledge seems to be reflective of this predicament, OECD 1997b: 17; House of Commons 2006: 20; Call and Cousens 2007: 9; OECD 2007; see Chapter 4). As Pouligny notes, there is ‘a problem of identification’ when dealing with the informal framework of society for this framework is permeated by “invisible” networks’ (Pouligny 2000: 30). With the fundamental insecurities produced by only being able to “see” the epiphenomenal but having to reckon with the invisible, three crucial discursive and programmatic turns occur. First, the formerly universal(ised) model of liberal, representative democracy becomes construed as an alien imposition and its promotion understood as hubristic. Secondly, local context becomes the starting point of all policy programming and intervention rather than the object of transformation. Thirdly, agency-

⁴⁴ The problem of not being able to obtain knowledge if we must assume reality to be produced deep down below the level of visibility is perfectly captured in a European Commission guideline for capacity-building and development. While the focus here is not on conflict contexts as such but rather on capacity assessment the problem of the position and knowledge of the outsider with regard to the internal and contingent workings of local contexts is exactly the same:

‘Outsiders often have a limited understanding of –and feeling for – what is going on inside other organisations. In particular, is it much easier to identify poor performance than the causes for this poor performance and the remedies to enhance it. Capacity assessments made by outsiders risk being based on superficial observations of what an organisation does not do or does not have ... Such assessments are just like observing that a person has fainted because the person does not walk and does not talk etc. – e.g. by observing what the person is not doing. It is much more difficult – but of course also more important – to diagnose the causes leading to the fainting and prescribe the right cure which will both allow the person to recover and to avoid future fainting.’ (EuropeAid 2005: 4)

centred conceptions of democracy for dealing with conflict, in particular empowerment, become a crucial tenet on the international agenda.

The shift from universal model to alien imposition is probably executed most drastically in UN discourses on democracy promotion in conflict contexts. In 1995, a preparatory report for the landmark document *Agenda for Democratization* emphasises the universal nature of democracy and confirms that the UN does not prescribe any specific model of democracy. Allegedly without any model in mind, the universal ideal of democracy is ‘a process by which an authoritarian society becomes increasingly participatory through such mechanisms as periodic elections to representative bodies, the accountability of public officials, a transparent public administration, an independent judiciary and a free press’ (UN 1995: §6). In other words, formal representative democracy is perceived to be the universal model. In 2009, another landmark document the *Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Democracy* castigates democracy promotion projects based on this understanding as ‘poorly conceptualized programmes’. Moreover, not only are these programmes poorly conceptualised but driven by ‘the promotion of inappropriate foreign modes’ which ‘have the potential to endanger democratic transitions and have ... even contributed to enhanced societal violence and conflict’ (UN 2009: 3).

Similarly, one of the leading experts on institutional design for deeply divided societies, Donald Horowitz, has come to the conclusion that the search for best institutional set-ups is misguided and inappropriate. More than misguided, in fact, they are hubristic: ‘Once we move past argument about the best constitutional course for divided societies, hubris should subside and humility should return quickly. There is ample reason, after all, to be humble’ (Horowitz 2002: 26). The reasons for humbleness, it transpires, rest in the far greater power of local realities and their dynamics turning abstract models (and any ideal state attached to it) into a preposterous farce. Concretely, adoption is ‘likely to be partial at best’, there are ‘systemic biases’ complicated by the complexity and ‘variations in the positions of ... groups participating’ and hence the actual processes on the ground are ‘uncongenial to the creation of a set of institutions that derive from any single theory’ (Horowitz 2002: 26). In other words, this kind of goal-driven approach that infers from the abstract model and imposes onto the concrete context is no longer considered to be superior and hierarchical knowledge but rather a hubristic and preposterous misperception.

This emerging truth at the turn of the millennium is succinctly captured by Bastian and Luckham in the conclusion of a volume asking whether it is possible to design democracy in conflict-torn societies. In the view of the authors, the problem is that ‘where attempts are made to design [institutions], history, “accident and force” and political manipulation may turn them on their heads and produce perverse and unforeseen outcomes’ (Bastian and Luckham 2003a: 304). From this predicament of unintended consequences they consequently draw the conclusion that:

There is a kind of hubris in the idea that constitutional experts, political scientists, donor agencies or even national decision makers can assure democracy or solve conflicts by designing institutions. Indeed institutional design is an apparent oxymoron. Institutions in the sense that many political thinkers use the terms evolve, grow, become rooted or become “institutionalised” – the metaphors are organic – and are not designed. (*Ibid.*: 304)

The reason for overestimation of what “even national decision-makers” can achieve in terms of democracy as an institutional form, it seems, rests precisely with the greater power of the organic in the absence of constitutive power. In this context, the element of ignorant hubris emerges in terms of, or as a consequence of, a misconception of the notion of institutions. This point is best captured in Pouligny’s critique of democracy promotion for peacebuilding. As her account is reflective of a crucial epistemological and political turning point, it will be quoted in some length. She criticises that ‘[t]he habitual understanding of “institutions” in the framework of democratization relies on a classical vision of the notion, notwithstanding the fact that that there is often a tendency towards a certain confusion with law (the institution therefore being considered as the ensemble of laws that controls the polity)’ (Pouligny 2000: 24) In her view, this “classical” notion of institutions and, on top, its confusion with juridical forms is a thoroughly misguided approach. This usage of “institution” by international agencies,

ignor[es] what sociology and anthropology ... have long taught us about its great polysemy. In fact, the “institution” understood as a “body of socially sanctioned means” may be related to a diverse range of organizational forms. It is the nature of this diversity which must be seized if we wish to comprehend how post-conflict societies seek to respond to challenges with which they are confronted under the various conditions which shape the different arenas, the rules, and modes of exchange between individual and collectivity. (*Ibid.*: 18)

Because outside interventions and a concern with “formal institutions’ are at ‘risk of disjunction’ with local contexts, ‘outsiders must take up the call of sociology and anthropology to insist upon an awareness of the routines and complexities of the processes

shaping institutions, in the (fluid) conjoining of the social and the political spheres' (*Ibid.*: 19). This reinterpretation of institutions from artificial to organic describes a pivotal development in the trajectory and displacement of democracy promotion. Taking on board a sociological or anthropological understanding of institutions adopts a view on what is present and what always already unfolds in terms of social dynamics and processes on the ground. Governing institutions, thus perceived, then describe a condensation or consolidation of these interactions in form of norms and customs. From this perspective, governing is something that is always already going on and reality can no longer be perceived to be subject to transformation through political artifice; contingency no longer constitutes a *tabula rasa*.

Consequently, what is captured by this “hubris” and the subsequent turn towards the organic is the end point of representative frameworks in the broadest sense – that is, not only as a form of governing predicated upon the practical limitations of government and the distinction between the public and the private, but also as a way of understanding the world in terms of constitutive, foundational power, linear trajectories and abstract, universal knowledge and models. It is suggested here that this needs to be understood as a result of the rise of the social – of society “as it really is” and subjects as socio-psychological products of their embeddedness in societal realities – into the sphere of governing. As a consequence, on the one hand, the “mind” – ways of thinking and perceiving – in its overdetermination through context now suggests itself to constitute what matters for governing; on the other hand, this deep, irretrievable reality is an intimidation and critique of abstract models (be they mental or be they political) that are under constant threat of being “off the mark” – of being falsified. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter: thus far the crisis.

On this ground, the final section addresses the main question asked in this chapter: is it justified to speak of a continuing crisis or do we see the seeds of an emerging governing rationality in the current discursive and programmatic focus on empowerment in the context of civil conflicts? Is the problem, to paraphrase Norris, of “social constructs with deep psychological roots” that appears in the hollowed out political artifice turning into a novel site that needs to be activated for governing? In order to indicate that this inversion of crisis and solution is indeed taking place in post-hubris approaches to international policy-making and to draw out some aspects of how this is being sought to activate the last section explores the understanding of conflict in the “New Wars” debate. In this “New

Wars” context, it examines the way “empowerment” is being invoked for conflict management.

Global Processes: Conflict as Misperception, Democracy for Social Resilience

Civil wars are increasingly perceived as complex, dynamic, unpredictable and ‘non-linear’ crises (da Câmara et al. 2001: 8) with ‘multiple complex needs’ (Cousens 2001: 6; see also UN 1991; Duffield 1994; Dillon and Reid 2000). In the absence of mechanisms of transforming these conflicts deeply rooted in the social fabric of life the “institutional option” of promoting democracy went beyond the practical and conceptual scope of limited representative government. The simultaneous appearance of this social fabric within the realm of governing concerns, its epiphenomenal nature and ensuing uncertainties, and the impossibility of bringing institutional leverage to the social, came forth as the self-critical charge of hubris. The liberal rationality of constantly finding a balance between doing too much and doing too little, of finding its sphere of employment through *de jure* limits of the private sphere and self-limitation of government, has been infringed upon on a fundamental level. As a reaction, and not dissimilar to the constructivist rejection of understanding the world in terms of material structures and constraints (for instance Wendt 1992; see Chapter 2), international policy-making begins to reject an understanding of democracy as a formal structure. Not dissimilar to constructivists anti-foundationalism, the turn towards the organic and informal means that socialised agency and informal structure merge into process. And finally, like constructivism, international policy-making turns toward agency-centred conceptions of democracy; and it appears to do so for similar reasons: as a result of a deep epistemological uncertainty. In other words, the trigger for this agency-centrism is found in a fear that reality will never reveal itself in any other terms but unintended consequences. Invisible networks generative of surface appearance never make themselves directly visible but nevertheless make themselves real through the mediation of unintended consequences between the externally-proposed or –imposed form of governing and hidden context realities.

In this respect, the argument that in dealing with “New Wars” liberal governance has a radical mission to transform societies as a whole, including the attitudes and beliefs of

the people within them' (Duffield 2001: 258) is to be treated with caution, at best, and, from today's vantage point, needs to be refuted at worst. Rather, an emerging form of governance in reaction to liberal governance's inability to provide ways of societal transformation seeks to foster peace *through* self-transformation of attitudes and beliefs of people within conflict-affected societies. In other words, the crisis provoked by the "appearance" of socio-psychological processes, or rather the growing understanding and importance of contexts as being permeated and determined by hidden realities, is beginning to be reversed into a new post-hubris form of governance. Promoting democracy as an agency-centred conception of empowerment, it will be suggested, as a project of empowering the network emerges as a crucial mechanism. For this kind of mechanism to emerge a modified understanding of civil conflicts has become operative.

"New Wars": More than a Demise of Meaning?

The notion and subsequent debate on "New Wars" was famously coined by Mary Kaldor in her widely-discussed book on *New and Old Wars* (1999) and the sequel *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (2003). For Kaldor, conflicts in the 1990s constitute a categorically different phenomenon than conflicts of the past. Old wars, she argues, have led to the consolidation of the Westphalian order; new wars are the result of disintegration and erosion on the age of globalisation (Kaldor 1999: 15-20 and 78-9). Whereas old wars were intrinsically tied to state formation, were fought in defence of a way of life (against fascism) or for the higher goal of democracy and national self-determination, wars in the 1990s were the result of identity politics (*Ibid.*: 77). Identity politics turned violent apply tactics of terror, destabilization, ethnic cleansing and brutalization of civilians. A similar understanding is put forward by the German political critic, Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1995). He contends that the new wars are characterised by their purposelessness; 'they are wars about nothing at all.' Since these conflicts have no purpose, combatants are also excused from having to legitimise their actions. 'Violence has been freed from ideology' (Enzensberger 1995, cit. in Kalyvas 2003: 103). Long-standing peace practitioner, John Paul Lederach concurs, albeit in a slightly more nuanced way: 'The ideological paradigm that used to consider international conflict in the Cold War is increasingly less salient in explaining the nature of contemporary conflict' (Lederach 1997: 11) 'For this reason',

Kaldor states, 'it is virtually impossible for any of the warring parties to re-establish legitimacy' (Kaldor 1999: 115).

This neat categorisation has since been challenged. In fact, the new war hypothesis has become subject to a veritable new wars debate (Newman 2004). Commentators challenge the reductionism inherent in the dichotomy (Cramer 2006) and criticise the idealisation of past conflicts in contradistinction to post-cold war conflicts (Kalyvas 2003). Beyond reductionism and idealism, there is, according to Stathis Kalyvas, a more fundamental dimension to the problem(atic distinction): '[T]he distinction drawn between post-Cold war conflicts and their predecessors may be attributable more to the demise of readily available conceptual categories than to the existence of profound difference' (Kalyvas 2001: 99). In a similar vein, Mark Duffield ripostes that 'the real difference is that the international community of effective states now denies any legitimacy to warring parties within ineffective ones' (Duffield 2009: 117). While, in particular Duffield and Kalyvas offer an intriguing line of critique with regard to a general loss of meaning, Kaldor's analysis may be more indicative – and indeed instrumental for the reworking of the meaning and role of democracy in international policy-making – than critics (a) care to admit and (b) are aware of. Indeed, while taking issues with the ontological claims, in attempting to refute and falsify the new wars hypothesis, critics are prone to substantiate the new wars argument of the primacy of violence and brutality epistemologically. Thus, for instance, both Kalyvas and Edward Newman who wish to question the validity of the distinction do so primarily by projecting the alleged characteristics of post-cold war conflicts – its social, cultural, violent and criminal dimensions – *back* onto their predecessors (Kalyvas 2001: 108-11; Newman 2004: 183-5). This critique rather than undermining new wars arguments seems to further attest to the loss of readily available conceptual or political categories. In this way, it confirms the problematisation of civil conflicts predominantly or even exclusively in terms of violence. Kaldor thus sums up the issue for everyone: 'The new type of warfare is a predatory social condition' (Kaldor 1999: 107).

As a predatory social condition in an era of globalisation, new wars are held to extend and operate in form of proliferating networks of interaction underneath the surface onto which they erupt (Lederach 1997: 11; Kaldor 1999: 110). Crucially, these conflict systems not only expand territorially. As networks or systems of violence, civil conflict pertains to a social continuum in which forms of violence are presented to be no longer distinguishable.

War and peace become part of a spectrum and a question of degree. 'Just as it is difficult to distinguish between the political and the economic, the public and the private, military and civil, so it is increasingly difficult to distinguish between war and peace' (Kaldor 1999: 110). This understanding has since been adopted into policy discourses of major international organisations. A recent World Bank report, for instance, claims that 'conflict and violence do not fit neatly either into "war" or "peace", or into "criminal" violence or "political" violence. [...] [D]ifferent forms of violence are linked to each other' (World Bank 2011a: 2). Similarly, the UNDP guidance note on conflict prevention and recovery finds that the notion "post-conflict" is 'misleading' 'not only because conflict is inherent in all societies, but because both grievance and violence often continues in societies after a settlement has been negotiated' (UNDP 2009b: 10). Moreover, civil wars that may appear to be settled superficially may relapse back into conflict (Cousens 2001: 1-2; Doyle and Sambanis 2006: 35; World Bank 2007). Hence, rather than thinking about civil conflicts in linear terms from war to peace, it is held that understanding conflict as a spiral, alternating between violence and non-violence provides a more pertinent framing (World Bank 2011a: 12). In other words, conflict now is understood and problematised primarily in terms of violence.

From this perspective, the chapter suggests that it indeed makes a difference whether conflicts are interpreted as a problem of deeply-rooted identity-driven politics or as a problem of violence. This difference concerns questions of what needs to be known, what needs to be problematised and what needs to be done when the problem is framed less in terms of identity politics and more in terms of a social condition. As it has been pointed out in the previous section, the "culture of violence" framing was present in the institutionalist approach but the growing importance of framings in terms of networks and social continuums has initiated not only the failure of the institutionalist approach but, as will be sought to highlight here, also denotes the beginning of a novel approach to conflict management. As will be demonstrated, these modifications and shifts in emphasis warrant or enable certain problematisations and disenable others. The most important consequence of the tweaked conflict framing in terms of non-linearity, conflict systems and networks, in their amalgamation under the umbrella of violence and collapsing into a predatory social condition, is that conflict no longer appears as a problem necessitating political settlement or political frameworks. The matter of conflict and its nature thus conceived does not pertain to a realm of substantive issues and interests (however problematic). That is, conflict does not need to be addressed as a matter of designing the

best political arrangement for an intricate problem. As a social condition it cannot appear as a question of finding such mechanism for resolution, nor does it call for concrete solutions of the substantive issues and interests that may appear on the surface. In fact, attempting to address conflict based on substantive issues and interests through institutional frameworks and interventions emerges as dangerously misguided and inappropriate when the emphasis is on violence as a social condition. That is, the kind or nature of knowledge required also is a different one. How this reframing affects and produces new approaches to conflict management based on relational power can best be seen in the ground-breaking 1997 work of John Paul Lederach in which he draws upon his extensive experience as practitioner and consultant.

Conflict: Violent Behaviour and Subjective Misperception

Towards the end of the 1990s, civil conflicts, stripped from any meaning and reduced to their phenomenal nature, came to be depicted as increasingly complex (Lederach 1997; Guéhenno 1998; Baser and Morgan 2008; see also Körppen and Ropers 2011). This understanding is thus also propelled by Lederach who presents conflict contexts to be mainly characterised by an unknown diffusion of power (Lederach 1997: 14).

The dispersed nature of power, Lederach explains, undermines conventional assumptions and knowledge requirements for peacebuilding as political settlement and democratic institution-building. On the one hand, there is no way of knowing if ostensible leaders indeed dispose of the capacity and power to lead and to transform conflict. What may appear as public leadership may therefore be deceptive and is thus not the point to start from (*Ibid.*: 16-7). '[I]t is never easy to assess the ability of individual leaders either to control the actions of the groups they claim to represent or to deliver their constituencies' (*Ibid.*: 14). On the other hand, starting off from the dispersed and fluid nature of power forestalls an approach to conflict management consisting of representative institutional forms. That is, Lederach reverses Huntington's argument that political power needs to be created and centralised where it is dispersed and hence absent (Huntington 2006 [1968]: 8; see Chapter 2) in arguing that *because* power is dispersed authority cannot be created. In his words: '[I]t is difficult to identify appropriate mechanism for establishing representation within a population and harder still to locate decision-making structures that are not fluid and ephemeral' (Lederach 1997: 14).

Decisively, from this perspective, relationships and process do not appear not as something to be dominated and interrupted through institution-building but as something to be embraced. Conventional approaches to conflict management and peacebuilding thus emerges as having put too much emphasis on the formal public sphere. What is needed instead is innovation. What this means, Lederach explains, is to 'go beyond the negotiation of substantive interests and issues ... into the realm of the subjective' (*Ibid.*: 25). The reason for this descent into the subjective is simple enough: because the subjective rather than the substantive is the site of conflict. That is, whatever may appear as substantive can always be deferred to the realm of the subjective. Substantive issues that emerge in civil conflicts are not literally substantive but rather the particular expressions of a certain – and misguided – way of thinking. 'Thus, critical to the dynamic that drives contemporary conflicts are socio-psychological perceptions, emotions, and subjective experiences, which can be wholly independent of the substantive or originating issue' (*Ibid.*: 14-5).

Based on a modified understanding of conflict as a form of violence, what Lederach thus is able to offer is an affirmative rather than problematic view on the subjective origins of conflict. In fact, conflict can now solely be interpreted as a socio-psychological condition or process which allows, and even necessitates, an ignorance of substantive issues since these are but the expression of a misguided way of thinking and relating. Consequently, substantive issues of conflicts, however ethnically-infused, can neither be the root cause nor, in fact, a guideline for external intervention (*Ibid.*: 24). Anything that appears as substantive or material aspects of conflicts can and must be subordinated to socio-psychological processes through which they come to be conceived as material or substantive. In this way, 'contested issues of substance (such as territory or governance) are intimately rooted in the cultural and psychological elements driving and sustaining conflict' (*Ibid.*: 16-7). In this way, the problematic dynamic of the institution-building approach in which social constructs with deep psychological roots appeared in the hollowed out sphere of formal political frameworks has been brought to an halt. Or more precisely, this dynamic is cancelled by not problematising how substantive issues link back to perception but by focusing on perception that produce substantive issues as a by-product.

From this perspective, even quite substantive issues of conflicts, like basic security and survival, becomes survival perception or survival thinking and must thus be problematised

and regulated through relationships. As a former practitioner in USAID's Promoting Governance, Accountability and Integrity programmes explicates:

Conflict encourages short-term, survival thinking that, in turn, encourages people to compartmentalize aspects of their life. Relationships between communities are severed, between community and family are strained, and between individuals become dehumanized [...] The result is a failure at the individual level to see the interconnected nature of the world – indeed, this might also be a cause of conflict [...] [F]or peace to take hold, communities must see their interconnectedness. (Pottebaum and Lee 2007: 3)

While too much of (the wrong kind of) interconnectedness and attachments in the way these conditioned decision-making constituted a problem for the electoral approach and frustrated the institutional approach, where these attachments emerged as “context” that produced unintended consequences, there can now not be enough of attachment and relationships for conflict management. This refocus is enabled by an understanding propelled in new wars thinking in which conflict is a predatory social condition. Conflict therefore is a problem of violent behaviour and a misguided way of thinking. In this way, the mind – subjective ways of perceiving – has been forced wide open as a field of problematisation and governing. Most starkly this transpires again from Pottebaum and Lee's framing. They warn that ‘strong competent leaders and combatants’ ... ‘might have good intentions and be committed to peace’ but ‘they often lack the right frame of mind ... to lead people toward peace and development’ (Pottebaum and Lee 2007: 4). Conflict thus perceived does not emerge as a problem that requires a political solution but needs therapeutic attention through re-socialisation so that the subject is enabled to see and relate to its environment differently and without resorting to violent patterns of behaviour.⁴⁵

As Lederach highlights, transforming conflict contexts is not to be achieved through approaches that address formal decision-making structures but must be employed to the ‘world of human meaning and perception’ (Lederach 1997: 63). This requires an approach by international actors that moves ‘beyond prescription ... and modalities for dealing with conflict that come from outside the setting’ to ‘discovering and empowering the resources,

⁴⁵ Therapeutic approaches and interventions have been critically observed and scrutinised in critical security scholarship (see for instance, Pupavac 2001; Neocleous 2012). However, the focus is much on trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder which is an emphasis that has not emerged in research conducted for the present study. The subject of therapeutic governance does not come forth as vulnerable and traumatised, neither is the governance intervention conducted by externals in contemporary empowerment promotion. In this context, Alison Howell's observation that governing resilience has replaced governing through trauma adds an important perspective to the debate (Howell 2012).

modalities and mechanism for building peace that exist within the context' (*Ibid.*: 95). What always already exists in context is a social fabric: human relationships and social networks, no matter how "pathological" or "dysfunctional", will exist. Moreover, with the mind forced wide open, it also is the social that has governing access and capacities. Crudely put, it has produced the conflict, it must be able to deal with it.

In this context, the redefinition of democracy in the International IDEA sequel to the negotiator's handbook on *Democracy, Conflict and Human Security* is pivotal. There it is stated: 'Democracy is not only a political system but also a social form of processes and interrelationships' (Large and Sisk 2006: 7; see Introduction). As a social form of processes and interrelationships, democracy, the authors highlight, is best be understood in terms of practice (*Ibid.*: 6). With regard to contemporary conflict management, the role of democratic practice consequently is of critical importance:

Democratic practice, through which individuals and societies address and manage the underlying sources and immediate manifestations of conflict within democratic principles and processes, is the critical intermediary variable between the underlying root causes and the symptomatic expression of conflict. (*Ibid.*: 6)

In other words, the new sphere that needs to be mediated and managed through democracy as a social form is that between the underlying reality of root causes, which is unknowable to external international actors, and the epiphenomenal surface reality, which is a problem to external international actors. '[I]nformal political institutions and social organizations' as socialisation platforms that 'promote norms and values of ethnic tolerance and cooperation' are the core for democracy as social form (*Ibid.*: 104). Relationships and networks thus emerge as key governing agents.

In this context, it is interesting to note the similarities between Foucault's methodological precaution for studying power, on the one hand, and the centrality accorded to relationships and processes in the policy world, on the other. Foucault cautioned that we should never assume power to be centralised or analyse it in terms of a more anchored locale; but he did so not out of the exigencies of the nature of power itself but because we do not have the knowledge (or position) to make such assumptions with some certainty. He thus demands that out of this predicament we must understand power as circular and relational, as something that works through networks (Foucault 2003: 29; see Introduction). If we take this precaution based on the more fundamental warning that we are not in a position to know, in conjunction with his observation that 'something fundamental' happens 'within the political artifice of power relations' once the milieu as

the subjects' relations to its environment⁴⁶ emerges within the sphere of governing (Foucault 2009: 21-2; see Introduction), we could perhaps suggest a 'fundamental thing' is happening here in the rationalisations of conflict, democracy and relationships. To put it in simple terms, Foucault introduces the importance of networks and circularity for understanding power after having highlighted the predicament of not being in a position to frame it otherwise – a position out of which it was thus hubristic, ignorant and possibly wrong to reckon with more constituted or cohered forms (not because they did not exist but because we were in no position to perceive them and therefore we would more likely than not “get it wrong”) on the basis of a fundamental epistemological uncertainty. Shortly after, in the following year's lectures, he observes the emergence of networks and circularity as a novel governing rationality operating on different parameters than the disciplinary with its tie to the ideal norm (and respective knowledge). In other words, a fundamental uncertainty about the human capability to frame reality – and the resulting notion of the power of the relational – and a governing rationality that works through the relational coincide. It suggests itself that there is a link between a radical doubt about human capacities to impose structure and meaning onto the contingent fabric of human interrelatedness and an emerging rationality of seeking to activate this contingency for governing.

This coincidence is mentioned, on the one hand, because it emerges within the shift from promoting democracy as an institutional form to a socio-agential form. Here the loss of political meaning, political purpose, and political organisation seems to have instigated the loss of certainty about both local contexts and the workings of representative government.⁴⁷ On the other hand, it is mentioned in order to provide a context through

⁴⁶ Foucault describes the milieu as a biological tie to the materiality within which humans live (Foucault 2009: 21-2). To unpack the conceptual and analytical power of the notion of the milieu for our contemporary condition, we could perhaps broaden the trope slightly and somewhat loosen the emphasis on “biological”. The milieu would then capture the naturalness of the human as a being that relates to and is related to its environment. Thus it would include the naturalness of the human as existing in the world and taking part in human affairs or life simply because there are also other human beings – an understanding that intimates from Arendt's reading of Greek Antiquity (for instance Arendt 1998:24 and 190).

⁴⁷ Further to what may have to be viewed critically as Foucault's imposition for analysing power in itself (see Introduction), this resemblance would therefore beg the question whether Foucault's understanding of power as something that always functions and the ensuing argument that all surface appearances (such as institutions, social classes and political parties) are a contingent or, at least, intricate product of condensation processes of capillary forces still has critical implications. That is, whether the critical potential of this understanding was provided only as long as there was a correlating truth regime that construed these entities as constituted universals and tangibles. If the truth regimes changes, for instance, with the turn towards the organic and informal in the understanding of institutions in democracy promotion rationalisations (Pouligny 2000; EuropeAid 2005: 6; Baser and Morgan 2008: 4) there is a

which we can understand the rationale of promoting empowerment for conflict management that will be drawn out next. That is, the concurrence of radical doubt with the emergence of relationships as the sphere through which one must govern can provide a context that points beyond an apologetic window dressing of Western hegemony (Abrahamsen 2000; Chandler 2006) but possibly also operates based on a rationale that sits uneasy with neoliberal governance of individualisation (Miraftab 2004; Leal 2007) and rational forms of subjectivity (Joseph 2012). That is, if we understand the promotion of agency-centred forms of democracy less immediately as an apologetic or remote way of exerting Western control but as a radical uncertainty of what can or should be dared to know, the exigencies of their promotion reveal themselves as different, and potentially even more devastating (as we are then not confronted with the power of knowledge but the power of a radical doubt).

As the last subsection seeks to highlight, empowerment in the context of an understanding of conflict as misperception does not aim at engineering autonomy, rationality or entrepreneurship but instead seeks to facilitate receptiveness, awareness and adjustment.

Scaling-up the Social Network, Empowering Informality: Communities, Women and Youth

Much emphasis is put on empowerment in the context of civil conflict management (Lederach 1997; UN 2000; World Bank 2001; World Bank 2007; World Bank 2009; Large and Sisk 2006; OECD 2009a; UNDP 2009b; Körppen 2011; UNDP 2012). From a policy-making perspective that seeks to address violence as a behavioural problem rather than conflict as a political problem, however, the question is who needs to be empowered given that violent behaviour and misperceptions, bad socialisations and networks are also part of that reality that already exists. In other words, how can the promise of democracy as social form be promoted? If political leaders as conventionally understood cannot lead because they do not have the right frame of mind, then new democratic leadership must be exercised elsewhere, differently and through a different agent. In international policy discourses, the new leaders and agents for transformation consequently emerge as those that have traditionally not been in positions of power and are characterised by their informality: local communities, women and youth (UN 2000a; World Bank 2001; 2007; 2011b; IFRC 2011).

chance that the notion of “power as relational” becomes unhooked as critique and instead actionable for governing.

Empowering local community groups through participatory and accountability processes in conflict-affected environments, for instance, seeks to ‘start the process of re-establishing social and institutional relationships, networks, and interpersonal trust – collectively understood as social capital’ (World Bank 2007: 4). Community development and empowerment ‘provides a framework for transforming the beliefs and perceptions of the population involved’. In this sense, people ‘rediscover their interconnected nature’ (Pottebaum and Lee 2007: 4). Rediscovering this interconnected nature, thus, is essential for realising and engaging the subject in addressing misguided perceptions as a failure to relate to others in a non-conflictive and non-violent manner (*Ibid.*: 4). Increasing interconnectedness is a crucial mechanism for modifying socio-psychological processes that lead to attitude and behaviour adjustment.

Problematizing conflict as misperception hence cedes or interpolates power at a different site and in a different modality. If conflict as misperception is the result of socio-psychological processes, the modality of transformative power that can effectively deploy itself is relational. Consequently, this modality of power and resulting forms of governance brings women, youth and the vulnerable into the centre of attention. These groups emerge as the agents to be empowered in their function as transmitters and relays of relational power. That is, they are sought to be empowered in the way they are perceived to already exist and as the kind of subjects they already are. Sanjay Pradhan, Vice President of the World Bank, for instance, promotes the ‘empowering [of] agents of change that can be important forces for cohesion and inclusion, such as women and youth leaders’ as crucial for transforming context permeated by violence and conflict. ‘In fragile states’, he explains, ‘these “softer” aspects of changing attitudes and behaviors, and fostering consensus and cohesion’ are indispensable for conflict management (World Bank 2009: 9). Similarly, a recent UNDP guideline on governance and peace asserts: ‘By strengthening informal institutions and networks, empowering vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth, reinventing the public space to attract hitherto excluded groups to participate in decision-making and building collective problem-solving skills a more resilient society is fostered’ (UNDP 2012: 12).

It is in this understanding that the landmark UN resolution on *Women, Peace and Security* demands ‘the full participation’ of women in peace processes since this ‘can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security’ (UN 2000a: 2). Women’s role as socialisers and agents of transformation is spelled

out even more explicitly in the 2012 World Development Report, which states: ‘Women’s ability to influence their environment goes beyond formal political channels ... Women can influence their environment through their participation in informal associations’ (World Bank 2011b: 151). They can induce change, the report further explains, ‘by their shaping the context for (men’s) decisions’ (*Ibid.*: 176). Moreover, in addition to their indirect and private exercise of agency, it is also their presumed disinterestedness due to their ‘more practical focus’ that accords women with appropriate capacities to act as local subjects of change (*Ibid.*: 181-2).

Concurrent with the World Bank’s take, the latest newcomer in democracy promotion, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) views youth as particularly important agents for conflict transformation which therefore need to be empowered. In mirroring an understanding of conflict and interest as misperception and a failure to relate to one’s environment in a non-confrontational manner, the mechanisms of transformation emerge as ‘critical self-reflection’ (IFRC 2011: 7), ‘empathy’ and ‘non-judgement’ (*Ibid.*: 12). The IFRC consequently identifies youth to dispose of the greatest relational-transformatory power. A recent initiative called ‘Youth as Agents of Behavioural Change’ therefore ‘equips young people with the necessary skills to inspire behavioural change’, such as ‘empathy, critical thinking, active listening, non-judgement, mediation, non-violent communication and peaceful resolution of tensions’ (*Ibid.*: 11). To this end, the federation has developed a ‘non-cognitive’ methodology, going “‘from the heart to the mind,’” that seeks to foster the capacity to ‘operate from inner peace’ and ‘strengthens resilience’ (*Ibid.*: 11). Thus equipped, the initiative ‘empowers youth’ to take up an ‘ethical leadership role in inspiring a transformation of mindsets, attitudes and behaviours within themselves and their community’ (*Ibid.*: 11).

In this conception and rationality of democratic empowerment and governing, leadership and democratic agency can be exercised by those never envisioned to appear in public. Their centrality derives from a thinking that considers these groups to be confined to exercising their agency through informal, private and close social relationships, through empathy and nudging. Importantly, it follows that promoting agency-centred democracy in the form of empowerment does not address the subject that is to be empowered in legal or political terms. The aim is not to empower individuals to become political subjects or to change their political and legal status. As democratic governance is being dissociated from the formal institutional sphere, approaching questions of governing and power through

juridical limitations becomes meaningless. These two principles, the *de facto* and *de jure* limitations, following Foucault (2008: 9-12 and 39-42), describe (neo)liberal rationalities of governing. In other words, after the trespassing of its practical limits in the institutional approach, democratic governance in the context of conflict management makes questions of illegitimate interference into (private) life obsolete.

Within the emerging rationality, the informality and powerlessness within which women, youth and the vulnerable are inculcated, is core to novel forms of governing through the social. The notion of democratic empowerment here refers especially to the non-individualised target of empowerment and agent of transformation. Effectively, these agents are not empowered as individuals nor as responsabilised users of their autonomy. To the contrary, what is empowered is their networked existence, their lack of autonomy and their embeddedness. And they are empowered to exercise their relational power in these terms – a kind of power that does not need to be or cannot be exercised consciously and through communication, it simply functions. The question of democracy promotion as empowerment hence is to make sure that relational power is present enough to be effective in the sense that the space of individual agency need to be permeated with relations. In this way, responsabilisation of the irresponsible subject of violent behaviour occurs through embedding these subjects in the networks of the powerless, through influencing their ways of thinking and perceiving. Through envelopment, their responsabilisation is a process in which they become aware of their effect on others. Irresponsible subjects thus are envisioned to democratically come to terms with their interconnected nature of existence and by way of de-autonomising acknowledge that their misguided abstraction from interconnectedness and pursuit of self-interest is responsible for conflict.

Conclusion

Based on the previous chapter's qualification of the 1990s as the "happy decade" for democracy promotion, this chapter examined the political and epistemological crisis unfolding at the underside of 1990s euphoria. This crisis, as drawn out in Chapter 2, was unleashed by a loss of political means and purpose, on the one hand, and a loss of foundational truths and meaning provided by the cold war framework. The examination of

its effects in the present chapter was conducted through a matrix of democracy promotion in relation to civil conflicts in which a shift from institution-centred to agency-centred conceptions of democracy has occurred. The chapter asked, however, whether it was justified to conceive of post-cold war developments as a continuation of this crisis of governing or whether we see the beginning of a resolve in the trajectory of democracy promotion and conflict management. More specifically, it asked whether it is the problems emerging with this crisis – loss of political meaning and the appearance of lived relations of the societal – that are being modified and reversed as a positive governing rationality. In order to address these questions the chapter first examined the concrete manifestation of this crisis. It do so by exploring more in-depth two aspects that had only been dealt with briefly in the previous chapters: the two stages in democracy promotion preceding the civil society turn – that is, the electoral approach and the institutional approach.

As the chapter has demonstrated, understanding the conditions and problems generated in the context of these two approaches are pivotal to understanding the reconceptualisation of democracy from a formal-political to a social-agential notion. Imbricated in this shift is also a changing role of democracy for governing. By extension, as the remaining two chapters will engage with, this changing role of democratic governance constitutes the basis from which democracy promotion works itself into the main concern of contemporary international policy-making.

The chapter argued that three fundamental truths of liberal forms have been shaken in the failure of the electoral approach and the overburdening of the institutional agenda. The first truth concerned the linear trajectory from elections to the establishment of democratic government and peace; the second truth revolved around the liberal equilibrium of governing through the public-private division; and the third, concerned the universality of liberal democratic models. In its different manifestations, these three fundamentals have all been challenged by the rise or rather exposure of the social. In the electoral approach the main problem centred on the nature of conflict as deeply-rooted identity politics and the way actors operated within them. The chapter demonstrated that individuals were problematised as framing their interests and acting in relation to these deeply socialised and internalised patterns. This was held to have undermined the idea that economic and political liberalisation would lead to the establishment of liberal representative government. Yet, the chapter argued that the problem discovered must be reframed. While not questioning the undermining of the idea of linear progress(ion) per se,

the chapter suggested that the roots for this rests elsewhere: in the understanding of the liberal progress as liberalisation rather than achievement, and related, in the inability of liberal forms of constituting the public as an artificial sphere of governing out of its own episteme of limiting public authority (which has not developed an autonomous mechanism for creating public authority). This inability has been substantially aggravated by the loss of political means and purpose available in the cold war era. Without such political and organisational mechanisms, formal procedures of liberal representative government are only able to elevate and reproduce what already exists in terms of social dynamics onto its hollowed out public sphere.

While the democracy promotion agenda subsequently shifted towards an institution-engineering approach, this approach was already entering into a politically and epistemologically constricted situation with regard to liberal forms. That is, the frustration of liberal trajectories implicated an imbalance in the liberal edifice of governing through the separation of the private from the public. Emerging out of the frustration of linear progression, it has been argued that the practical limitations government as one of the basic principles of a liberal rationality of governing were irrevocably impinged upon from the very beginning. It has been demonstrated that to the same extent that the complexities of social dynamics had worked themselves into the hollowed out public, they now needed regulation through institutional arrangements.

The transgression of practical limitations culminated in a shift from understanding liberal representative government to be a universal model to an understanding of an imposition of an alien structure unfitting for local contexts. Alongside this shift, the self-allegation of hubris emerged – the hubris of thinking that models could be designed onto given realities. It has been suggested, however, that implicated in the self-charge of hubris is a radical doubt not dissimilar to the constructivist uncertainty with regard to capturing reality through theoretical constructs. Deeply-rooted conflicts produce a deeply hidden level of reality that has come to be of concern in the way epiphenomena of invisible social and socio-psychological processes had worked themselves into the political artifice. In other words, it was underlying socio-cultural processes that were now understood to determine decision-making within a juridico-political framework that envisions a regulation of decision-making through formal constraints. As a consequence, local (conflict) contexts are only ever discernible as epiphenomenal of deeper structures, authoritative and artificial institutional design must be feared to miss the point and be off the mark of these deeper

realities. Whether the model has missed reality, however, can only be inferred from unintended consequences. At the same time, since local context's deep reality do not provide a firm foundation for adjusting design it seems that little knowledge can be gained from experience. Ultimately, then, the deep reality of local contexts and the unintended consequences it makes external interveners produce appear to challenge knowledge about the model itself.⁴⁸

The moment of hubris, the chapter has suggested, represents something of a culmination and turning point in the trajectory of the crisis of governing. It is followed by a turn towards more organic forms of governing and a reworking of institutions as informal norms arrangements. In the course of democracy promotion and its displacement this marks a crucial caesura. It has been demonstrated that through a modified problematisation of conflict as social condition the dominating problems that have emerged and contributed to the crisis of governing are beginning to be reworked into a positive governing rationality. This has been found to be the case for the socio-psychological identity-subject of conflict and the problem of the social fabric of life's invisible networks. By reworking conflict as no longer amenable to political settlement and instead making it a therapeutic question of re-socialisation, a new form and agent of power and governing emerge that are better equipped to employ themselves at the socio-psychological site where things now are held to be produced and happen: social and socialising relationships and networks that not only always already exist but have sway over attitude adjustment and behavioural change – or what has been conceptualised for this thesis as relational power. Democratic empowerment, the chapter finally argued, thus aims at empowering those groups that are understood to exert relational power due to their traditional position of powerlessness in juridical-political edifices – that is, communities, women and youth. Crucially, democracy promotion as empowerment does not aim at changing these groups' political or legal status. Questions of governing through *de jure* limitations, it has been pointed out, become meaningless in social governance. Rather they are empowered as epitomes of relationships and networks to envelop unruly subjects of interest and conflict in the networks of the powerless. As such active

⁴⁸ This seems to be a direct consequence of consolidation thinking which emerged after political purpose for “having a democracy” and playing the rules of the game had been lost (see Chapter 2). In this context, it is useful to recall Kurki's experience with interviewing democracy promoters as to what model they were promoting: none of the interviewees was willing or able to provide an answer (Kurki 2013: 19; see Chapter 1). Kurki, moreover, notes that “[n]o longer do democracy promoters aim to coercively push an unproblematic one-size-fits-all approach to democracy support” (Kurki 2013: 217).

participants in civil conflict are enabled to realise that it is their failure to relate to their environment in a non-violent way that is responsible for conflict.

This emerging process of reversing crisis into a positive governing rationality, importantly also encompasses an inversion of radical doubt in a positive mechanism for (self-) governance. It is suggested that this becomes most prevalent in the way democracy as an agency-centred form works through concerns with statebuilding and climate change. Statebuilding itself emerges as a positive (critical) epistemology and autonomous policy concern in the 2000s. As a policy concern able to draw on the floating notion of governance already prevalent, it offered a problem framing through which previously separate concerns, such as security, development and democracy could be concatenated (Chandler 2010: 2). The following chapter thus examines the role of democracy promotion in statebuilding framings. It focuses on two aspects that have been mentioned and alluded to in this chapter but suggest themselves to need further scrutiny in order to understand the logic of emerging rationalities of governing through the social. These are the role of unintended consequences and the question of rationality, and by extension, of autonomy. Since unintended consequences, as this chapter found, seemed to have played an essential role in triggering the reversal of problems associated with the crisis of governing in the 1990s into a an emerging positive governing rationality in which agency-centred democracy claims a central role, the next chapter asks how unintended consequences are problematised and addressed in statebuilding discourses. It suggests that unintended consequences are inculcated in a way that reverses or rather embraces Cartesian doubt in which subjects are encouraged to undo their mental frameworks through reality “as it really is”. For linking this trend into the concomitant reconceptualisation of democracy as an agential-relational form, the chapter asks what happens to the idea of the rational subject and its relation to the external world once, as for instance constructivists have done, the subject is conceived to be predominantly a product of intersubjective processes. What will be suggested is that democracy promotion does not primarily or not only work within statebuilding but rather that statebuilding itself is a democracy promotion mechanism, directed at the statebuilders in a self-referential manner.

CHAPTER 4

REFORM THYSELF: STATEBUILDING, CONTINGENCY AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES AS NOVEL FORMS OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE PROMOTION

Introduction

Thus far the thesis has traced the trajectory of the understanding and role of democracy and its promotion in terms of constitutive power during the cold war, liberal-trajectorial power in the immediate post-cold war era and relational power towards the end of the 1990s. The previous chapter drew out the unfolding political and epistemological crisis of governing at the underside of the “happy 1990s” as it manifested itself in democracy promotion as a conflict management mechanism. The origins of the crisis have been located in the end of the cold war and the way it ended. It has been suggested that the end of the cold war elicited an epistemological and political loss of the constitutive power of political frameworks and prompted a general uncertainty with regard to theoretical frameworks’ ability or adequacy to reveal reality. One of the key issues that emerged as a consequence is the rise or exposure of the social – as an unmediated sphere of social complexities, dynamics, interactions and networks – into the realm of governing and conceptualisations. The previous chapter found that that a shift in the understanding and promotion of liberal representative forms of governing from constituting the public sphere to liberalising the public sphere is of crucial importance for capturing the trajectory and displacement of democracy promotion. In the wake of this shift, the previous chapter argued, three liberal truths have been undermined as a consequence of the rise of the social: assumptions about linear trajectories, the division of the private and the public, and the universality of liberal, representative models. In the context of conflict management, the crisis of governing, the chapter demonstrated, culminates in the self-allegation of hubris in seeking to promote democracy as a universal model of formal institutional arrangements and calls for more humbleness in the face of the complexity of social realities. The chapter found that underpinning this shift from universal model to hubristic imposition at odds with local needs and realities is a fundamental uncertainty with regard to the

concrete workings of local context and the abstract workings of institutional models. This uncertainty has been prompted and fostered by the unintended consequences of institution-building. Subsequently, we see a turn towards more anthropologically and sociologically informed understandings of institutions as organic social constructs and norms arrangements.

It has been indicated that this organic and context-sensitive understanding of institutions marks a caesura or turning point in international policy-making and the crisis of governing. The chapter discerned a beginning inversion of the crisis of governing into a positive governing rationality. In the context of conflict management this has been propelled or enabled by a reworking of the problem of conflict from identity-politics warranting a political arrangement to a social condition requiring a therapeutic approach of re-socialisation. The problematisation of conflict now occurs along socio-psychological processes which can and must be addressed through different sites and agents of transformation. The chapter observed that it is in this context that a reconceptualisation of democracy from a formal political arrangement to social-agential forms concerned with relationships takes place. It finally argued that empowerment promotion captures this novel understanding of relational democracy. Crucially, while empowerment contains a strong element of responsabilisation, the rationale, aim, and modality seems to have shifted markedly away from the individual. Rather than engineering autonomy, rationality or entrepreneurship, empowerment within the context of relational power seeks to create receptiveness, awareness and adjustment as a way of managing conflict as a socio-psychological process. Empowerment as a governmental rationality indeed works from a distance; however, it is not so much the individual that is engineered to fill the gap through self-governance but rather the socialising network as a medium through which self-governance as an attitude, mental and behavioural adjustment in relation to the network can be inculcated. What problematic subjects thus are encouraged to be able to realise is that the cause of the problem, that is, the reason why there was conflict and violence, rested with their ways of thinking and relating.

The remaining two chapters revolve around an examination of two aspects that have briefly been mentioned or alluded to in the previous one – unintended consequences and the challenge to autonomy and rationality – since these harbour the third manifestation of

the rise of the social as a reconfiguration of knowledge (see Introduction). Exploring the impact of a sociologically-infused understanding of the world on unintended consequences and the idea of autonomy, and by the same token, the idea of rationality, is thus central for making sense of the emerging governing rationality encapsulated in democracy promotion as an agency-centred concept along a relational modality of power.⁴⁹ In particular the finding that the problems that have given rise to the crisis of governing and its culmination in hubris are beginning to be reworked as a positive governing rationality suggest that the problem of unintended consequences and the fundamental challenge of idea of human autonomy and rationality warrant closer scrutiny. The remaining chapters therefore ask: how is the problem of unintended consequences, which seemed to have prompted the self-charge of hubris, dealt with in the wake of reworking an epistemological and political crisis into a positive governing rationality? Can we think of the radical doubt that the complexities of social reality are not amenable to our political and conceptual frameworks as an essential feature of contemporary democracy promotion? The second question is posed especially in relation to the emerging democracy promotion concern of empowering the network and embedding the individual: what is the effect of opening up socio-psychological processes as a locale of self-governance on the understanding of autonomy and rationality, and by extension, what are the effects on contemporary policy-making? Is it possible to perceive and address the human subject as (potentially) autonomous and rational at all once socialising processes have been recognised and fronted as determining human decision-making? What does this imply for international policy-makers themselves?

The main aim of this chapter is therefore to examine whether these aspects must be understood to lie at the core of governing rationalities developing in contemporary statebuilding. That is, the chapter asks whether statebuilding is best understood as governing mechanism through which novel forms of democratisation and democratic agency are being activated as part of an emerging rationality of embedded self-governance that works essentially through Cartesian doubt rather than based on authoritative knowledge. To concretise this concern, the question it seeks to explore is whether the

⁴⁹ To recapture, in drawing on Foucault's agenda for understanding power, relational power refers to a modality of power that does not originate and is not exerted by an individual or collective subject but is generated by the fact that there is interactions, linkages and relationships between humans and between humans and their environment (see Foucault 2003: 29). This form of power that does not need to be created and does not need assistance for maintaining it; it is not a 'made product' in opposition to 'anything that has come into being naturally' (Arendt 2005: 181) but, as Foucault highlights, simply 'functions' (Foucault 2003: 29; see Introduction).

following proposition made in recent democratic theory to bring about a more genuinely democratic world that must leave behind its misguided association with the idea of representation, is reflected and promoted through contemporary statebuilding:

“[T]he supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-round growth [or better: flourishing] of every member of society.” [...] It is clear that growth or flourishing cannot simply mean the enlargement of power ... Rather, to be ethically tenable, democratic self-rule has to involve a practice of self-restraint and self-transformation (even self-emptying) capable of instilling the habit of ... generous openness towards others. (Dallmayr 2010: 187)

Does contemporary international policy-making indeed seek to create an environment for practicing democratic self-transformation and self-emptying as an embrace of Cartesian doubt? In order to explore this question the chapter proposes a double change in perspective. The first one concerns the relation between statebuilding and democracy promotion. It asks whether it is more revealing to not primarily examine democracy promotion within statebuilding but instead understand statebuilding itself as a mechanism of democracy promotion. The second change in perspective concerns the target of statebuilding. Here the question is whether we need to re-orient our analytical focus away from the primacy of postcolonial subjects and societies and instead understand the target of statebuilding to include international statebuilders themselves.

For this it is important to take into account the particular epistemological juncture that gave rise to statebuilding as a pressing policy concern. As an autonomous policy and academic field of study, statebuilding emerged in the early to mid-2000s as a reframing of international concerns with conflict and security. When policy-makers, advisors and academic commentators began to talk about “statebuilding”, therefore, this was after the interventionist institution-engineering approach had faltered. Such approaches had been declared to constitute a hubristic imposition of one-size-fits-all models since social dynamics and processes on, or rather beneath, the ground seemed to render model assumptions unviable when statebuilding entered into international policy-making and programming. Statebuilding, in other words, emerged within an epistemological environment in which it was held that little could be done because little could be known. At the same time, it entered and developed within a period in which the notion of institutions was being redefined in sociological terms and understood in terms of intersubjective norms edifices and informal arrangements. Institutions, in this sense, came to be construed as

something more organic, more natural, and more real than the artificial, technocratic and abstract ideal-type understanding of political science.

The birth of statebuilding, that is, when the trope started to appear in the titles of books and policy report, is thus with the simultaneous publication of three seminal books on statebuilding in 2004 (Chesterman 2004; Fukuyama 2004; Paris 2004; see Paris and Sisk 2009: 8), that provided something of its canonical spine. While none of the authors is a self-professed critical scholar and all have played central advisory roles for governments and international organisations,⁵⁰ all three accounts problematise statebuilding as being plagued by fundamental contradictions caught up between means and objectives. In fact, it seems that statebuilding's essential contradictions have come to constitute the nodal point around which the academic and policy discourse revolves. This chapter suggests, however, that these essential and unresolvable paradoxes do not undermine statebuilding. To the contrary, these contradictions come to constitute the foundation for the reworking of statebuilding as a mechanism through which democracy as embedded self-restraint and self-transformation is sought to be promoted. Within this context, for instance, the emergence of 'Do No Harm' approaches in statebuilding (as well as democracy promotion) discourses seem to play an important role (see seminal OECD 2010a; also UN 2009) as a way of accepting these paradoxes as unresolvable and instead perceive of statebuilding as a policy where less is more.

The chapter thus proposes that once socio-psychological processes have suggested themselves to be a key site for governing and power has come to be understood to rest in dynamics and processes that always already exists, essential contradictions of statebuilding can be activated as way of generating new knowledge. This knowledge, it seems, works on the self through the mediation of an inconceivable reality. In this light, it will be suggested that externals are encouraged to foster their sensitivity towards local reality that will never reveal itself to the outsider and towards the way unintended consequences are both unavoidable and problematic. Unintended consequences, in other words, inculcate a

⁵⁰ Simon Chesterman has written policy reports for the UN, most noticeably *The UN Security Council and the Rule of Law* which was circulated as document of the General Assembly and the Security Council in 2008 (UN document nomad/63/69-S/2008/270) (http://law.nus.edu.sg/about_us/faculty/staff/profileview.asp?UserID=lawsac). Francis Fukuyama has come to fame with his "end of history" postulate and is member of various influential conservative think tanks such as the RAND Corporation and the Council on Foreign Relations (<http://fukuyama.stanford.edu/>). Roland Paris was foreign policy advisor in the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Privy Council Office of the Canadian government (<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~rparis/bio.html>).

learning process about the inadequacy and problematic nature of externals' mental frameworks that misconstrue contextual knowledge, problems and solutions as generalisable and valid beyond context. Through other's intractable contexts and hidden transcripts donors are encouraged to rid themselves from prefabricated assumptions and expectations that must be assumed to have nothing to do with reality and learn that not only all solutions are local and subjective but so are all problems. In this sense, statebuilding may literally become a project of building states of mind, in an era profoundly characterised by complexity, contingency and insecurity in which – since we do not have substantive solutions – we also cannot have, or rather do not have, substantive problems as before.

The chapter is organised in three sections. The first section will draw out how statebuilding consolidated the general critique of abstract models that emerged in conflict management. Abstract models and epistemological generalisations are not criticised in terms of their content or ideological background but rather are questioned from a sociological and anthropological view on the concreteness of social processes and dynamics. It will be suggested that statebuilding as a framework of critique brings critical literature and official discourse in close proximity. In the second section, the questions and intimations sketched out above will be explored through an engagement with the conceptual foundation of statebuilding in economics' new institutionalism (Hameiri 2009: 6-7; Chandler 2010) – an influential school that sought to explain glaring differences in development trajectories. It coined in particular the notion of 'bounded rationality' in which social environment qualifies rational decision-making. It will be highlighted that this qualification of rationality does not only interpellate the postcolonial subject as one of limited rationality, but – and this seems crucial – is discovered as a problem associated with a radical deficiency in human cognitive capacities and therefore applies to *all* subjects. Based on this engagement with new institutionalism's conceptualisation, the last section investigates various discursive and programmatic shifts that are becoming increasingly prevalent, such as the shift from good governance to various guises of 'good enough governance' (Grindle 2005; DFID 2005; ERD [European Report on Development] 2009), from 'best practice' to 'best fit' (Carothers and de Gramont 2011), from technocratic approaches to an acknowledgement of politics (OECD 2008; OECD 2009c) in relation with 'Do No Harm' rationalisations. These discursive shifts will be scrutinised in terms of their impact on knowledge, information and

the emphasis and role of unintended consequences that permeates these programmes and accounts. The section seeks to draw out the new knowledge and governance regime of self-transformation, self-restraint and self-emptying through a discussion of calls for understanding statebuilding from a ‘political economy perspective’ (ODI 2007; Carothers and de Gramont 2011) and by way of developing a ‘culture of analysis’ for greater context-sensitivity (IDS 2010; OECD 2011). These new understandings, it will be proposed, all revolve around a self-critique through emphasising the limits of what can be known and what can be done. The intuition to be pursued then is whether the new knowledge refers first and foremost to fostering greater awareness to those limits of context and exerts power in terms of self-adjusting ways of thinking and perceiving.

“Essential Paradoxes” and the Birth of Statebuilding as Critique of Universals

If statebuilding is not simply analysed on the grounds of an empirical given (for instance, Heathershaw and Lambach 2008; Lemay-Hébert 2009; Bliesemann de Guevara 2010; Roberts 2013), the policy field’s origin is usually associated with the end of the cold war or the post-cold war in general (for instance, Robinson 2007: 2-3; Hameiri 2009: 1-2; Chandler 2010: 2; Marquette and Beswick 2011: 1704). However, the chapter proposes a different historicisation on the grounds of the emergence of the trope “statebuilding” proper as a way of framing, understanding and problematising international policy concerns (see also Paris and Sisk 2009: 8). Following Paris and Sisk (2009) for instrumental reasons, this approach locates the birth of statebuilding with the simultaneous publication of Roland Paris’ *At Wars End: Building Peace after Civil Conflict*, Simon Chesterman’s *You, the People: The UN, Transitional Administration and State-building*, and most importantly for the present study, Francis Fukuyama’s *State Building: Governance and World Order in the Twenty-First Century* (all 2004; see also Krasner 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2004). The reason for this periodisation is two-fold. In itself, the emergence of the term “statebuilding” as a positive epistemology and problem-framing simply strikes as noteworthy (i.e. why was there the need for a neologism if it was to merely describe a continuation?) and, relatedly, from the genealogical perspective developed through the previous chapter, the beginning of the 2000s emerge as a watershed moment in the epistemological and political crisis that followed the end of the cold war. This correlation indicates more than coincidence. What

the proposed historicisation enables therefore is a contextualisation and investigation of statebuilding after the “hubris” of the interventionist institutional-engineering approach of the late 1990s. This immediately relocates the problematique of statebuilding and opens a perspective from which the material can be organised differently. For instance, it enables an analytical sensitivity to the way in which statebuilding entered the scene as essential and allegedly irreconcilable contradictions as a result of the epistemological juncture at which it emerged and has since been subject to relentless but also monotonous critique.

This section discusses the “essential dilemmas” of statebuilding. These essentialised contradictions, it will be suggested, are not a by-product of statebuilding but as a framework of understanding and approaching the world constitutes its very core. The discussion here seeks to highlight how statebuilding as a new trope offers a discursive framing that allows a self-critique of universal assumptions and abstract knowledge through the existence of the local as a reality not amenable to the universal. What statebuilding framings, in other words, allow is a consolidation of the insight from the 1990s that an approach to the world through model thinking is unviable; through statebuilding as an essential contradiction such thinking then finally becomes unintelligible. As a framework for consolidating this emerging understanding, statebuilding’s essential paradoxes set the stage for self-governance and self-transformation “after hubris”.

Essential Dilemma: Statebuilding’s Enmeshment with Reality

As mentioned, all three inceptive monographs that encapsulate the birth of statebuilding as a framework through which the world could be understood are a critique of international interventions to build institutions. Chesterman, for instance, highlights the incommensurability and confusion inherent in seeking to build government institutions through local ownership in contexts that are deemed to be problematic which has warranted the intervention in the first place (Chesterman 2004: 239). In the same vein, Fukuyama critically highlights the logical tension arising for a policy that seeks to capacity-build government by taking it away (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]). In fact, while he maintains that ‘state-building is one of the most important issues for the world community’ (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: xvii), he notes that external statebuilders are ‘making things worse’ (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 53). Paris, while calling for more assertive international

interventions and administrations encounters a conundrum in rejecting imposed rule and authoritarian solutions as unsustainable (Paris 2004: 180).

While these three critiques already signpost very well the self-critical predicament of international statebuilding, it is helpful to look more closely at the rationalisation that accompany these paradoxes surrounding the post-interventionist encounter between the external and the local. A paradigmatic discussion of key tensions of liberal statebuilding is provided by Paris and Sisk (2007) for they emerge as the summary finding of a collaborative research project which involved more than a dozen scholars from various countries and was disseminated through the International Peace Academy (now International Peace Institute) with close ties to the UN.⁵¹

As Paris and Sisk, for instance, portray the first and principal ‘inherent dilemma’ between outside intervention and self-government from which others follow:

[s]ome of the most difficult policy dilemmas flow from this paradox: statebuilding missions seek to promote national autonomy and self-government, but they do so by means of international intervention. Even though these missions are designed to assist national authorities, the power they exercise is inevitably intrusive, not matter how well intentioned they may be. (Paris and Sisk 2007: 4)

What transpires from this “essential” dilemma, however, is a problem that is effectively located elsewhere. Rather than the primary contradiction being one of a quasi-colonial rule within a paradigm of liberal democracy, the issue seems to be more with the fact that the policy is intrusive. Yet, importantly neither this nor any of the other essential problems raised are addressed in terms of legal aspects, such as the right to non-intervention and autonomy. Instead the limitations – and ensuing critique – to statebuilding are not legal but social. That is, the limitations are not found in an artificial construct of law but in statebuilding as an interference and enmeshment with reality. This enmeshment not only concerns the activities carried out under the umbrella of statebuilding but also describes an entanglement and contradiction produced by a shifting epistemology of governing from model to reality within in which statebuilding emerges and unfolds.

This becomes particularly obvious in what emerges as the second major contradiction: “universal values” are promoted as a remedy for local problems’. As the authors explain this ‘inherent contradiction’ with view of civil conflicts:

⁵¹The International Peace Institute (IPI) is located in New York, across from the United Nations headquarters. Its mission statement follows the UN Charter on international peace and security and its honorary chair is Ban Ki-Moon, the current UN Secretary-General (<http://www.ipacademy.org/about.html>).

Civil wars have both international and domestic drivers, and they sometimes spill over national borders. At bottom, however, they are predominantly *local phenomena*, fought and experienced by individuals and groups who live in a *particular sociocultural context*. Some of the policy dilemmas faced by statebuilding actors derive from incongruities between the universal values (predominantly those in the liberal tradition of individual human rights, democratic governance and market-oriented economics) espoused by international organizations and donor governments on the one hand, and the particular social practices, political traditions and cultural expectations of the host society on the other. This tension, like the previous two, contributes to the problem of defining statebuilding policies that are appropriate, effective, and legitimate, not only in the eyes of the interveners, but also for the local elites and general population of the country. (Paris and Sisk 2007: 4; emphases added)

External statebuilding, it emerges, effectively always and necessarily ‘calls into question the legitimacy and sustainability of any ensuing political institution’ (*Ibid.*: 4). It follows that, if political institutions are only considered legitimate from the perspective of always already existing local realities in which they naturally self-generate then such institutions, per definition, cannot be promoted (see Lemay-Hébert 2009). It emerges from Paris and Sisk’s presentation that an ingrained dynamism or organic reality is understood to exert power that radically challenges juridico-political frameworks based on a universal liberal model. As Paris and Sisk problematise: ‘Indeed, international actors often underestimate the persistence and resilience of the deeply engrained patterns of political and economic life’ (*Ibid.*: 4). The problem then is not that cost of policing itself (see Krasner 1999: 152) or the fact that, given its perceived goal, statebuilders are ‘not colonial enough’ (Chesterman 2004: 12) but that the source of legitimacy is framed to lie exclusively in socio-local realities of which individuals are a product rather than the author. From this understanding neither policing nor direct foreign rule are in fact thinkable; as forms of power or international interventions these approaches literally make no sense as their logics of changing the way societal life is organised has no leverage, no point of contact, with how relational power generates reality. In this light, Paris and Sisk proclaim: ‘At the most basic level, these contradictions are unchanging and unchangeable’ (Paris and Sisk 2009: 305).

The Sociological Critique of Abstraction

In order to emphasise the fundamental epistemological shift that is occurring “after hubris”, this section engages with the increasingly dominant sociological critique of statebuilding to show how critical and official discourse are converging on the same worldview and respective problematisations. The way in which legitimacy is juxtaposed to any abstract

political and theoretical artifice and radically challenges the role of the external is particularly prevalent in Lemay-Hébert's critique. Lemay-Hébert criticises statebuilding to propel an understanding of institutions that are separate from local dynamics. It is in terms of this separation that he considers statebuilding to be illegitimate. Importantly, he does not frame his contentions as a critique of the idea of intervention itself nor as a critique of the purported idea(l) or liberal "ideology" sitting behind the promoted institutional framework but its discrepancy with social processes (see also Kurz 2010). The 'barriers to ... transformation' therefore are to found in the fact that 'society is objectified; portrayed as an entity as tangible as any dimension of the state' (Lemay-Hébert 2009: 27). The question of legitimacy as a critique of statebuilding thus pitches the process-character of reality against the abstraction and artificiality of models and generalised understandings of the world. In Lemay-Hébert's words: '[T]he legitimacy approach is more sociologically or anthropologically-oriented, relativizing generalizing assumptions and emphasizing the particularities of each state and its societal context' (*Ibid.*: 28). In this view, the problem of institution-building approaches is therefore that they are incommensurable with the emerging understanding of the world in terms of relational power produced in the concreteness of social interaction. In this way, Lemay-Hébert concludes: 'By emphasizing the relevance of legitimacy, this essay underscores the limits of the institutional framework, both in theory and in practice' (*Ibid.*: 41). In other words, it is the dynamism of reality that indicates the limits of artifice and intervention.

With this critique that works through concrete processes of reality against the permanence of generalised understandings and models Lemay-Hébert is far from alone. For instance, Volker Boege and colleagues, of the German Berghof Peace Foundation, have published a handbook on *Hybrid Political Orders and Emerging States* in which they call for 'a reality-check'. What this reality check consists of is letting go of 'the narrow state-centric view' and instead begin 'to comprehend the context of what truly constitute[s] power' (Boege et al 2008: 6). Their investigation reveals that what really and truly constitutes power is 'combinations of forces from the customary sphere' (*Ibid.*: 9), particular 'norms of behaviour' (*Ibid.*: 12) and even interactions in 'people's everyday life' (Boege et al. 2008: 11). From the perspective of this reality check, statebuilding is problematised as 'a divorce of state institution from traditional values and practices' that 'undermine[s] the potential for democracy' because 'internal and external state-builders [are] neglecting and

(unintentionally) undermining community and customary sources of order and resilience’ (*Ibid.*: 12).

The notion of hybridity is also invoked by Roger Mac Ginty as a framework for criticising what he considers to be liberal statebuilding. Contributing to the emergence of a critical common sense, he concurs that it is ‘useful to draw on the sociological concept of social interactionism in attempting to conceive of processes whereby hybridisation occurs’ (Mac Ginty 2011: 73). Thus informed by social interactionism, ‘hybridisation is regarded as a dynamic and complex process in which prior-hybridised entities coalesce, conflict, and re-coalesce with other prior-hybridised entities to produce a context of constant mixing and interchange’ (*Ibid.*: 51). In other words, there is nothing prior to complex processes and interactions; there is neither foundation nor outcome but only emergence. Mac Ginty finds that the ‘picture that emerges is complex but ... much more accurate’ (*Ibid.*: 10). What this newly gained accuracy then allows us to understand is that from a “real life” sociological perspective ‘[a]ll social environments entail hybridisation and distortion’ (*Ibid.*: 9). What his critique of statebuilding consequently consists in is that all case studies have shown that external intervention ‘became distorted as they interacted with local actors on the ground’ (*Ibid.*: 10). In other words, he first emphasises that viewed from a perspective of social interactionism all contexts are processes of hybridisation and distortion and then criticises statebuilding interventions to hybridise and distort contexts. That, of course, is a necessary and exigent critical finding in the face of the methodological framing; but, to paraphrase Mark Peceny’s puzzlement with regard to the constructivist turn in democratisation studies, it is ‘difficult to know what knowledge has been gained’ (Peceny 1999: 99; see Chapter 2). While still a nagging discomfort for consolidation and constructivist scholars, the point of the sociological critique of statebuilding seems much more to serve the purpose of ‘questioning’ the capacity of externals ‘to analyse on-the-ground phenomena’ (Mac Ginty 2011: 4).

This critique of statebuilding through questioning the capacity to know a reality that is conceived of as a *perpetuum mobile* fuelled by complex interactions culminates in Berit Bliesemann de Guevara’s introduction to a special issue on the limits of statebuilding. Drawing mainly on insights and concepts of French sociologists, such as Braudel or Bourdieu, the paramount criticism of the special issue is that at ‘the core of any statebuilding process’ lies ‘the inevitable deformation of original intentions in the process of politics’ (Bliesemann de Guevara 2010: 113). This inevitable deformation, the author

explicates, is a result of the ‘most basic structural characteristic’ that all actors are embedded ‘in the structures of world society’ (*Ibid.*: 113). This, as Bliesemann de Guevara highlights, is not a characteristic limited to non-Western societies but ‘also holds true for the social structures into which international state-builders themselves are embedded’ (*Ibid.*: 117-8). As a result, the essence of such sociologically-informed perspectives on intervention and statebuilding, emerging as contemporary critical mainstream, is perfectly captured in the following point:

Statebuilding’s effects ... unfold in contingent, contradictory and often unintentional and unconscious ways – confirming Ferguson’s development politics-related observation that, ‘any intentional deployment only takes effect through a convoluted route involving unacknowledged structures and unpredictable outcomes . . . The whole mechanism is . . . a “mushy mixture” of the discursive and the non-discursive, of the intentional plans and the unacknowledged social world with which they are engaged’ (Ferguson 2006, pp. 283-284). *Unintended effects of purposeful actions are at the centre of state dynamics under the conditions of statebuilding.* (*Ibid.*: 116; emphasis added)

In other words, not much meaning seems left once a sociological perspective is adopted that frames the world primarily in terms of social complexities. Moreover, it emerges from this depiction that unintended consequences are not considered a function of intention but a function of reality’s autopoietic complexity. It is not the intention that comes first; instead unintended consequences arise out of the complexity of human interaction. As incidentally Max Weber (whose theory of the state is a thorn in many critics’ side) has once pointed out, more often than not, politically and generally human action has produced consequences that were not initially intended (Weber 2008: 194-5). For Weber, however, the problem is not unintended consequences as such. But precisely because of this phenomenon, it is even more important to have an original cause, plan or agenda that stands separately from already existing reality. Otherwise politics is lost in fundamental meaninglessness. In his words:

It is perfectly true and a fundamental fact of all history ... that the ultimate outcome of political action is often, indeed regularly, at variance with its original purpose, or indeed bears an almost paradoxical relationship to it. But therefore this purpose: the service of a *causa*, must not be lacking, if the action is to have a firm foundation inwardly. [...] Otherwise, it is quite true to say that even the outwardly greatest political successes will be subject to the curse of creaturely nullity [sic]’ (Weber 2008: 194-5).

However, the problematisation and essentialisation of unintended consequences presented in these critiques of statebuilding works precisely as a way of decapitating

purpose. Unintended effects do not inform intention in a way that would lead to change in means, tactics and mechanisms; they do not serve to evaluate the intention, the purpose or the abstract political and theoretical framework sitting behind such intention; instead they frustrate intention. The starting point is not the intention or purpose about which the unintended consequences tells us something, but the unintended consequence that tells us nothing other than that “doing” is an interference with the processes of reality and as such defy purpose and meaning.

In fact, the framework of statebuilding seems to consolidate sociological understandings and problematisations of international interventions, politics and governance emerging in the 1990s. It is these novel terms of critical understanding which question universal assumptions and generalised knowledge not on its own terms but through the existence of reality.⁵² Understood in procedural and dynamic terms, local contexts and global structures emerge as reality’s challenge to the abstract and artifice. Thus understood the world is not amenable to the abstraction of generalisations neither politically nor epistemologically. The underpinning rationale of these problematisations of abstract, universal models is that we should not and cannot have institutional frameworks and prefabricated assumptions because there always already is the dynamism of reality that makes everything bent, distorted and deformed (possibly, as Weber intimated, even success becomes just another distorted unintended consequence). Crucially, with this framing critique moves into close proximity of problem-solving approaches and policy discourses on statebuilding. What the remainder of the chapter seeks to demonstrate is that policy discourses likewise propel an increasingly sociologically-infused understanding of institutions, knowledge and legitimacy based on organic or hybrid and informal social constructs (rather than, for instance, based

⁵²The fact that critics of statebuilding do not challenge the “content” or ideology behind statebuilding has been also been highlighted by David Chandler. He observes that instead the critique works through ‘the non-liberal other’ that ‘invalidates, challenges or resists (passively or actively) policy practices’ (Chandler 2010: 31). This section, however, found that it is less the non-liberal other than the contingency of unmediated reality that invalidates, challenges or resists the abstract ideas underpinning policy practices. This difference between the resistance of the local and the challenge of unmediated reality has consequences for the understanding of the governing problematisation discerned in statebuilding discourses. For Chandler it is the autonomy of the post-colonial other. In this chapter it will be suggested it is the illusion of autonomy of the Western self. This difference surfaces again in the understanding of the problematisations at play in new institutionalism. Chandler sees the contribution of new institutionalism’s qualification of rationality to international statebuilding in the essentialisation of difference (*Ibid.*: 88-9). This chapter concurs with this finding. However, it argues that Chandler does not pay sufficient attention to the second important dimension of this qualification: that the boundedness of rationality has been associated with an biological incapacity of human and therefore affects all subjects as humans per se, not only the post-colonial other. The implications of this for arguments of context-sensitivity and agency-centeredness as apologetic window dressings for legitimizing Western hegemony and interventionism (*Ibid.*: 167-87) will be intimated towards the end of the chapter.

on a political objective) and focus on social processes embedding actors in global-local interactions and dynamics. In other words, both critique and policy demonstrate a marked inclination towards the “real”, that is, see truth and power to rest in the dynamism of social reality “as it really is”.

What thus is being consolidated in the post-1990s statebuilding framework is the turn towards relational power – or, more precisely, the ceding of power to the contingency of the world that emerges and exists naturally and without assistance. In this light, the remainder of the chapter asks whether these sociological understandings provide a platform through which policy discourses of statebuilding are enabled to rework their problem-solution nexus in terms of the promotion of novel forms of democratic self-rule. It will be suggested that the sociologically-informed challenge to generalised, formal and abstract forms of institutions and knowledge enable the inversion of target and donor of statebuilding: through sensitivity to social processes on the ground and awareness-building towards unintended consequences donors are encouraged to realise their own particularity and introspectively empty their states of mind to become more attuned to reality.

The next section returns to the canonical 2004 publications, here in particular the work of Fukuyama, to draw out the economic foundations of statebuilding in new institutionalism. Through an engagement with the seminal work of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Douglass North (expert advisor to the World Bank) it seeks to show the radicalism with which the rise of the social has revoked the world from the human by questioning both rationality and abstractability. At the same time, the section seeks to highlight how this revocation is instrumental for furthering the opening and development of a different sphere of governing and human agency than that of the rational human and the external world. This discussion then serves as the basis for the examination of contemporary governing rationalities transpiring from policy discourses on statebuilding.

The Power of Environment: New Institutionalism and the Subjectivity of Rationality

Under the heading ‘the new conventional wisdom’ Fukuyama in his work on statebuilding asserts that the importance of the state has come to be taken for granted in development policy circles ‘whose mantra since at least 1997 has been the dictum that “institutions

matter” (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 28). Fukuyama, however, is critical of the concomitant rally cry of “getting to Denmark”. ‘We all know what “Denmark” looks like’, he notes, ‘[b]ut to what extent is the knowledge transferable?’ (*Ibid.*: 30). To explain the importance of institutions he turns to institutional economics. This allows him to criticise the Denmark-approach as being too much driven by the premise of ‘methodological individualism’ of classical economics. “Getting to Denmark”, as a universal or Western ideal state, is similar to understanding ‘organizations as collection of individuals who learn to cooperate socially for reasons of individual self-interest’. What this perspective underplays, but which new institutionalism focuses on, is the role of ‘group identity’ and ‘socialization’ (*Ibid.*: 68). To put it differently, what new institutionalist economics bring into economic theory is a sociological dimension to explain the difficulties of “getting to Denmark”. In this context, Chandler has importantly pointed out the influence of new institutionalist rationalisations, and in particular the work of North, on international statebuilding (Chandler 2010: 88). He argues that ‘[t]he area in which institutionalist approaches developed and were cohered intellectually was not that of legitimizing forms of governmental regulation but rather in the apologia of difference’ (*Ibid.*: 88). As this section seeks to highlight, however, the production of difference and the way it comes operative in statebuilding is much more fundamental than apologia. It brings, as the section suggests, policy discourse and practices of statebuilding much closer to its sociological critique.

Difference, Bounded Rationality and the Embedded Inner Life of the Subject

New institutional economics surfaced at the beginning of the 1990s as a result of asking why inefficient institutions, particularly in third world countries, existed (North 1990, Ostrom 1990). According to neoclassical theorising, competitive pressures should have led to their elimination. What consequently needed explanation was the ‘radically differential performance of economics over long periods of time’ (North 1990: 7). In other words, new institutionalists problematised the assumptions about the self-interested, rational individual as the starting point of theorisations. Rather than deriving explanations from the universal, the starting point of investigation must begin with explaining disparity (North 1990: 11; Ostrom 1990; Portes 2006).

Crucially – particularly when considering the influential role new institutionalism played for the emergence of international statebuilding – institutions in new

institutionalism are not the direct solution to development problems. As Chandler correctly pointed out, new institutionalism does not advocate institutions for market regulation (Chandler 2010; see above). “Institutions matter” but the school significantly redefines and relocates institutions that matter for ways of governing and decision-making: the focus is on informal institutions, where they take on a far more ambivalent role. ‘Institutions are rules of the game in society’ that put certain constraints on human interaction (North 1990: 6). These constraints, according to North, are ‘pervasive’ (*Ibid.*: 5) but largely hidden (North 1990: 6). What triggered the re-emphasis on institutions in conjunction with the concomitant relocation of focus onto the informal is its recalcitrance that operates and unfolds outside the remit of public institutions. It is this recalcitrance that turns informal institutions into a pivotal explanatory variable once the analytical focus is on difference and disparity. As North highlights, formal institutions ‘can change overnight’ while ‘informal constraints embodied in customs, traditions, and codes of conduct are much more impervious to deliberate policies’ (*Ibid.*: 6). In a similar vein, Fukuyama observes: ‘The importance and pervasiveness of norms in management and public administration imply that institutional development will be heavily impacted by social structure, culture and other variables not under the direct control of public policy’ (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 112). The turn towards things local, social and context-specific in statebuilding thus finds a particular explanation in new institutionalism’s sociologicalised rationalisations. “Society” emerges as the explanatory variable of difference. Importantly, this explanatory variable hinges upon the specific understanding of society as milieu – that is, as a network of organically embedded subjects (North 1990: 11-15; DiMaggio and Powell 1991: 28; Portes 2006: 242).

With its economic foundation in new institutionalism, it suggests itself that statebuilding arose as a policy always already cohered around the limits of public institutions based on the differential of the milieu rather than as a predominantly coercive agenda seeking to transform society according to a Western liberal democratic template. It is in this light that Chandler argues that international statebuilding denotes the fulcrum of essentialised difference legitimising post-liberal civil society interventions ‘on the basis of the moral and civilizational divide between the west and the post-colonial or post-conflict other (Chandler 2010: 170). However, what Chandler’s argument somewhat sidesteps, is the way power over the subject is ceded to and obfuscated in the milieu. And it will be suggested this handing over of power to the milieu is much more important and

consequential for fully understanding contemporary statebuilding in itself as a mechanism of promoting democratic self-governance that is directed at and encloses the donors.⁵³

The key lies in is the reason provided for the pervasiveness of informal constraints and their radical recalcitrance to the government of formal institutions. To explain this pervasiveness of informal institutions (social norms and customary conventions) North, and others (Ostrom 1990: 37; see Koelble 1995) turn towards the problem of perception for decision-making. The issue is that perceptions of information rather than actual information itself determine decision-making. These perceptions then are understood as socially determined subjective filters. '[P]eople decipher the environment by processing information through pre-existing mental constructs' (North 1990: 20). Crucially, these mental constructs are necessitated by the inability of the human mind to process full information. Reality "as it really is" is too complex to process in an unmediated and unfiltered way that would be necessary for rational decision-making. Mental constructs thus compensate for this inability since they allow simplifications without which humans, in their limited cognitive capacities, would be unable to make sense of the world, decide or act. According to North,

the uncertainties arise from incomplete information with respect to the behaviour of other individuals in the process of human interaction. The computational limitations of the individual are determined by the capacity of the mind to process, organize, and utilize information. From this capacity taken in conjunction with the uncertainties involved in deciphering the environment, rules and procedures evolve to simplify the process. The consequent institutional framework, by structuring human interaction, limits the choice set of actors. (*Ibid.*: 25)

From this understanding, it follows that the "explanatory variable" of difference – informal institutions – are effectively mental constructs that directly link the mind with the environment. Without these socially provided mental constructs humans are incapable of coping with their existence in the world. Difference and particularity are thus much more than essentialised; they become an insurmountable human condition. Individual decision-making, for new institutionalists, is not determined by available information in conjunction with self-interest but rather by the perception of information and the contingent way this perception informs an internalised process of interest formation. As North emphasises: 'The subjective and incomplete processing of information plays a critical role in decision-

⁵³ As the following chapter on climate change demonstrates, letting power drop into unmediated contingency of reality allows us not only to comprehend climate change as directly linked to statebuilding but also as a culmination of democracy promotion.

making' (*Ibid.*: 23). Any decision-making is thus both subjectivised as well as irreducibly embedded in particular contexts that form the mental constructs and filters through which reality is perceived. As Fukuyama confirms: 'Everything depends on context, past history, the identity or organizational players [the embedded subject]' (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 104)

There are various significant consequences following from this discovery that what accounts for difference also is an irreducible feature of human existence as a result of its cognitive deficiencies (where the social differential then cannot be accounted for as it is not accessible to the human mind – it has formed the human mind). Two will be spelled out here since they are of immediate importance for the way statebuilding operates as a broader governing rationality. The third consequence, that in this understanding of embeddedness undermines the idea of human autonomy, is a conclusion new institutionalists themselves seemed to have shied away from. In turn, new materialism as a new theory of radical democracy has capitalised on this. As there is a noticeable affinity between climate change discourses and new materialism, this aspect will be addressed in the next chapter.

First of all, there is a direct link between the environment and the inner life of mind. That is, the environment – through informal institutions and norms – mediates the subjective perception of reality. There is no outside to this link, however: reality is always already a 'subjective perception of reality' (North 1990: 23). A problem, for instance, is the subjective perception of a problem; the other is a subjective perception of the other, a solution is the subjective perception of a solution, and so on. By extension, ways of thinking have no space or validity independent of the context in which they have been formed. Simply put, humans are not the author of the world they live in but its product. The external world thus cannot be reflected upon once perception is construed as a product of context. As such, humans are interpellated as embedded into a reality that is inaccessible to them and which will and can never reveal itself. Instead of having authoritative knowledge about the world as the guideline for taking decisions and taking action, reality and the human merge into a socio-psychological feedback loop. In this sense, Chandler critically observes in his latest book: 'There is no gap between the individual and the world' (Chandler 2013: 19; see Introduction).

Secondly, the 'social filter' (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 105) that both enables humans to reduce complexity they live in but necessarily colours all calculation and decision-making undermines the idea of rationality in itself rather radically. As Thomas Koelble in reviewing

the burgeoning new institutionalist literature observes: ‘Individuals are viewed as “embedded” in so many social, economic, and political relationships beyond their control and even cognition that it is almost absurd to speak of utility-maximizing and rational behavior ... The very concept of rationality is dependent upon its environment’ (Koelble 1995: 235). What this context-dependency of rationality ultimately means is that either all subjects are rational but differently rational according to their contingent environment or no subject is rational because of the fact that human computational limitations require the “social crutch” to be able to do anything at all. In any case, decision-making and interest – no matter how “rational” – becomes idiosyncratic.

As a result, on the one hand, humans are grounded. The local “on the ground” logically can no longer be a designation of the non-Western other but rather describes a fundamental human condition. We are all embedded into the ‘structures of world society’ (Bliesemann de Guevara; see above) – but in different and contingent ways that this commonality makes the difference between self and other unbridgeable. From a new institutionalist perspective, the condition of embeddedness also revokes the external world as a sphere of purposeful human agency. With the discovery of the “social crutch” as something glued to the very base of human existence, extraction from an ‘absolute chaos of difference’ as the condition for political organisation and the constitutive power of the public artifice (Arendt 2005: 93; see introduction) would appear as a possibility barred by the precognitive condition of embeddedness and the radical differences that this condition produces. For the way this finding impinges upon contemporary statebuilding and the way it has become a democracy promotion mechanism through which donors are encouraged to transform themselves, it is worthwhile to recall Foucault’s warning that we, as human beings, are not in the position to perceive of power as anything but relational (Foucault 2003: 29; see Introduction). That is, power circulates purposelessness, constantly produced and reproduced as unintended effects and consequences by the individual as a relay that both exercises power and is affected by power out of the sheer fact of existence. It seems that from this position there is not much space for intentionality. On the other hand, in new institutionalist rationalisations there is another – and, in fact, only – sphere that quite blatantly offers itself to be of governability: subjective perceptions.

With the basic grounding of the human, all things local, agency-centred and context-specific seem to take on a different role. Rather than being only apologetic (out of choice), the turn towards the local and context-specific seems to be the expression of fundamental human inadequacy. In this context, one of the crucial problems transpiring from new institutionalism and statebuilding discourses is the issue of knowledge. With the subjectivity of rationality and subjective processing of information, information does not equal information, nor does information processing equal information processing. As a result much emphasis is put on the split nature of knowledge.

This bifurcation in Fukuyama's terminology concerns "best practice" and *metis*; others have called it "technical" and "tacit" (Ostrom 1990). "Best practice", Fukuyama explains, assumes that 'a practice that works in one part of the world is immediately publicized and set up as a model for other parts of the world to follow'. *Metis*, on the other hand, refers to the idiosyncratic 'ability to use local knowledge to create local solutions' (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 112). The fundamental and most consequential difference between these two types of knowledge is their communicability and abstractability. While the former is easily communicable, clearly measurable and through abstraction and generalization transferrable, the latter, "tacit" knowledge, is neither communicable, measurable nor abstractable. It has validity only in and through a particular context. Crucially, knowledge and information based on *metis* can only be obtained through immersion, coming-into-being and existing in a particular environment in which this knowledge – informal rules, social norms, customary conventions – are practiced. Local knowledge, in other words, is local not because there is something special to be known about a particular context but because it is presented as neither communicable nor, in fact, cognitive.

With the problem of the subjectivity of perception, however, all knowledge becomes tacit; there is no measure or level of abstraction that would allow the formation of more generalizable assumptions and formulation of clear goals. As Fukuyama explicates:

goals never exist clearly at any given time but rather emerge as the result of interactions among different organizational players [embedded subjects]. These players have bounded rationality, not in [the] ... sense of not being able to accurately predict future states of the world but because the observation and interpretation of events is itself a social process that colors, distorts, and changes the cognitive process. (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 70)

What makes goals futile and untenable, in other words, is not that they may be proven wrong in the course of events but that they are already based on an always inherent misperception or miscommunication as a result of its infusion and colouring with “tacit” knowledge. As a EuropeAid document on the difficulties of capacity-building puts this:

Individuals and organisations, and their capacity, are embedded in a context of institutional and structural factors. This also captures that individuals, including donor staff, are not able to articulate all the deeper-rooted factors influencing their choices and actions. (EuropeAid 2005: 12).

This leads Fukuyama to announce what has been widely adopted in statebuilding discourses since: ‘The local character of the knowledge required to design a wide variety of good administrative practices suggests that administrative capacity isn’t actually transferred from one society to another (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 120). As a result, ‘design and input from people immersed in local conditions will be ... most critical’. Moreover, in each case ‘each transaction may have to be different’ (*Ibid.*: 115-6).

Difference – the contingency of difference – seems to make knowledge, goal formulation and prescription as part of a hierarchical and interventionist statebuilding agenda impossible. Everything must be local – the problem and the solution – because in a subjective world of socio-psychological processes there is no universal benchmark or signpost according to which to evaluate a problem and prescribe a solution. To let Fukuyama speak for one last time and describe for us the emerging rationale of promoting engaged self-governance through statebuilding: ‘outsiders to a society may be tempted to think that they know more than they actually do about the universality of a particular institution or practice’ (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]: 116). In other words, how to get to Denmark is no longer an intelligible question or problem, because there is no more Denmark; Denmark is just another irretrievable local context, a social filter – neither to be accepted nor rejected. And statebuilding as a framework for understanding the world, it seems, was always already based on this radical rendition of universals and ideals based on a human condition.

Epitomising this epistemological context, the statebuilding imperative of local solutions, ownership and participation shifts from “best practice” to “tacit knowledge”. Captured, for instance, in the watershed 2007 OECD *Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States and Situations*. As the first principle the document states: ‘Take context as the starting point ... [A]void blue-print approaches’. The second principle is: ‘Do no harm. International interventions create societal divisions and worsen corruption

and abuse' (OECD 2007: [1]). In this light, 'the aim should be a "good fit" not "best practice"' (OECD n/d: 14; see also DFID 2005: 20; OECD 2008: 35; Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 10). The reversals executed in these guidelines are consequential. Taking context first and then doing no harm is effectively underpinned by the same rationale as the sociological critique. From the vantage point of taking the contingency of reality first, all policy interventions and practices are an interference and entanglement with the dynamics of social realities. Taking this contingency first frustrates the logic or the idea of goal formulation according to the absent ideal from which measures could be designed (but which also could be the base for purposeful resistance). As the next section seeks to demonstrate, under these conditions, the imperative of "do no harm" thus translates into an imperative of "have no goals" (or expectations).

For this purpose, the section will engage with an important discursive and programmatic shift from technocratic approaches to the acknowledgement of politics that seems to have gone unnoticed in critical literature, and contextualise this within the concomitant emergence of "new knowledge". It will be suggested that a discursive and programmatic regime is developing that centres on the intractability of reality as an "absolute chaos of difference". The new political approach, and the emerging knowledge tools, appears to be serving as a vehicle for learning about subjective embeddedness and particularity. They capitalise on socio-psychological processes for perception-management through deep engagement and openness to the unbridgeable particularity of the other.

Less is More: Learning to Let Go

The disjunction between politics as it happens in the minds of international administrators and politics as it happens on the ground has been a recurrent theme in this book. (Chesterman 2004: 236-7)

Understanding contemporary statebuilding discourses to be working at this disjunction between the politics of the mind and the politics of reality is crucial. Taking Chesterman's conclusion as a guideline, the section discusses the discursive emphasis on the political nature of statebuilding and asks what the understanding and role is of this new political approach. Following from this it explores the way unintended consequences are problematised and finally draws out how sensitivity to context works as a platform from which donors' are encouraged to understand that the problem is their mind.

What holds this emerging “edifice” of governmental rationality together is the umbrella of resilience (OECD 2008: 18; ERD 2009: 100; OECD 2011: 25; UNDP 2012). As an increasingly salient trope in international policy-making discourses, including statebuilding, resilience as the ability to cope and adapt is a principle of reality. Individuals cope with and adapt to their immediate context and conditions as a necessary reflex; the reflex is presented in policy discourse as “capacity”. It has sometimes been criticised for encapsulating a Darwinian component (Walker and Cooper 2011). More important, however, for drawing out its governing capacity is that it describes an approach that starts from what exists – and accords capacity to what exists – rather than from what is missing to which lacks of capacity are accorded. Simply put, resilience thinking captures an understanding in which nothing is missing, lacking or vulnerable, where everything is there in the world; what undermines or bars this capacity to come into effect are prefabricated ideas of the mind which miscommunicates with reality (for details see Chapter 5). In this context, it is not reality that can or needs to be transformed according to the idea in mind, but the idea in mind can or needs to be transformed according to reality by way of immersion. The section thus focuses on the way statebuilding is reworked as a democracy promotion mechanism of donor self-transformation and self-emptying for more openness towards the world through the idea of resilience.

Be Aware, the Subject is Governed: The Politics of the Social

Following new institutionalist rationalisations, contemporary statebuilding policy discourses fully adopt the relocation and focus of institutions that matter for governing into the informal. As Thomas Carothers and Diane de Gramont, of the US-based Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in reviewing tendencies in statebuilding and governance support observe: ‘As donors both increased their work at the local level and came to recognize the limitations of best practice institutions, they also began to look beyond a country’s formal institutions to consider the roles of informal institutions’ (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 12). Out of the insight that there ‘are not cases of “state formation” *ex novo*’ (ODI 2007: 6), for instance, the UNDP explains: ‘The practical understanding of governance has moved radically from concepts of ‘ruling over’ or national administrative functions and conventional authority-based models, towards approaches that rely less on formal authority and more on the interaction of state and civil society

actors.’ (UNDP 2009: 3). Equally as radical, the OECD defines informal, social practices to constitute the centre of any political system: ‘Political settlement refers not only to the formal architecture of politics, but also a web of political institutions – the informal rules, shared understandings and rooted habits that shape political interaction and conduct, and that are at the heart of every political system’ (OECD 2011: 31). The reason for this new-found focus is two-fold, as the Sussex University-based Institute for Development Studies (IDS), in close affinity to North’s sociological reasoning, explains. On the one hand, the shift towards the informal reflects the realisation that ‘informal institutions and personalised relationships are pervasive and powerful’ (IDS 2010: 72). On the other hand, but intimately related, the reason for the shift is to be explained by the mere reality or “naturalness” of informal arrangements. No human environment exists without them: ‘Informality is just a fact of life’ (*Ibid.*: 11). Starting from this fact of life therefore is held to provide a more genuine and non-ideological view on governance (*Ibid.*: 11).

Imbricated in this shift away from the unfitting and powerless artificiality of best practices to the powerful reality of tacit arrangements is a second shift, away from technical approaches to an acknowledgement of the ‘centrality of politics’ (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 6). By way of self-problematisation, the UK Department for International Development states: ‘Donors have tried to promote change through technical solutions supported by individual champions of reform, believing that the problem is technical not political’ (DFID 2005: 14). ‘In the past’, an OECD guideline concurs, ‘capacity development was understood as what outsiders can do to build the capacity of others, like training or technical assistance. Today, however, it is seen as an endogenous process ... [that] goes well beyond the technical level and entails a concern with the wider political context’ (OECD n/d: 3). Carothers and de Gramont agree that ‘[g]overnance assistance was initially shaped by what can be called “the temptation of the technical”’ (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 5). Not only is the wider political context taken into account, it is recognised that statebuilding ‘understood in the context of state-society relations’ is ‘a deeply political process’ especially in regard to ‘what is perceived to be legitimate in a specific context’ (OECD 2011: 16; see also ERD 2009: 91; EuropeAid 2011a: 2). Recognising the deep politics involved in statebuilding means to acknowledge that ‘[l]ocal perceptions of legitimacy may diverge fundamentally from international human-rights norms’ (OECD 2010b: 53). This acknowledgement, springing from an ‘endogenous perspective’, means that capacity development ‘cannot be imported’ since, from such perspective ‘no recipe for effective

capacity development support exists' (OECD n/d: 3; see also OECD 2011: 16). It seems, Lemay-Hébert's, and others, critical embrace of more sociologically and anthropologically informed understandings of legitimacy to resist the relativising and generalising assumptions allegedly at the heart of international statebuilding (Lemay-Hébert 2009: 28; see above) has found wide-spread acceptance and employment in official discourse. Obviously, there is very little generalisation going on.

The shift away from technical approaches to new political perspectives has logically necessitated the development of new analytical tools. These come foremost in form of "political economy analyses". 'There is a growing enthusiasm for using political economy analysis' (IDS 2010: 6). Carothers and de Gramont confirm the 'introduction of new formal tools, particularly political economy analysis' (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 6). For instance, a EuropeAid guideline on how to involve non-state actors in statebuilding seeks 'to understand the 'political economy' underlying state-civil society relations' (EuropeAid 2011a: 21). Likewise an Overseas Development Institute (ODI) paper wishes to contribute to knowledge producing by 'adopting a political economy perspective' (ODI 2007: 4).

Given this emphasis, it suggests itself to ask what knowledge has been gained. What strikes first of all is that the notion of knowledge seems to have been reworked to mean awareness. Secondly, it emerges that a political economy perspective in line with the shift towards the informal invokes a double-layered reality (see also Chapter 3). Reality consists of a visible, "fake" layer and a deeper but invisible "real" layer. From a political economy perspective, the IDS, for example, explains the 'importance of politics' to refer to the need to "look behind the façade" of formal institutions to detect the "real" location of power' (IDS 2010: 6). Using the same terminology, the EuropeAid guideline on non-state actors and statebuilding emphasises that through a political economy lens more attention is being paid to 'prevailing rules, interests, power relations and how resources and opportunities are distributed. These core governance dimensions – often less visible, yet present behind the façade – largely determine how authority is exercised' (EuropeAid 2011a: 21). In other words, not only is reality double-layered with the "real" locale in 'underlying political conditions and structures' (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 5) but, viewed from this perspective the idea emerges that at this underlying level – of informality, power and politics – the subject emerges as always already governed in pervasive and deep ways.

Against this governance of the informal, formal political artifices have no reach: they are a façade behind which reality unfolds.⁵⁴

Moreover, like informality, politics is understood to be a fact of life. This is most tangibly presented so by EuropeAid which provides a direct definition of politics. Politics, it is explained, is a phenomenon that describes ‘all the many activities of cooperation, conflict and negotiation involved in decisions about the use, production and distribution of resources, whether these activities are formal or informal, public or private, or a mixture of all. Such a basic conception *enables us to think of politics as a necessary activity*’ (EuropeAid 2011a: 21; emphasis added). In other words, a political economy perspective enables statebuilders to realise that on reality’s deeper level everything is there already: institutions, power, politics, governance. States exist – and they are real, not artificial. This insight seems to a central tenet around which contemporary statebuilding discourses circle.

At the same time, it transpires that nothing in this “state edifice” has any foundation or subject. Governance, politics and institutions all are the product of the dynamism of unmediated reality that exist because humans exist. Politics, in other words, is a prerogative of the interrelationship, not a purposeful human activity. Individuals, grounded in their context, are subjected, are exposed to and contribute to politics. Politics functions. As such it is a fact of life to be coped with. Coping with the reality politics here seems to go both ways. While the locals need to cope with – and thrive on – their particular condition, externals are encouraged to cope with – and thrive on – the fundamental incapacity to know or do anything in the face of these overpowering but invisible processes.

Not only do deeply rooted, underlying political conditions and structures ‘prevent any simple fixes’ (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 5), but seemingly prevent any understanding whatsoever. That this might be decreasingly considered a problem but more a core element of governing the Western self through statebuilding transpires from the following rationalisations on legitimacy: ‘Legitimacy in fragile situations is ... very complex, with different sources of legitimacy coexisting, competing and conflicting – and interacting with other sources of power and interest. These are very difficult issues for outsiders to

⁵⁴ Here we are reminded of Patrick Jackson’s points on critical realist rationalisations which also interpellate a level deeper than reality which is understood to produce anything that appears on the surface (see Introduction). As Jackson has critically pointed out, this level deeper than reality seems to fulfil more of an apologetic role rather than something to be revealed. According to him, there is a trend detectable in critical realism that amounts to a celebration of Cartesian doubt rather than an attempt to tackle or overcome such doubt. (Jackson 2011; see Introduction). Following his critical presentation, there may thus be an unwarranted convergence developing between this critical perspective and an emerging form of governing that reverses radical doubt and ignorance into a positive rationality of engaged and participatory self-governance.

grasp, much less influence constructively’ (OECD 2011: 37). At the same time, the ‘intangible dimensions of state-building’ have ‘placed the concept of legitimacy ... at the centre of the state-building agenda’ (ERD 2009: 91). In other words, on the one hand, nothing can be understood and done about legitimacy, but at the same time, it is considered to be the focus of international statebuilding agenda. For the moment, it can at least be noted that it is very intriguing that a concept about which outsiders can understand little and do little should be placed at the centre of state-building, precisely in its nature of fundamental “unknowability”. The centrality of a concept or process that is presented to be of “tacit” knowledge and hence firmly beyond communication and even cognition seems to be positively linked to a sociological perspective on the organic nature of governing edifices. This perspective tells us that ‘there are therefore limits as to what the international community can and should do’ (OECD 2011: 16; see also Carothers and de Gramont 2011). It appears that the Cartesian doubt, that reality will never reveal itself and that our frameworks may therefore always be in danger of deceiving us, inculcated and solidified by political economy’s sociologicalised analysis is turning into a celebrated core of statebuilding.

Do No Harm: Interference with Reality as Unintended Consequence

Policy discourses on statebuilding demonstrate a simultaneous concern with harm and a problematisation of unintended consequences. Current do-no-harm approaches thus link to unintended consequences in a crucial way and must be understood in the context of the political turn of statebuilding. The OECD usefully sums up the problematique:

Generally donors lack the knowledge of local politics, of the balance of power between locally contending groups and elites or how they are linked to the centre, so support in this area is often blind and therefore in danger of provoking unintended outcomes. (OECD 2010a: 11)

In fact, from here, we can let the policy discourse draw out the links itself first:

Doing no harm essentially means that donor intervention does not undermine statebuilding processes. Donors can inadvertently do harm when the resources they deliver or the policy reforms they advocate exacerbate rather than mitigate the conditions for violent conflict (OECD 2010a: 9)

The EU’s initiatives ... could be perceived as intrusive and not politically neutral by partner countries. They can, possibly unintentionally, also affect processes and dynamics that are intrinsically internal. (ERD 2009: 2)

Put differently, the rationale emerging here is that due to the fact that there is already a double layer of reality, the deeper and more real, “tacit” and socialised, one of which is neither communicable nor accessible to the outsider, any interference must be assumed to provoke an unintended outcome. In this regard, harm is not done by intentional policy practices, for instance, because these are unsuitable for context, undermine international law or are driven by sinister donor interests. Instead, harm must be assumed to be done inadvertently simply because something has been done and hence there has been an interference with the unknown processes structuring and regulating local contexts. What this means, by extension, is that current do-no-harm approaches are not therapeutic. These approaches do not seem to address a vulnerable subject and they are not primarily other-caring. Instead, more than the other, they concern is with the self. Crucially, however, this self-centredness is mediated through the obscured but “real” context already permeated by governing relationships of the social. For apprehending this trajectory it is helpful to look at the way resilience is invoked in the problematique of unintended consequences as inherently harmful.

Resilient states and resilient societies have advanced into a core concern in statebuilding discourses (OECD 2008; ERD 2009; OECD 2011; UNDP 2012). The UNDP, for instance, considers the main task of statebuilding today to rest in the ‘[b]uilding resilience of society, particularly by strengthening their capacity to adapt and cope’. This capacity, however, is a bound to ‘highly localized and customary’ settings since resilience as a way through which society governs itself is presented to work based on norms. This is because localised and customary settings ‘often play a central role in setting societal norms and standards, regulating behaviour and mediating conflict’ (UNDP 2012: 83). This highly localised regime seems to be the precondition of resilience since subjects do not cope or adapt out of choice; out of choice individuals choose and only cope and adapt when there is none, as for instance in the following of norms. Resilience building thus means first and foremost not disturbing or, worse, severing these regulatory relationships and interactions. From this understanding, ‘donors can do harm to existing accountability relationships where they do not “go with the grain” of existing relationships’ (EuropeAid 2011a: 24). A resilience perspective thus carries the imperative of not interfering with already governed societies rather than creating or changing anything. Consequently and crucially, it seems that the emphasis on resilience reworks the rationality of statebuilding into an international policy of acceptance, appreciation and coming to terms with context. As the

agenda-setting OECD handbook on doing no harm, for example, emphasises: ‘Doing no harm in these situations may mean that donors accept a political settlement where open electoral competition is curbed’ (OECD 2010a: 11). The DFID similarly maintains statebuilding as resilience-maintenance means that donors must come to terms with conditions in which ‘corruption may be rife, staff may lack necessary skills, and capacity may be chronically weak’ (DFID 2005: 20).⁵⁵

In other words, the inculcation of unintended consequences does not ask for strategy optimisation based on knowledge generation about what has gone wrong where. Rather, it appears to be a learning mechanism for donor realisation that less is more. Through the sociologically coloured lens on institutions and governance as contingent processes of the social through which societies govern themselves, the only way of avoiding unintended consequences is by not interfering. However, local contexts as the “chaos of difference” are pivotal for contemporary statebuilding as a vehicle for renouncing prefabricated assumptions, ideals and standards. In this way constant engagement and immersion into context until its full particularity comes into view is crucial for democratic self-emptying and self-transformation. It seems, less interference and more concern with the self is more statebuilding.

⁵⁵ Within the imperative of resilience, coming to term with context also applies to locals. In this respect, the statebuilding policy discourse displays similar programmatic emphases that have emerged already in conflict management (Chapter 3). As in post-intervention conflict management the emphasis in statebuilding discourses is on empowering the network of the powerless as a mechanism that envelops unruly subjects, such as combatants or powerful elites, for perception and attitude adjustment. Again, the focus is on women, marginalised groups and youth which are invoked as local statebuilding actors (OECD 2011: 47). As in conflict management, the precondition for this “solution” is the understanding of the problem of powerful elites as a social phenomenon or social condition. The concept of social accountability plays a central role in this context. As for instance Paul Collier explains:

‘[T]he right decision will be taken again and again if it is subject of social pressure. Such pressure need not work through the discipline of elections in order to be effective. Ministers and senior officials are drawn from a social network whose attitude they are likely to respect’ (Collier 2010a: 231).

In other words, if there are power-seeking and self-interested elites then this is the result of the way societies govern themselves through social networks and norms. Thus, the responsibility is on the network of the powerless to either govern unruly subjects through socialisation to inculcate behavioural and attitude adaptation, or to facilitate coping and adaption to the social phenomenon of powerful elites and suboptimal or dysfunctional public institutions. In this sense, ‘[p]articipatory processes reinforce the resilience of the state by providing a non-violent means for mediating conflicting interests and by constraining the power of rulers or élites’ (OECD 2008: 21). For state resilience, therefore, special concern is with ‘the mobilisation capacity of vulnerable or marginalised groups’ (OECD 2011: 35). Whether through changing the perceptions of the vulnerable and marginalised to adapt or changing those of powerful rules to adapt is irrelevant as long as ‘state capacities and social expectations’ are brought ‘into equilibrium’ (ERD 2009: 91). The main point for resilience governance, therefore, is to ensure that the context in which subjects exist is satiated with the greatest possible density of relationships in order to enable the subject to turn form the external world to the internal world of self-transformation. This is captured very clearly in the European Report on Development, on *Overcoming Fragility*: ‘A possible means of leveraging local capacities and institutions and improving governance is to focus on building up local governments and tying them as closely as possible to their communities’ (ERD 2009: 95).

Statebuilding from an endogenous perspective enables statebuilders to learn that local subjects are always already governed by the social, or rather govern themselves through the social as a “fact of life”. In relation, through understanding that unintended outcomes and harm are a result of interference with ongoing but hidden social and socialising processes, donors find in local contexts a vehicle of becoming less-goal oriented and instead learn to “go with the flow” of the deep, invisible networks and relationships that satiate local contexts with governance. While radical societal transformation is no longer considered possible and, in fact, not even desirable, what has opened itself as the radical site of transformation is subjective perception. This site has opened up as a result of changing the framing through which we understand the world from the artifice, as a creation, to the informal, as a fact of life. In the rule of the social – socialising processes, norms and customs – the mind links directly to its environment and in fact the two become inseparable. Norms imply automated decision-making in accordance with context. However, it emerges from recent policy discourses on statebuilding that self-governance as a way of coming to terms with the richness of reality “as it really is” is not a passive project. Instead it needs constant participation, immersion and awareness on the side of the self-transforming subject.

Working from this rationale, guidelines and policy recommendations in statebuilding put noticeable emphasis on the primary goal of self-reformation. ‘Reform Thyself’, for instance, is one of the key recommendations put forward by the Carnegie Democracy and Rule of Law paper (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 16). Operationalising the insights from political economy analysis – that societies are already governed through a deep and irretrievable social dimension – requires donors ‘to change not just what they do but how they operate, and by extension their own governance’ (*Ibid.*: 16). What donors need to realise, the IDS insists, is that statebuilding policy interventions ‘fail because [donors and agencies] make the wrong starting assumption: that progressive change consists in, and can be achieved through, strengthening formal rules-based institutions that reflect a clear division between public and private spheres of life’ (IDS 2010: Executive Summary). In other words, these political and mental frameworks of liberalism need to be let go of. Through prefabricated perceptions about end or ideal states, the starting assumptions and the expectations that these spuriously generalised frameworks bring with them, problems are

created that do not really exist, rather than solving any. From the vantage point of reality, the real problem then is that '[d]evelopment practitioners, and especially Western donors, have mental models of development and of their own role in the process that get in the way' (IDS 2010: 70). The entire reversal in statebuilding from artifice to reality hence 'requires new types of knowledge'. As mentioned above, these new types of knowledge, however, are not concerned with obtaining knowledge about the world but they must be designed and garnered for the purpose of 'changing staff perceptions' (Carothers and de Gramont 2011: 17).

One such new type of knowledge tool is put forward by the OECD. It calls for the development of a 'culture of analysis' (OECD 2011: 13). Already implied in the notion of "culture" is that there is no particular knowledge to be retrieved through such analysis; rather it denotes a continuous awareness raising and appreciation process. Such '[a]nalysis should not focus on assessing problems and gaps but ... look at possible drivers of stability and peace and institutional strength. Even in the most fragile contexts, functioning institutions and capacities exist' (*Ibid.*: 13; see also ERD 2009: 100). Put differently, the aim of a culture of analysis as awareness raising processes is a coming to terms with reality; that is, a view of the world that does not create problems that do not exist but rather perceives of reality as source of solutions. A culture of analysis is therefore primarily a tool of undoing previous – but now no longer valid – ways of generating knowledge through assessment tools and implementation strategies. Instead, it commands 'a shift from seeing such tools as the driving force in context analysis to building a culture of analysis' through which 'partner staff should be encouraged to "think politically"' (OECD 2011: 78). "Thinking politically", if taken into the context of statebuilding's political turn, appears to describe a state of awareness that unintended and unwarranted consequences arise out of an interference with the governance of the social network.

Moreover, in the context of awareness raising as a culture, there is a simultaneous emphasis on deep understanding and deep appreciation of contexts and environments. For instance:

We stress that the choices made in governance programming cannot be based on abstract policy, but must be based on a deep understanding of the political and social fabric of a country [...] [P]rogramming driven by deep and thorough analysis and recognition of the limitation of imported models for institutions will improve the ... sustainability of the outputs, irrespective of the objective of the programming. (OECD 2008: 36)

Understanding ... sources and processes that increase legitimacy are central to effective statebuilding. This requires a deep appreciation, without preconceived or fixed ideas, of how people's perceptions and beliefs about what constitutes legitimate public authority are shaped in a specific context. (OECD 2011: 36)

In other words, deep appreciation is a process through which limitations of thinking in terms of abstracts, irrespective of policy concerns, can be recognised. Digging ever deeper and appreciating all experiences, knowledge and insights without discrimination – necessarily – brings to view the particularities of any context.

Continued engagement and, to paraphrase Dallmayr, a generous openness towards the essential difference of the other is thus pivotal for keeping the mind open. It emerges that such continuous and generous openness towards the particularity and peculiarity of others' conditions, realities and perceptions allows the formation of expectations that are not artificial products of the mind but more naturally products of reality. That means we have 'realistic expectations about what international engagement can achieve' (ERD 2009: 90), 'be more realistic about what you can and cannot do' (OECD 2011: 47), and 'obtain a more realistic assessment' of the feasibility of any proposed policy. What can be created through deep engagement and appreciation are sensitivities that foster a realisation that there is no external, common world with problems that can be communicated, shared or compared, but rather that all reality is subjective – a contingent and subjective perception always already coloured. Generous openness and deep appreciation enables statebuilders to adjust their ways of thinking for a less problematising and a more adaptive and thus realistic attitude.

Current practices of statebuilding, it seems, are passing Dallmayr's "supreme test" of making democratic self-rule flourish through practices that inculcate self-restraint and self-transformation for a more ethical, non-disruptive existence in the world (Dallmayr 2010; see above). As this chapter demonstrated, however, this supreme test is not passed through statebuilding as an other-regarding form of international engagement but rather through statebuilding as a governing mechanism for promoting democratic self-rule through the deep appreciation of the chaos of difference. In this framework, the Cartesian doubt that our artificial mental and theoretical constructs may have nothing to do with reality is inverted. That is, it seems that it is through continuous engagement the meaninglessness of contingency that we can maintain the process of self-ridding from these frameworks of fabricated assumptions and problems. In this way of keeping the mind open to the mystery of other people's embedded perceptions, a new consolidation of a

mental constructs can be prevented; self-emptying becomes sustainable. And while not revealing anything about reality, we at least have the certainty that we are in tune with it – or to paraphrase EuropeAid, that we do not go against its grain. Chesterman’s castigated disjunction between the politics of the Western mind and the politics of reality on the ground has dissolved in a very particular way: not by bringing Westerners and locals together in the external world but by adjusting the Western mind to the eternal mystery of the local’s existence in a deeper level of reality.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the afterlife of democracy promotion in the context of statebuilding. Based on findings with regards to trends in governing rationalities uncovered and traced in the previous chapter, it proposed a double change in perspective for conducting its analysis. The previous chapter observed that, on the one hand, unintended consequences arising out of democratic institution-building provoked a fundamental insecurity with regard to the relation between local context and externally promoted model and hence a self-critical charge of hubris. On the other hand, it observed that this understanding of hubris correlated with a shift from artificial, “engineered” understandings of governance institutions to an organic, informal and context-sensitive understanding, which from a sociological perspective always already exists. It suggested that this correlation indicated a modification in the problem-solution nexus in international democracy promotion: The problem or crisis provoked by the rise of the social in which context emerged as an invisible, unknowable but existing force resisting governance promotion through institutional engineering was beginning to be reworked into a positive governing rationality through which democratic self-governance could be promoted.

Taking its cue from this unfolding trend, particularly in regard to the self-charge of hubris, the present chapter asked whether it was more revealing not to focus on democracy promotion within statebuilding but take statebuilding itself as mechanism for democracy promotion. Relatedly, it secondly asked whether it was analytically more fruitful not to approach the post-colonial other as the main target of statebuilding but rather the donors themselves. These questions were further prompted by two developments: on the one hand, by recent reformulations of democracy in political theory as way of self-

transformation and self-emptying for more ethical openness towards others as a critique of representative forms; and on the other hand by the emergence of statebuilding as an essentially self-critical discourse and policy concern after the institution-building approach had been discarded as hubristic and institutions themselves discovered as an organic element of social life.

The chapter found that locating the emergence of statebuilding at this epistemological juncture facilitated an analytical perspective on statebuilding as a discourse that was cohered around essential contradictions. While these essential paradoxes developed into something like a truth regime in the discourse on statebuilding, the historical contextualisation proposed here enabled an understanding of these contradictions to be expressive of the juncture between an understanding of governance to be associated with public artifice to an understanding of governance associated with the norms edifices of the social. In relation to this observation the genealogical location of statebuilding “after hubris” also cleared the vision for understanding statebuilding as a framework through which post-cold war concerns, realisations and problematisations revolving around the rise of the social could be consolidated.

From this perspective on statebuilding as a consolidation of the social, important epistemological dislocations but also convergences showed. These concern in particular the retreat from abstraction and generalisation as valid knowledge in three main discursive areas of statebuilding – critique, economic-conceptual foundation and policy discourses. In turn, all three areas display a noticeable inclination to the real: the concrete is pitched against the abstract. That is, limitations are indicated and criticisms formulated that challenge artificial frameworks, prefabricated ideas and generalisable knowledge on the basis of interference with local realities and cognitive incapacities.

The primacy of the organic over the formal extends in consequential ways into statebuilding’s conceptual foundations in new institutional economics; here in particular the work of Douglass North. New institutionalists’ crucial contribution to the emergence and understanding of statebuilding consisted in the contention that institutions matter but that the institutions that matter were informal. New institutionalism argued that informal institutions mattered because, on the one hand, they influenced decision-making and, on the other hand, because they resisted change through formal frameworks. The second crucial contribution or discovery made by new institutionalism was the concomitant qualification of rationality. This qualification, new institutionalists argued, hinged upon a

fundamental and ingrained human cognitive deficiency to receive and process the full complexity of information necessary to make rational, objective decisions. Informal institutions, as institutions that matter for governing and decision-making, thus are social filters that reduce complexity and enable the human to act and exist in a complex world. It has been argued that this links the social environment directly with mental constructs and effectively revokes the idea of mind-world dualism. That is, reality is then always already a subjective perception of reality in which the subjective dimension is a direct extension of social context. In other words, the human existence in the world becomes as socio-psychological process. As a result, not only the idea of rationality but also universality and even generalisation are radically frustrated. The chapter argued this combination between the relocation of the locale of governing into the informal in conjunction with the revocation of rationality is pivotal for capturing the reworking of statebuilding into a mechanism for novel forms of democratic governance. Of particular relevance is the way in which new institutionalism opened up the realm of perception as an extension of individuals' social attachments as a site of governance.

The chapter found that policy discourse on statebuilding, in mirroring new institutionalist rationalisation, displays a very marked self-centredness which is mediated through local context. It has been argued that contemporary statebuilding emerges as an intricate learning process, best captured by the formula "less is more". The chapter made out three stages or lessons of this self-centred learning process. It has been suggested that these stages are best cohered and understood under the umbrella of resilience which has become a salient trope in statebuilding (as well as in climate change; see Chapter 5). The first, and most important aspect, concerns the "political turn" in statebuilding discourse as a renunciation of blueprint and technical approaches. Through the new tool of political economy analysis, donors learn that subjects are always already governed by informality. Political economy perspectives introduce a second unobservable deeper layer or structure to reality which is held to be more "real" than surface "façades". On this deeper, invisible but more real level, institutions, politics and governance exist and function in terms of relational power. Secondly, and in close relation, statebuilding discourses problematise unintended consequences in combination with "do no harm" imperatives. It has been suggested that, in the way unintended consequences operate in statebuilding discourses, they are not provoked in relation to intention (as an aberrant of original intention) but are the necessary outcome of an interference with the dynamism of social realities. The

problematization of unintended consequences emerged as a vehicle to understanding that this governance of unmediated human interrelationships – in its contingency, particularity and unknowability to the outsider – is not to be disturbed or severed. Self-restraint is in order. Thirdly, statebuilding discourses are much concerned with the need of changing staff perception and problematize the mental constructs of donors that get in the way of statebuilding. As the chapter argued, it is through the emphasis of deep appreciation and engagement with local context through which particularity can be produced. Context-sensitivity appears to function as a learning mechanism through which statebuilders realise that it is their prefabricated assumptions and generalisations that produce problems that have nothing to do with reality. Deep appreciation and engagement with the mysterious difference of the other therefore empowers donors to rid themselves from their mental constructs in order to come to terms with and appreciate local reality.

In other words, the agency-centred conception of democracy promotion re-worked from a shift of liberal-trajectorial power to relational power is beginning to reveal itself as an internalisation of the site of transformation inculcated by learning processes of undoing prefabricated assumptions. This process is set in motion through an engagement with the essential difference of our embedded conditions. The radical doubt or suspicion that externals' mental, political and theoretical constructs may have nothing to do with reality is thus inverted into a positive rationality of democratic (self-)governance promotion in which externals can unlearn (rather than having to produce actionable, technocratic, knowledge). What indicates this reworking to be important for international policy-making is that it allows an understanding of problems as a subjective products of the mind rather than substantive problems of the world. At this point, the alleged emancipatory content of constructivist understandings of political change (see Chapter 2) would find a rather radical application in democracy promotion through statebuilding. The sometimes ridiculed critique of mind-world monism that all we need to do is think differently and then the world changes may find itself to be reworked and quite seriously adopted in international policy-making concern with inculcating self-governance “after hubris” when little can be known and little can be done about the world. It seems to have been reworked however, in the sense that because the world is not ours to change we need to (and can) change the way we think.

The next chapter investigates how this emerging positive rationality of democratic (self-) governance becomes manifest in policy discourses that are concerned with climate

change. Climate change is presented as a problem fundamentally different from other social, economic or political problems. One of the key differences of climate change framings is that their object of concern – the climate or the environment – other than civil conflict or questions to do with statehood is not in itself within the realm of human activities or creation. Linked to this non-human concern is the emphasis on adaptation as the main response to the climate change problematique. Based on this growing international concern which fronts a problem that is not primarily a human activity (conflict) or construct (state), the chapter explores climate change problematisations in relation to the concomitant rise of new materialism as a radical democratic theory beyond anthropocentrism. New materialist concerns with more egalitarian, inclusive and therefore genuine democratic governance revolve around the need to curtail what it considers the human hubris of separating himself from his environment. Consequently, the democratic promise envisioned in new materialism rests in undoing the illusion that the human subject is autonomous. The chapter therefore asks whether we can discern commonalities between new materialist concerns and climate change problematisations. It suggests that the framing of the world as a socio-ecological system and resulting problematisations point towards a governing rationality that is garnered around a similar agenda. Based on this intimation, the chapter asks for mechanisms that are developed once democracy promotion is not about engineering but about undoing the subject.

CHAPTER 5

TEARING DOWN THE WALLS: CLIMATE CHANGE, RESISTANCE AND THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT OF THE NETWORK

Introduction

The previous chapter suggested that contemporary democracy promotion statebuilding is best understood as a governing mechanism in itself rather than a policy field within which democracy is promoted. This is not to say that within statebuilding discourses aspects of democratic governance play no role. The promotion of, for instance, social accountability and the empowerment of the organisational capacities of women, youth and the marginalised form part of the policy discourse. These follow similar rationalities of attitude adjustment and behavioural adaption as the empowerment policies observed in conflict management (see Chapter 3). However, it has been argued that these practices are best understood in a wider context of governing rationalities that are closely linked to contemporary advances in democratic political theory in which the focus is on the self: democratic self-rule through self-transformation and self-restraint, as well as self-emptying for less disruptive ways of living. From this vantage point, it has been argued that as a self-critical discourse the target of statebuilding includes the donors themselves. It emerged that statebuilding functions as a lens through which new learning processes can be inculcated that work primarily through local contexts as a platform and guideline for self-adjustment and expectation management. As a form of governing, the chapter argued, statebuilding is concerned with building democratic states of mind of deep appreciation and openness to essential difference and particularity.

As the chapter suggested, one key aspect for the double move of focusing on the mind and enlarging the target community has been the way informal institutions have come to be understood and invoked in statebuilding discourses. Based on new institutionalist economics, statebuilding emerged as a framing that perceived of the central sphere of governance, politics, agency and decision-making to be located in norms edifices and customary arrangements. This sphere has been discovered as pervasive and recalcitrant to

changes in formal government institutions and was presented as an explanation for difference. Crucially, informality has not only been discovered as a differential and the primary sphere of governance. In addition, informality was recognised and positively activated as a fact of life; all human existence has a social fabric. But even more fundamentally, it is perceived and activated as a precondition of human life, always already colouring the way reality and circumstances are understood and processed for decision-making. Human, societal and political life is thus saturated with informality – with norms and customs over which no one has authority and whose power emanates from no one in particular. Governing through informal institutions is the prerogative of relationships and networks which operate on a deeper, hidden level of reality as the force that produce and determine surface appearances; for instance, everything that subjects say and do. Today, participation and democracy are thus becoming understood as a way of self-governing through attachments. Importantly, it follows that in the social, the mind, the environment, and forms of governance merge.

It has been argued that this understanding undermines the idea of a separation between the human and the external world and frustrates abstract and transferable knowledge and institutional forms of government attached to such an understanding. What is thereby consolidated is a growing recognition – turning into an imperative – that there is little that can be done in and about the world since there is no way of knowing whether what actors assume to be the case is actually the case. Without the possibility of abstraction and extraction for which we need credible political and conceptual frameworks, the natural ‘chaos of difference’ (Arendt 2005: 93; see Introduction) turns into an absolute fact of life in which generalisations and comparability is revoked and attempts of governing and outside imposition and intervention (as well as resisting) become but an interference with unknown consequences. However, new institutionalism, in arguing that reality is always already a subjective perception of reality, together with according primacy to the norm, has inadvertently offered an alternative sphere for human agency, which is being activated in terms of democratic self-governance promotion. If there is an unknown discrepancy between reality and subjective perception embedded in socialisation and behavioural norms, then social, political and economic problems (poverty, exclusion, conflict) can and must be addressed in terms of subjective perception. It has been suggested that novel forms of governing along the line of transforming perceptions

manifest themselves in a positive appropriation of radical uncertainty as a state of mind the subject is encouraged to achieve.

Wishing to draw out more clearly the contours of this emerging governing rationality, this chapter investigates whether governing mechanisms required for accessing and activating self-transformation and self-emptying under conditions of embeddedness can be better provided by democratic forms with their emphasis on inclusion and engagement rather than liberal forms with their emphasis on the individual and the private. The main interest of the chapter is with the role policy problematisations with regard to climate change play in this regard. In the light of the discernible trend to positivise the revocation of the separation between the rational subject and the external world and its replacement by a merging of the mind with its environment, the chapter asks whether increasingly prevalent rationalisations of democracy from new materialist and posthumanist perspectives are reflected in climate change concerns. Posthumanist and new materialist perspectives on democracy are not only indicative because these framings are often concerned with nature and environment themselves, but are of interest in this chapter because of their rejection of anthropocentrism and concomitant request for rethinking agency and the role of ontology (Latour 2004; Bennett 2010; Coole and Frost 2011; Connolly 2011; Cudworth and Hobden 2011). The rejection of human exceptionalism is presented to be a promise for greater and more egalitarian democratic governance. It is particularly the following questions and intimations advanced by the ground-breaking work of Bruno Latour that will be explored for their relevance for tracing the role and nature of democracy promotion through climate change discourses:

[I]f we have stopped being modern, if we can no longer separate the work of proliferation from the work of purification, what are we going to become? [...] Will a different democracy become necessary? A democracy extended to things? (Latour 1993: 12)

The networks would [then] have a place of their own. (*Ibid.*: 10)

What is proposed here, in other words, is a necessity for a democracy of a different type once modern anthropocentrism is renounced. The sphere of this democracy is extended to incorporate all that exists into a democratic network. In relation to this conceptualisation the chapter investigates whether it can help us apprehend the growing remoteness of problem framings from conflict management to statebuilding and now culminating in the globality of climate change in the context of an increasing contention or sense that reality is

not amenable to intervention where the focus is increasingly on the inner life of individuals. Put differently, what fills the space between government and the subject and why is it expanded to the greatest possible distance between the global and the subjective? As Latour intimates, it is networks that thus are granted an autonomous space of their own. For new materialists, these networks are complex human-nonhuman-assemblages connected by effectivity through which a radically new democratisation process can and must be brought about. New forms of ‘politics of becoming’ are envisioned to unfetter from the self-imposed limitations on agency and change provoked by the human hubris of separating himself from his environment. A yet untapped potential for effecting change in the conditions humans find themselves in becomes possible through ‘microtactics on the self’ (Connolly 2011: 100-16). Here, new materialism alludes, lies the promise of democracy.

The main purpose of this chapter is to investigate how this new promise of democracy is translated and activated in terms of policy-making and governance in the context of climate change concerns. It is interested in the way in which reality is understood, what kinds of problematisation it necessitates and where sites of resistance and recalcitrance open up that need to be worked at for bringing about democracy. The overall contention of the chapter is that through the remoteness from which subjective decision-making is problematised, a space opens up that is to be filled with the greatest possible density of relationships, interconnectedness and attachments that facilitates an internalised concern with the self. Once the outside world in which humans exist is thus saturated by relationships, logics of appropriateness and survival reflexes, humans are enabled to work on their perceptions and attitudes in relation to their immersion and embeddedness into these environments of no choice. In other words, the chapter suggests that democratisation thus becomes a process through which the embedded subject realises its lack of autonomy, in which a work on the self results in an acknowledgement of the needlessness of making decisions concerned with the outside world and a celebration of democracy as a way of existing that is fully consumed by a constant self-emptying and self-discovery enabled by an embedded openness to external stimuli as an impulse for internalised “action”.

It will be suggested that climate change discourses once again offer a framing through which previous problematisations with regard to statebuilding can be consolidated into a more coherent critique in terms of which novel forms of governing through a fostering of

radical uncertainty and contingency of the embedded condition can unfold. As the chapter seeks to highlight, this critique concerns a full and open assault on artificial frameworks of governing, subjectivity and thinking, which have increasingly come to be understood to represent a “façade” behind which an interconnected, deeper and more genuine level of reality unfolds (see particularly Chapters 3 and 4). Through adopting a perspective that understands the world as a socio-ecological system, both state-centrism and anthropocentrism are overtly renounced in climate change policy discourses. Most especially, the attack focuses on frameworks of representation and respective logics of decision-making as out of synch with the temporality and movement of the environment and hence a barrier to adaptation. Working from this observation the chapter examines whether this assault in itself is best understood as a way of promoting democracy. In this context it is especially interested in sites of resistance and recalcitrance taken in conjunction with the manner in which collective action and engagement are promoted. The chapter seeks to highlight that these sites of resistance emerge at a level of cognitive-biological incapacities, for instance the inability of taking a holistic view on global life. At the same time, democratic principles such as collective action and engagement are invoked in situations of greatest attachment and least autonomy, such as the everyday and the extraordinary. Since these democratic principles are invoked in situations of greatest attachment and least autonomy, the chapter suggests that one of the central democracy promotion techniques is the capitalisation on “decisions without thinking” for enabling the externally stimulated interplay between self-emptying and self-experience.

The chapter is organised in three sections. The first section draws out the rationalities of new materialism’s critique and democratic theory. It focuses in particular on the notion of human hubris and the affirmation of the non-autonomous human for their conceptualisation of democratic governance. It asks whether we find similar rationalisations and understandings of the world reflected in climate change discourse, what sites of resistance emerge and how these are activated for governing. In the second section, the chapter engages with the open critique of mental and political frameworks of representation and asks on which grounds they are attacked. It suggests that the prevalent framing of the world in terms of socio-ecological systems shares an epistemological and ontological concern with new materialism in relation to the illusionary nature of artificial structures and subjectivities. The third section finally seeks to draw out how this shared

concern is activated as a new way and understanding of democratic governance promotion. Based on the sites and nature of resistance that open up form a socio-ecological system framing, the section seeks to highlight how contemporary democracy promotion is concerned with enabling the human being to unplug the blockages of the human subject.

New Materialism: Democracy Against the Hubris of Being Human

This section draws out some of the relevant critical and conceptual positions in new materialism. New materialism, which has in French sociologist Bruno Latour something of a founding figure, advances a non-anthropocentric form of democratic governance based on a curtailing of the self-interested modern subject which it considers to be not only hubristic but an illusion. New materialism criticises the “aversion to the real” in the cultural turn and (re-)inserts non-human and material contributions activated through the assemblage of interconnectivity into human existence, politics and governance. Importantly, new materialism openly rejects autonomy as a characteristic of the human.

Human Hubris and Democracy

New materialism has emerged in recent years as a way of radically criticising the fundamental inadequacy of available epistemological and political frameworks to deal with what are considered basic problems such as inequality and environmental exploitation. As a revamped Counter-Enlightenment, these basic problems of humanity are perceived to be entrenched and reproduced in the very way the human has come to be construed as an artificial being separated from and forging his environment. At the same time, new materialism is driven by desire for a more egalitarian and inclusive democratic world (Latour 2004: 88-9; Cudworth and Hobden 2011). What frustrates this more egalitarian democratic governance from materialising – and even us from thinking of it – is the human subject and how it has come to understand itself. The human here clearly emerges as the problem (and, in a way, as the solution, as will be shown). For example, Jane Bennett in her seminal work claims that it is ‘the image of dead or thoroughly instrumentalized matter’ that ‘feed hubris and our earth-destroying fantasies of conquest and consumption’ (Bennett 2010: ix). This position is echoed in William Connolly’s work: ‘the postulation of a

world of inert facts is the product of a human subjectivity filled with hubris' (Connolly 2010: 35). The democratic project of new materialism therefore is convened around finding and conceptualising ways to 'curtail the hubris expressed in the "anthropic exception"' (Connolly 2011: 25). Logically, new ways of thinking of politics, agency and the subject become necessary. In this sense, new materialism is being summoned as a response to what is seen as an 'allergy to "the real"' that underpinned conventional critical discourses, broadly revolving around the "cultural turn", which are 'now more or less exhausted' (Coole and Frost 2010: 6).

The central element for reworking our conceptual and political edifices beyond anthropocentrism required for more genuine, egalitarian, democratic governance is to think about agency in distributive terms in order to overcome the dichotomy between the human subject and the material world (Connolly 2011: 21-2). This distributive character, in turn, is predicated on a dissociation of the notion of agency from intention and speech. Instead agency revolves around the ideas of "affecting" and "having an effect" which is captured in new materialism's concepts of 'actants', 'agentic capacity' or 'agentic contribution' (Latour 2004: 75; Bennett 2010: xvi; Coole and Frost 2010: 10). These invisible strings of effectivity generate and hold together the network or 'assemblage'. As Bennett explains:

What this suggests for the concept of *agency* is the efficacy or effectivity to which that term has traditionally referred becomes distributed across an ontologically heterogeneous field, rather than being a capacity localized in a human body or in a collective produced (only) by human efforts. (Bennett 2010: 23)

In other words, the idea of agentic capacity as affecting and having an effect corresponds to what has been captured in this thesis as relational power (see Introduction). In this sense, 'process itself is an actant' (*Ibid.*: 33). Distributive agency, thus, is the corollary form of agency to a modality of power that is relational. Understanding agency to be distributive, hence, interpellates relational power to be the primary modality of power that is exerted and governs. With this affirmation of agency as the direct expression of the "inter" or the relational, logically and consequently, unintended consequences also become positively embraced. Rather than posing a problem through which they are invoked as a learning mechanism, unintended consequences become a genuinely positive governing mechanism in posthuman democracy. As Diane Coole and Samantha Frost explain:

The human species is being relocated within a natural environment, whose material forces themselves manifest certain agentic capacities and in which the domain of

unintended or unanticipated effects is considerably broadened. (Coole and Frost 2010: 10)

Unsurprisingly, thus, rethinking agency and subjectivity in posthuman terms has significant consequences for the role of the human in the world. Authorship, causality and intentionality are not only doubted but openly and affirmatively revoked. In these terms, Coole and Frost state the obvious when highlighting that new materialism challenges ‘some of the most basic assumptions that have underpinned the modern world, including its normative sense of the human and its beliefs about human agency’ (Coole and Frost 2010: 6). If, as new materialism contends, democratic governance can only be achieved when the hubristic belief that humans are special is overridden and all according forms of knowledge, power, subjectivity and governing, are suspended, then conventional understandings about human freedom and human autonomy become invalid. Simply put, if agency is distributive and thus congruent with the power of the ontological effect or relationship (that has no purpose but simply *is*), so is decision-making. Decision-making, like power or agency, has no subject. It is therefore not merely the consequence, but the aim of suspending the human-nature divide is to disturb ‘the conventional sense that agents are exclusively humans who possess the cognitive abilities, intentionality, and freedom to make autonomous decisions’ (Coole and Frost 2010: 10; see also Bennett 2010: 37; Connolly 2011: 33). At this point, it is Connolly that makes a decisive remark that seems to be central to capturing and comprehending democracy promotion through policy discourses and problematisations that are concerned with climate change. He announces: ‘When that adjustment is made the *real complexity* of the world comes fully *into view* (Connolly 2011: 31). Bringing about democratic governance, it seems, is about bringing something real into view.

The Empirical Falsity of Autonomy

The point that is being made here is that the lack of democracy made apparent by persistent hierarchies and inequalities is argued to be a result of a human hubris. This hubris is said to reside in the idea that man stands – or can possibly stand – above his environment for the pursuit of goals and interests and the imposition of structures that with all intention “go against the grain” and disrupt the dynamism inherent in the contingency of effects produced by sheer existence. In the rationale of new materialism,

for a more egalitarian democracy to emerge this hubris needs to be curtailed. What follows is that greater or genuine democracy is to be promoted by curtailing this hubris of human exceptionalism. Logically, in order to curtail human exceptionalism, grounds on which this hubris could have developed need to be revoked.

It seems that one of the basic foundations of this exceptionalist “hubris” is the ability to abstract from the ‘absolute chaos of difference’ inherent in human existence and reduce and cohere this complexity into a commonality that can be represented politically and conceptually (Arendt 2005: 93). Moreover, a crucial enabling condition for cohering contingency into commonality seems to be the mediation through “matter”; that is, the idea that there is an object(ive) world in which there is some permanence in “matter”, including for instance, materials interests and constraints.⁵⁶ In reversing this ability into a human deficiency and by turning it into a social condition, new insitutionalist economics was able to fundamentally problematise the ability of abstraction and representation mediated by the materiality of the world. In other words, what democratic institution engineering first faltered on (Chapter 3) and statebuilding with its sociologicalised view on reality then consolidated (Chapter 4) is that reality is indeed an absolute chaos of difference. This is what the rise of the social told us.

Capitalising on these developments, new materialism does not have to propose an alternative political programme for democratisation. It can simply point to reality, as it is. New materialism is not compelled to reason, for instance for the network or against human autonomy. All it needs to highlight is the illusionary nature of human autonomy. As Latour explains, the networks come to have ‘the whole place to themselves’ quite naturally. ‘We simply have to ratify what we have always done, provided that we reconsider our past, provided that we understand retrospectively to what extent we have never been modern’ (Latour 1993: 144). And since deception is what we feared all along⁵⁷ and, politically, deception after 1989 seemed to continuously confirm itself, new materialism may only

⁵⁶The point is powerfully made by Arendt when she highlights the need for permanence, materiality and objectivity against the constant processes and volatility of life. In her words: ‘[T]he things of the world have the function of stabilizing human life, and their objectivity lies in the fact that ...men, in their ever-changing nature notwithstanding, can retrieve their sameness, that is their identity, by being related to the same chair and the same table. [...] Only we who have erected the objectivity of a world of our own from what nature gives us, who have built it into the environment of nature as something “objective”. Without a world between men and nature, there is eternal movement, but no objectivity’ (Arendt 1998: 137)

⁵⁷As Nietzsche has famously pointed out the fear of being deceived: ‘This absolute will to truth: what is it? Is it the will not to allow ourselves to be deceived?’ (Nietzsche 2006: 156). This English translation is somewhat imprecise. The second question is not a separate question but a rhetorical one, clearly indicating an affirmative answer to the first – in the sense of “is it not”. (‘Dieser unbedingte Wille zur Wahrheit: was ist er? Ist es nicht der Wille, sich nicht täuschen zu lassen?’ (Nietzsche 2011: 575)).

need to nudge us somewhat in the right direction; for instance by simply openly stating that our aversion to the real was already epistemologically and politically exhausted. While not yet self-aware, problematisations in statebuilding discourse already have radically cancelled this aversion. New materialism hence concedes and confirms our growing impression and recognition of the real complexity of the world, the utter chaos of difference. In other words, for the new democratic politics, we only need to 'become who [we] are' (Connolly 2011: 114). Without an aversion to the real and in being more realistic in a world with no abstract meaning or imagination, human autonomy is simply 'empirically false' (Bennett 2010: 37). Empirical falsity then constitutes the basis for novel forms of democratic governance that 'call upon us to reorient ourselves profoundly in relation to the world, to one another, and to ourselves' (Coole and Frost: 2010: 6).

Decisively, for inculcating and encouraging this reorientation, new materialism asks humans to fully acknowledge and realise their lack of autonomy. We need not to extricate ourselves but 'enhance attachment to this world' (Connolly 2011: 67). The more we are attached and the more we become aware and sharpen our perceptions to infinitely remote and immediately close processes and interactions the more we can begin to affirm that the site of our agency is an endless and purposeless adaptation to stimuli, effects and impulses. These stimuli we are receiving through our irreducible participation in the contingent processes from which we, as a result of empirical falsity, never have been and never will be liberated. As Latour proclaimed, we have moved from modernity's 'Free at last!' to posthumanity's 'Attached at last!' (Latour 2009: 75, cit. in Cudworth and Hobden 2011: 1). From a new materialist perspective, learning that we have never been modern emerges as the central task and promise of democratic (self-)governance.

The remainder of the chapter explores whether climate change policy framings and problematisations can be cohered as a concern with a similar problematique. Questions to be explored in this regard are: If democracy needs to be brought about by undoing the illusion of the subject and not engineering, what needs to be undone? How is this activated, where do sites of resistance emerge and how are these addressed? As the next section seeks to highlight, policy discourses concerned with climate change not only problematise but openly rally against frameworks of representation. Here it is not only and not mainly an institutional problem but a problem with mental frameworks of representation and the kinds of interested subjects these encourage.

Climate Change: The Failure of Governance and the Participation in the Real World

Climate change has become the most pressing policy concern of our time. Recent development reports by major development agencies such as the World Bank, the UN and the UNDP, the European Union as well as its member states, and the OECD focus on these themes and use “climate change” and “sustainability” as the primary lens through which to frame issues of development (European Commission 2003: 3; UN 2004; UNDP 2007: 1; World Bank 2010: xiii; DFID et al. 2011: 3; EuropeAid 2011: 1; OECD 2012: 3, see also Strengthening Climate Resilience 2010: 2).⁵⁸ Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the summoning of a High-Level Panel on Global Sustainability by the UN Secretary-General whose report *Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing* was published in 2012 (UN 2012).⁵⁹ These reports, in turn, are informed by outputs of more specialised policy and advisor communities, such as the World Resource Institute (WRI 2001, 2005, 2008), the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP 2004), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC 1997, 2007, 2011) and think tanks such as the influential Resilience Alliance (RA 2012),⁶⁰ the International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change (IHDP) (IHDP 2003) or the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) (Baser and Morgan 2008).⁶¹

⁵⁸I use the label “climate change” as an overall term for concerns about sustainability, disaster management, degradation, and climate change adaptation, unless an individual discussion or differentiation is required.

⁵⁹ UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Panels are part of the UN’s post-cold war reform initiatives. They are summoned on pressing concerns and attract much attention and discussion worldwide (see, for example, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/un-reform/un-reform-initiatives/highlevel-panels.html>). The current Panel and report on climate change, resilience and sustainability is noteworthy in the context of consolidating and solidifying these issues and their inherent problematisations as paramount rather than for its content which reaffirms many of the UN’s previous positions on this (see UN 2004; UNDP 2007).

⁶⁰ RA’s researchers have, for instance, provided the 2002 background paper for the World Summit on Sustainable Development as part of the Environmental Advisory Council to the Swedish Government (Folke et al. 2002).

⁶¹ Funded and requested by the OECD, the ECDPM has published a cardinal report on ‘Capacity, Change and Performance’ (Baser and Morgan 2008) which many climate change and adaptation policy guidelines draw upon (see, for instance UNDP 2011a).

Clearing the View for the Real Complexity of the World

In its capacity to question the fundamentals of human survival and well-being international donor organisations have come to view climate change as qualitatively ‘different from other problems facing humanity’ (UNDP 2007: 2). At the same time, however, ‘the issue of climate change can seem remote’ (OECD 2009: 28). In this role, climate change is perceived to require new ways of thinking about collective life (UNDP 2007: 2; see also World Bank 2010: xiv). Based on this self-presentation as essentially different, climate change discourses will be scrutinised for the fields, types and dimensions of problematisations they propel. One clear difference of climate change as a policy concern is that its object of concern, irrespective of human contribution to global warming and environmental degradation, is that “climate” itself is not something the human subject does. It is considerably less anthropocentric than, for instance, civil conflicts or state failure. Decisively, whereas statebuilding discourses problematised representative political and theoretical frameworks, climate change offers a framing through which these can finally be openly refuted. The rationale of this critique is their obstruction of precisely what new materialists demanded: a view on the real complexity of the world. As the remainder of this chapter seeks to show, this attack on representation is central for promoting democracy as a posthuman form of governance.

‘The environmental crises we confront today have many causes’, former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan notes, but above all they are a ‘failure of governance’ (Annan, cit. in UNEP 2002: 6). This failure of governance, however, no longer refers to internal failings such as inefficiency or corruption. Rather governance is understood to be failing as governance structures as such. The failure thus describes a much more fundamental critique of man-made constructs of governing and thinking. Here it is first and foremost representative structures that emerge as highly problematic since they are considered to be juxtaposed to the goal of climate change adaptation.

In the view of the influential IPCC, for instance, ‘the inadequacy and lack of synergy between institutional and legislative arrangements for disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and poverty reduction are ... as much part of the problem as the shortage of resources’ (IPCC 2011: 453). In a similar vein, the World Bank’s recent World Development Report on climate change and sustainability launches a fundamental critique of the politics, power play and decision-making of representative systems of government.

Failures, it emerges, are generated predominantly in the kind of subjectivities these endorse and how these influence decision-making. 'Decision-makers are individuals, and the failures in the way individuals make decisions also affect the way organizations, including governments, work' (World Bank 2010: 332). These failures, from the climate change perspective now fervently adopted by the World Bank, are accorded to institutionalised decision-making based on partial information and particular interests. According to the World Bank, the subjects of representation, predominantly concerned with the logics imposed by the façade of artifice instead of the logics demanded by the reality of contingency, must, from a climate change perspective, produce bad policies:

Disaster risk management is an example of how standard adaptation measures can fail because the public (the voter) often fails to think in preventive terms. So decision makers neglect prevention and preparedness because these issues do not win votes. In turn, decision makers' realization that disaster relief has higher political payoffs than preparedness closes the circle or moral hazard. [...] This realization works against policy change and reinforces bad policies. (*Ibid.*: 337-8)

As the UNDP confirms:

The cumulative nature of climate change has wide-ranging implications. Perhaps the most important is that carbon cycles do not follow political cycles. (UNDP 2007: 4)

In other words, when viewed through a climate lens, subjectivities of representation appear as problematic due to their recalcitrance to preparedness and anticipatory adaptation to the "non-event" (see also IPCC 2011: 53; for a critique see Neocleous 2012: 190-2). Anthropocentric agency based on representation is dangerously fake as it always necessarily goes against the grain of that which naturally happens and affects at its own pace and dynamic.

Based on this critique, a climate change perspective asks for the causes for this recalcitrance that makes the subject interested and calculating and leads to politics going against the grain. What emerges as the chief problem is the obstruction caused by conceptual, strategic and cognitive compartmentalisation and prioritisation. Through a climate change lens, such prioritisation inhibits a view and awareness of the ineluctable complexity of global life. As the IPCC complains:

Learning related to socio-ecological systems requires recognizing their complex dynamics, including delays, stock-and-flow dynamics, and feedback loops ..., features that can complicate management strategies by making it difficult to perceive how a system operates. Heuristic devices and mental models can sometimes inhibit learning by obscuring a problem's full complexity ... and complicating policy action among both experts and lay people. (IPCC 2011: 53)

These mental representations, heuristic devices and mental constructs that frame the way people think impede the intake of a comprehensive and holistic view of the real complexity of the world. Attempting to present and make sense of the world through abstraction and rationalisation invariably leads to exclusion and the prioritisation of some issues (or groups) over others. With representation as an only partial and truncated reflection of reality presented to stand for the whole comes the possibility of an alternative representation and hence contestation, never commensurable with holistic reality. In these terms, we can be certain that mental models do not provide the full picture. The issue is therefore not that we think one thing rather than the other – that we prioritise and generalise this aspect of reality rather than another in our conceptual frameworks and mental models – but that what we think is not real. From a climate change perspective, the one thing that can be said with absolute certainty is that the way subjects think and take action is not how the system really operates. After all, the subject is earth-bound and the climate is global. Partial and truncated models provide a base for comprehension that provides some permanence. From a climate change perspective this truncated nature of mental representations and constructs inhibits learning. With the mediation of mental representations we make assumptions rather than immerse in learning processes. The former, logically, leads to decision-making the latter to adaptation.

In other words, the subject once having to be painstakingly engineered to exercise its freedom and autonomy responsibly (Foucault 1991; Chandler 2010) is now becoming the problematic subject precisely because of its acquired artificiality. Instead of having a formative role, this artificial subjectivity of the human subject living in a made-up world betrays the real world and its own nature. As the World Bank powerfully summarises the problem: ‘features of human decision-making under uncertainty constrain our natural instinct to adapt’ (World Bank 2010: 325). That is, in unmistakable clarity, once the perceived champion of neoliberal governmentality construed to be concerned with fostering rational self-responsibilisation (Joseph 2012) and the entrepreneurial subject (Kiersey 2009) declares that it is decision-making that constrains us. For international policy-making, this is the failure of liberal governance – a betrayal of the real. If it is representative frameworks leading to decisions which are in their very nature as decisions unsustainable and betray our full potential as humans, the question for policy-making is what would free up this potential to adapt. If adaptation is our real capacity and not decision-making, then the deeper reality of the network needs to be unleashed by enabling

us to rid ourselves from mental structures that lead to decision-making. It appears, what is manifesting itself in the critique of representative structures is the international policy-making's version of how we have never been modern. In portraying the world as socio-ecological systems it has developed discursive framings to uncover the illusion of autonomy and in resilience it has a programme to realise its potential for a different democracy.

The Real World: Socio-Ecological System and the Irresistibility of Inclusion

A pivotal development is that the environment and societies are now approached as socio-ecological systems, which is underpinned by complexity theories (see for instance, Walker and Salt 2006; RA 2012). In this, climate change shares a crucial theoretical foundation with new materialism (see for instance, Coole and Frost 2010: 13; Connolly 2011: 35; Cudworth and Hobden 2011). With the growing prevalence accorded to climate change and environmental concerns, complex system framings have come to discursively dominate policy output (OECD 2001; WRI 2001; Walker and Salt 2006: 31; World Bank 2010; UNDP 2011a; IPCC 2011). According to the IPCC, managing climate risks necessitates a 'systems approach' to humans and the environment (IPCC 2011: 48; see also OECD 2009: 50). In climate change discourse these are fully integrated systems, captured in the notion of socio-ecological system. 'Socio-ecological systems', the Resilience Alliance (RA) further specifies, emphasise a "humans-in-nature" perspective in which 'ecosystems are integrated with human society' (RA 2012: 6). What is intimated in this understanding of integrated life is a rather fundamental change in perspective with regards to the way humans exist in the world, what it means to be human in this world and how to govern.

As system the human-nature integration defines itself primarily through the dynamism of interconnectedness, interactions and relationships. As contingent organic entities, with 'multiple open boundaries', systems are portrayed to be open to influence, factors, forces and participants that constantly contribute to their emerging and shifting complexion (EuropeAid 2005: 7). What that means is that without dynamic change they would not be systems. There are 'feedbacks and interactions among the different parts of the system' (RA 2012: 4) and 'complex interactions of broader forces more generally' (UNDP 2011b: 3). The system is thus essentially a system because and as long as there is

interaction and flux. Systems thus become the pinnacle of change. Most emphatically this is drawn out by the ground-breaking ECDPM study report on capacity and change:

Systems are made up of a diverse set of actors whose multiple interactions produce behaviors in the whole system not found in any of the actors. They generate adaptation by changing, both intentionally and indirectly, in the face of new circumstances in order to sustain themselves. (Baser and Morgan 2008: 3)

In other words, similarly stripped from any purpose or cause, we now find ourselves confronted with a reality that produces itself as a function of complexity and complexity, in turn, is presented as a function of change. From a climate change perspective, this is ‘how the world actually works’ (Walker and Salt 2006: 14). Crucially, the autopoiesis of reality is ‘much more complex than our assumptions allow for’ (*Ibid.*: 7) with the consequence that

[t]he vast number of system interrelationships lead to unpredictable patterns of both disorder and order. Systems are seen as having a dynamic of their own that is [only] partly open to explicitly human direction. (Baser and Morgan 2008: 18)

In other words, *interaction* and not action itself has the capacity to make and shape reality. Action can only be another interaction. While the human network in conflict management and statebuilding still had a direction to it depending on the group of actors that constituted it (women, youth, marginalised), the dynamism of the socio-ecological system exceeds human control and thus becomes the autonomous “space-filler” Latour considered necessary for a different democracy.

Consequently, one of the essential characteristics of framing the world as integrated human-eco-systems is that they exist. They develop their dynamics on the basis of their integrated nature. That is, their reality is without *raison d’être* and hence these socio-ecological systems are approached from a purely ontological perspective. Stripped from purpose, systems simply are what remains. As Walker and Salt in their policy publication on *Resilience Thinking* explain: ‘In the real world regions and businesses are interlinked systems of people and nature driven and dominated by the manner in which they respond to and interact with each other’ (Walker and Salt 2006: 8). Living in the real world means living in the interlinked system. When viewed through a climate lens, this is ‘how the world actually works’ (*Ibid.*: 14). That is, ‘we all live and operate in social systems that are inextricably linked with the ecological systems in which they are embedded; we exist *within* social-sociological systems’ (*Ibid.*: 31).

From this perspective, the reason why there is the recalcitrance of representation thinking and the constraints it puts on adaptation, we are told, lies with the ‘notion of

nature and culture being separate' (UN 2004: 21). The understanding underpinning this problematisation, however, is not that we need to recombine them, but that the notion of separation was an erroneous illusion due to the fact that how the world really works is in terms of an integrated socio-ecological system. There is no need to normatively promote the suspense of this separation, one can simply point to what, through a climate change lens, emerges as an empirical falsity challenged by the socio-ecological system. In this, climate change rationalisations converge with new materialism's aversion of dichotomies and discontinuation: 'discontinuous concepts' are 'an illusion' (Connolly 2011: 33). There is no separation or discontinuity; there is no autonomous space. From this position, what democracy promotion, as a way of embedded self-governance, is apparently concerned with is realising this truth. That is, as a way of 'resilience thinking', the rationale that is manifesting itself is to make thinking anything but this truth impossible.

In this context, an IHDP newsletter stresses empathically the non-liberal understanding prompted in policy discourse concerned with climate change adaptation:

A first principle of resilience and sustainability is that the human and the natural world are not simply interdependent. These two worlds are in fact one and the same, viewed through the eyes of the human species (IHDP 2003:2).

What transpires from this presentation is the double role of reality "as it actually is" in climate change framings. On the one hand, the discourse simply points out the somewhat non-falsifiable but meaningless truth that everything is linked and travels in some way and that humans, in this sense, are part of their environment and attached to each other. On the other hand, it is a "first principle" of a governing programme. In this context of positing the contingency of unmediated reality as a first principle – which as a governing programme forgoes even thinking in terms of liberal forms of governing and subjectivity – agency-centred notions of democracy, in particular inclusion (as well as engagement and collective action, as the last section shows) take on a prominent role.

Whereas the aspect of change highlights both the actuality as well as the remoteness of reality from a climate change perspective, the promotion of participation highlights the immediacy of reality at play. One of the most decisive aspects of democracy and its promotion in its current complexion is that the focus on participation and inclusion is characterised by an inversion: instead of seeking to enable people to participate and be included in a public and political sphere of engagement from which they were thus far excluded, it promotes participation by levelling the sphere of engagement down onto a level at which participation and inclusion becomes an irreducible fact. This inversion

culminates in climate change discourses. This means that a sphere of democracy promotion and governing is invoked in which participation is neither a choice nor a right (which can be possessed and also be alienated) but a mere fact. The immediacy of participation is most succinctly captured in the 2007 *Human Development Report* which states: ‘the world’s atmosphere is shared by all in the obvious sense that *nobody can be “excluded” from it*’ (UNDP 2007: 58, emphasis added). Obviously, while strategic engagement is erased from meaningful human activities in the portrayal of humans as part of a socio-ecological system, participation is irreducible. Exclusion is not possible. What emerges and what comes to play an important role of the reconceptualisation of (political) agency is that, while human beings have been decisively curtailed in their intentionality and agenda-setting capacities to be authors of change, they still are participants by default thanks to lowering the sphere of such engagement to an ineluctable level in which participation is the result of existence.

While the complexity of the real world effectively eclipses any way of anchoring political, social, economic and even environmental questions in any political or juridical structures, humans are very much part of the real world. It seems that through resilience this necessity and possibility can be positively linked (Chandler 2013: 45-6). Via the interplay of the autonomy of the system and the non-autonomy of the individual the imperative of the system the human is excluded as an agent out of his own accord but crucially included as a being with untapped adaptive capacity. This capacity can potentially be as vast, rich and diverse as the networked attachments through which the human receives impulses and is affected. The next section will sketch out how democracy is activated through resilience. It first highlights the way in which the human emerges as resistant from the vantage point of the complexity of the real world. It then engages with the employment of resilience as positive adaption and seeks to intimate some programmatic mechanism for tapping into adaption. Here “decisions without thinking” seem to play an important role for which engagement and collective action are invoked.

Activating Democracy: Resistance, Resilience and Releasing the Human Blockage

From the vantage point of new democracy, a great advantage of climate change is that it offers a problem framing through which decision-making as meaningful human activity could be suspended while at the same time encapsulating an imperative of agency: climate is changing, hence passivity is not an option (UNDP 2007: 4; OECD 2009: 3; UN 2012: 7-10). Despite our embeddedness in complex socio-ecological systems and the suspension of the culture-nature separation, we are still “humans” after all with an inner life and contemplative capacities. These just do not have external validity or application. As the UN High-Level Panel on *Resilient People, Resilience Planet* reminds us: ‘We are not passive, helpless victims of the impersonal, deterministic forces of history’ (UN 2012: 10). However, for activating the human potential for not being a passive victim, cognition and information do not reach deep enough.

The Impossibility of Prevention: Cognitive-Biological Barriers

As new institutionalist economics already noted, humans effectively are cognitively not equipped for processing the kind of information that would be necessary to act and make decisions in the complexity of the socio-ecological system. The insubstantial awareness that if we ‘turn on the air-conditioning’ in America this has ‘consequences for rural communities in Bangladesh’ (UNDP 2007: 3) is ineffective as an impulse for taking preventive action. The vastness of the interconnectedness is too overpowering for cognitively limited subjects. It leads to inertia and disengagement (World Bank 2010: 321-3) which, according to the climate change perspective, will lead us into the abyss and hence needs to be avoided at any cost. In this context, there are three sites of resistance which emerge that, while in their blurring between recalcitrance and incapacity seem insurmountable, are all reconfigured and thus central for promoting democratic governance: barriers to understanding, cognitive incapacity, and worry. All three ultimately converge on the problem of mental constructs and decision-making.

Here it is important to take note of one of the central consequences of the renunciation of representation and anthropocentric subjectivity. The “episteme” of socio-ecological systems thinking no longer recognises strategic decision-making, including the ignorance of some issues and the prioritisation of others *as* decision-making. Instead, such

agency re-enters the picture as a cognitive-biological site of resistance to be worked at. Decision-making becomes a 'barrier to understanding' (IPCC 2011: 30; see also UNDP 2011a: 42; World Bank 2010). Unsurprisingly, once (non)decision-making is reworked as barriers to understanding, these barriers become paramount. 'Barriers to understanding', the IPCC notices, 'for instance, can include difficulty recognizing a changing signal due to difficulty with its detection, perception and appreciation'. These purported difficulties are aggravated in case of 'preoccupation with other pressing concerns that divert attention from the growing signal; and lack of administrative and social support for making adaptive decisions' (IPCC 2011: 55). In other words, decisions and any preoccupations with something other than the system are always already at odds with the complexity of reality. What apparently needs to be understood is that without growing awareness and appreciation of the signal or stimuli adaptation will be endangered. Decision-making and preoccupation with other concerns as barriers to understanding therefore would need to be curtailed.

Whereas the barrier to understanding here is the reworking of decision-making based on calculation and prioritisation, the same blockage manifests itself with regard to cognitive incapacities that come with complexity. As the ECDPM study report highlights:

CAS [complex adaptive system] thinking encourages people to try and "see" the system of which they are part. [...] But usually they suffer from "system blindness". They only see parts of these systems at work and then make judgements about the whole. [...] They misunderstand the nature of these relationships that shape system behaviour. And they lose track of processes within the system that make it run. (Baser and Morgan 2008: 17)

Out of "system blindness" people lose track and are then compelled to make judgements based on inference. Inference, however, is necessarily detached from and at odds with "how the world really works". Again, the failure not just *in* decision-making or judgement but *of* decision-making surfaces as a barrier to becoming aware of the myriads of relationships and its distributive agency. These decisions are therefore problematic because they are made not because they are wrong. Quite naturally, embeddedness leads to a failure to see the whole; that position is disabled precisely because of the condition of embeddedness. Effectively, thus, the possibility that decision-making can be improved becomes unthinkable since anything but embeddedness has come to be understood as an illusion – not how it really works – in climate change framings.

Thirdly, the World Bank problematises barriers to understanding in terms of the finite human capacity to worry as a result of the way we biologically developed. As the development report on climate change observes:

Our evolution as a species has shaped the way our brains work. We are particularly good at acting on threats that can be linked to a human face ... that challenge our moral framework ... or that evoke recent personal experience. The slow pace of climate change as well as the delayed, intangible ... nature of risks, simply do not move us. (World Bank 2010: 324-5)

When we look at our brain, it turns out that we cannot be concerned with anything that is not within our direct physical, moral or personal milieu. It is again the hyper-real episteme of climate change framings that tells us that particularly prevention and generally intention is not and cannot be how it actually works. Our brains do not allow us to do anything that does not directly concern us. Prevention thus is portrayed to be an impossibility. More than that, it is an illusion: we have never been able to prevent anything or be concerned with anything that does not directly affect us or stimulates our morals.

Based on this fact, the report discovers similar barriers to understanding and effecting change that concern human thought and behavioural patterns. It finds that '[w]e are "myopic decision-makers" who strongly discount future events and assign higher priorities to problems closer in space and time'. It further notes that '[e]ven if people were indeed fully rational, knowledge would not necessarily lead to action. Their "finite pool of worries" might prevent them from acting on existing information because they prioritize basic needs such as security, shelter, and the like' (World Bank 2010: 325). In other words, more than by an information deficit or a deficit of processing information correctly, human beings are constrained and limited by the things they can and do worry about.

It is particularly with regard to the finite capacity to worry as a constraint that an almost exigent logic unfolds in the hyper-real framework of problematisations in climate change discourses. This is especially so in crucial conjunction with the way the mind has been forced open in the informality thinking in conflict management and foremost in statebuilding: Human beings would seem to be constrained by "worry" and preoccupation as such. Worrying is always based on some mental construct and therefore based on some form of reductionism. From a socio-ecological systems point of view, worry is nothing else but self-interest. Worry therefore is rooted in the permanence of assumptions rather than the flexibility of learning. In other words, worrying, based on assumptions rather than openness to the world, may obstruct a different way of thinking. In combination with the

radically blocked cognitive capacities with regard to the external – invisible and infinite – reality that humans are embedded in, the finite capacity to worry or be concerned seems to suggest itself as the blockage to be worked at.

What transpires through these problematisations is that decision-making and preoccupation are opposed to learning and adaptation. However, in the same way that that the nature-culture separation was not suspended on normative or reasoned grounds, there are no arguments made against decision-making and for learning (for instance that the subject needs to first learn how to safely exercise its autonomy). Instead, in the juxtaposing of decision-making and preoccupation against learning and adaptation, the former simply are an illusion of the human subject, and the latter therefore what humans really are about. As the ECDPM report emphasises: In the face of ‘accelerating uncertainty and complexity’ what is called into question’ is ‘predictability and intentionality. Many actors must now find new ways of thinking and behaving’ (Baser and Morgan 2008: 21). New ways of understanding through learning and adaptation consequently emerge as the essence of what being human is really about. Via climate change framings the rise of the social, of contingency and the real finally unearths the actual form of human agency after the illusion of artifice, constantly disproven by the effects and unanticipated effects of complex systems. It would seem that decisions, preoccupations and self-interest as barriers to understanding can therefore be potentially unblocked if the human becomes fully part of the real world. And they need to be unblocked in order to empower humans to become what they are: another element in the contingency of the world. The contingency of the human, however – and here seems to rest the great promise of democratic self-governance through the collective of the assemblage – is complemented with an inner world, with ways of thinking and perceiving, that distinguishes his agentic capacity from that of the nonhuman.

Resilience and Becoming Who We Are: The Democratic Promise through a Climate Adaptation Lens

The central policy programme of climate change discourses revolves around resilience (IPCC 1997; WRI 2005; IPCC 2007; WRI 2008; IPCC 2011). While it originates in ecology (Walker and Cooper 2011), the concept has found widespread discursive application in policy and therapeutic discourses and has permeated a great range of international policy

fields and concerns, from humanitarian intervention to food security, from finance to development and statebuilding (see for instance, DFID 2011; WRI 2008; Pouligny 2010; see also Chapter 4). Emphasising resilience is considered to be empowering as it does not approach individual or collective subjects (or systems) as lacking and dysfunctional but addresses subjects in terms of capacity (Glantz and Johnson 2002: iv-v; Shih 2004). This capacity revolves around adaption and the ability of subjects to deal with – and thrive on – the conditions they find themselves in. Resilience as adaptive capacity is considered a process rather than an outcome. In other words, it is not a stable capacity that can be secured but rather a constant learning process (ODI 2011: 2).

Underpinning this emphasis on adaption is a prior acceptance and, as has been highlighted, welcoming of externally inflicted change (Chandler 2013: 45). ‘At the heart of resilience thinking’ thus ‘is a very simple notion – things change – and to ignore or resist this change is to increase our vulnerability and forgo emerging opportunities. In doing so, we limit our options’ (Walker and Salt 2006: 9-10). The World Resource Institute agrees: ‘Indeed, social resilience is not about avoiding change ... but learning to adapt’ (WRI 2008: 28-9). In other words, at play in these accounts of resilience is both an imperative and a promise. On the one hand, we are not to resist change, but, at the same time, embracing the way we learn to adapt to change is presented to hold constant potentiality – what Walker and Salt call “emergent opportunities”. This means that resilience demands the prior renunciation of authority over changes in external circumstances to unfold its promise of self-transformation in relation to these external changes over which authority has been revoked. Unsurprisingly, there is a close affinity between resilience and the idea of self-cultivation in new materialism’s posthuman democratic project. The task at hand for new materialists is to ‘deepen the sensitivity to others of varying degrees of agentic complexity’ (Connolly 2011: 26). To cultivate these sensitivities

is to come to terms more richly with multiple modes and degrees of agency that compose the world. Cultivation of enhanced relations with modes of agency that exceed our current powers in this way or that can contribute new powers to thinking in a world that exceeds the modern myths of the masterful human agent, the self-interested agent with a fixed preference schedule ... and the arbitrary, exclusive human carrier of nihilism. (Connolly 2011: 31)

In other words, to become who we actually are - never modern – means that we are encouraged to actively seek contingency and necessity and subjugate ourselves to its “greater power”. This form of self-cultivation is to be employed against our own illusion of being a masterful human agent with fixed preferences. In order to become who we are we,

logically, first need to overcome and rid ourselves from the illusion. Critically summarising the current surge of resilience discourses, Chandler hence observes that resilience is portrayed as

positive adaption or the active embrace of necessity, the resilient subject is one which actively embraces necessity through positive adaption. The resilient subject (at both individual and collective levels) is not passive in the face of necessity and does not seek to resist external changes in circumstances, but rather is active, understanding necessity as the only facilitator of self-knowledge, self-growth and self-transformation. (Chandler 2013: 45)

The important point here is that both interlinking agendas resonate with the socio-ecological system “episteme” of the real world as complex contingent system of which humans are part (necessity) and the resulting illusion of decision-making and self-interest which are barriers to learning and adaption. Resilience, new materialism and climate change discourse consider it necessary to unblock these barriers and blockages to become more human as a possibility that has opened up after the “allergy to the real”. What makes resilience or democracy (according to new materialism) promotion in climate change discourse particularly interesting therefore is its open critique of decision-making and self-interest and its revocation of anthropocentrism. In this way, climate change policy discourses as a governing programme demonstrates more clearly what is needed and what is possible for promoting new democracy as adaptive self-cultivation.

Not without reason, an IHDP climate change adaption newsletter announces: ‘The message of resilience is more radical for policy-makers than that of sustainability’ (IHDP 2003: 2). According to the newsletter, the ‘agenda implied by resilience actually challenges some of the widely held tenets about ... resistance to change’. It further specifies:

Promoting resilience means changing, in particular the nature of decision-making to recognize the benefits of autonomy and new forms of governance in promoting social goals, self-organisation, and the capacity to adapt. (IHDP 2003: 2)

Importantly, the notion of autonomy refers to the network or system, not the individual. It is the network that self-organises and the individual who develops its capacity to adapt because it is inextricably embedded. What policy discourse concerned with climate change adaption, based on its unearthing of sites of recalcitrance, however realised is that democracy against the human illusion is not self-evident; rather it needs to be constantly fostered. People do not come to terms that easily with emptying, cultivating and transforming themselves.

What thus emerges as the key problem is the capacity for actors 'to commit and engage' which, as the ECDPM study notes, turned out to be less obvious than initially assumed (Baser and Morgan 2008: 27). Unsurprisingly but crucially, the failure of commitment, the study finds, was less do to with "political will" but has a deeper root cause in the way people know, frame and understand the world (*Ibid.*: 28). Discerning the same problem, the WRI clarifies and thereby indicates the drastic implications: 'if changes are too gradual, individuals may not perceive the events as serious enough at any one point in time to justify action' (WRI 2008: 55). Note, action here refers to adaptive "action". In other words, unless the incentive for adaption is great enough, the individual may have some choice and get preoccupied with other concerns rather than learning to perceive differently and from the experience of adapting. As a consequence of this realisation, what policy and advisor discourses seem to be developing is a governing rationality that tries to lock in the human in the interplay between the extreme and the everyday. Both spheres constitute the two areas in which there is least choice, and hence most opportunity to learn adaptation. This locking-in then serves as the governing space from which adaptive governance promotion retrieves its agenda.

This becomes clear, for instance, in disaster management. While historically emergency politics were understood to require a centralisation of power and called for command-and-control approaches the opposite is the case in climate change framings. Emergency and disaster management not only calls participation and inclusion but also must link to vulnerability in daily life. To illustrate the point it is worthwhile to quote at some length the seminal 2004 UN report on *Living With Risk*:

The integration of disaster reduction strategies with development policies ... requires the participation of all relevant sectors in a society such as environment, finance, industry, transport, construction, agriculture, education and health. It also requires different forms of management and outlooks than those typically identified with emergency or disaster management.

The most efficient forms of hierarchical command and control practices for crisis management are much less suited to the deliberate and more widely considered forms of public, private and professional participation in reducing risk and vulnerability in daily life. To be effective, disaster risk reduction practices have to draw their information and inspiration from many different sources in a society and be based on widespread participation. (UN 2004: 14)

From here on, the increasingly dominant climate change adaption framing seeks to make this link between the remoteness of global life and the immediacy of the everyday – in which humans necessarily participate and from which no one is excluded – actionable for

promoting adaptive governance. What can thereby be overcome are precisely the blockages of the human mind generated by mental models and preoccupation with other concerns. This is because participation in these situations does not require or even allow thinking for “decision-making”. Policy guidelines thus appear to turn their focus on situations in which humans do not need to know or understand the world in conventional terms in order to act adaptively. For instance, as the IPCC suggests, by considering ‘how humans responses to extreme events and disaster (based on historical experience and evolution in practice) could contribute to adaptation objectives and processes’ (IPCC 2011: 29)

Inspired by a similar observation, Claudia Aradau and Rens van Munster, in their study on catastrophe as a mechanism of governing, work through such contradictions as “think the unthinkable”, “know the unknowable” or “expect the unexpected” by asking ‘what modes of knowledge and practices are deployed to act in an event that cannot be known, has not yet taken place but may radically disrupt existing social structures’. They argue that we see the rise of ‘a new mode of governing where imagination and sensorial experience play an increasing role’ (Aradau and van Munster 2011: 2). In a recent article on trauma the authors add that these new forms of knowing and governing are fostered through enactment strategies in which ‘[p]articipants are triggered into action *before* they understand the situation’ and come ‘to view a particular problem in a different way’ (Aradau and van Munster 2012: 235; emphasis in original).

These are essential observations but they need modification in order to resonate with climate change rationalities. The way climate change reports seek to encourage the human subject to generate “new knowledge” about the self to untie the blockages of mental models and decision-making is, decisively, not through imagination but through stimuli. Moreover, in recent climate change framings the emerging mechanism is also not in an enactment of a reality that is not (yet) but instead an appropriation and duplication of a reality that exists and in which participation is irreducible and irresistible. Instead of enacting certain conditions or situations for developing novel forms of self-knowing and self-governing, climate change seeks to appropriate an existential commitment to adaption. Instead of making subjects “acting up” new forms for adaptive governance promotion “zoom in”. It zooms in until the immediate site of adaption processes comes into purview. ‘Climate change disaster risk is most adequately depicted, measured, and monitored at the local or micro level ... where the *actual* interaction of hazard and vulnerability are worked

out in situ' (IPCC 2011: 39; emphasis added). It is here in the "actual interaction" between harm, having an effect and unintentional participation that 'stimuli' (*Ibid.*: 36) can be distilled for promoting resilience and even collective action. Retrieving and promoting resilience through situations that cannot be reflected upon, in other words, also can be applied collective action. Here it is the emergent norm – norm predicated on the contingent that cannot be internalised – that elicits collective action in extreme situations:

In the occurrence of extreme events, affected groups interact with one another in an attempt to develop a set of norms appropriate to the situation, otherwise known as the emergent norm theory of collective behaviour. (*Ibid.*: 310)

The reason why resilience for new forms of self-knowledge are decidedly not promoted through enactment and imagination but through actuality and stimuli rests in the new democratic promise propelled by new materialism and epistemologically and politically reflected in the socio-ecological system episteme. For a novel form of democratic self-governance we need to become who we always were and realise that autonomy was an illusion. This democratic self-governance cannot be promoted by enactment or imagination as this is what new materialist democracy fundamentally rallies against as fuelling illusions and myths that have nothing to do with the "real". According to this rationale we need more of reality as it actually is not less. Promoting back to us a learning process of who we always were, by simply cancelling the illusion that there is a world that we have made, is made quite explicit by the IPCC. It explains:

[H]uman adaption to prevailing climate variability and change, and climate and weather extremes in the past centuries and millennia, provides a wealth of experience form which the field of adaptation to climate change, individuals and governments, can draw. (IPCC 2011: 38)

Resilience and its promotion, it adds, 'may be seen as attempts to duplicate ... adjustment that society and nature have accomplished on many occasions spontaneously in the past' (*Ibid.*: 43-4). Moreover, linking the past, the global, the everyday, and the subjective into a "super-social", it suggests that the design of mechanisms aimed at adaptation as a subjective learning process should be based on ordinary and regular lock-in situations in which we participate out of necessity as a corollary to the focus on "exceptional" and "extreme" events': 'The ability to deal with risk, crisis, and change is closely related to an individual's life experience with smaller-scale, more regular physical and social occurrences' (*Ibid.*: 38).

How this interplay between the autonomous network, liberated from its institutional attachment and out of our control, and the human liberated through attachment from the illusion of the modern subject works out for adaptive learning and self-adjustment is illustrated by the UN's ground-breaking 2004 report on disaster management:

Disaster reduction strategies will have succeeded when government and citizens understand that a natural disaster is ... evidence of their own neglected responsibility rather than an act of god. (UN 2004: xiii)

It may not be an act of god but it certainly is an act of contingency. What it does is signpost that we have not yet worked sufficiently on ourselves to adapt; it is a learning process. And the kind of responsibility that springs from this interplay is not one based on communicated intention but a responsibility that is to be shouldered as an insufficient work on the self. The check and control mechanism for this novel democratic governing rationality is the global network itself. With the replacement of the illusion of formal political structures with the reality of the socio-ecological system, the "human-in-nature" with his introspective politics of self-transformation cannot be held publicly accountable by men or legally accountable by law. Unbecoming the illusion of the subject that we never were makes us answerable to that which rules and which produced us: the irreducible contingency of the complexity of the unmediated reality as it actually is.

The new democratic subject of collective self-governance, in being caught up between the hyperbole of illusion and the hyperbole of capacity, can make no claims to rights or freedom. All the quasi-outside world into which we are embedded is ultimately there for enabling us to realise how we need to become ourselves: beings in the world with an internal sphere for constant self-fulfilment through the joy of being there and being governed by no one but this "there-ness".

All that is needed for us to become who we are – beings that unlike others are capable of making a difference on ourselves – is complexity that provides us with constant change and stimuli to fulfil this promise. The less artificial structures and prefabricated assumptions block this processes the greater is our adaptive self-experience and our constantly renewed sense of having effected change. What the promotion of radically reworked democratic governance thus does is help us fulfil our true potential by unblocking the blockages of the subject: imposing necessity on us empowers us to work on our attitudes and perceptions to realise that we were never meant for the world. Once the real has revealed our illusion we can see that the world is there for us to work on ourselves – as beings that were never modern, that never had freedom or autonomy and never had the

problems that come with freedom. Democracy, after its devaluation and erroneous hook-up with liberalisation of the 1990s and 2000s is being refilled with new normative value and rigor: We are our oyster and there are no problems in the world.

Conclusion

Based on the previous chapter's argument that statebuilding as a mechanism of promoting democracy through self-restraint and self-transformation had revoked rationality through the social and weakened the separation between the rational subject and the external world, this chapter further explored the understanding and role of democracy promotion along relational power. For this purpose it explored climate change adaption discourses which present themselves as the most pressing concern of our times and a fundamentally different problem from other and previous concerns. Based on the trend to positivise the revocation of the separation between the rational human and the external world, in conjunction with climate change as a concern that does not have a human base, the chapter explored the extent to which the radical democratic theory of new materialism could contribute to comprehending climate change problematisation and policies. It investigated the extent to which this conceptual underpinning was helpful for capturing democratic governing rationalities unfolding in policy discourses concerned with climate change. For this purpose the chapter first sketched out relevant criticisms and conceptualisation of new materialism. Secondly it explored whether these were reflected in the way climate change adaption discourses understood the world and the human subject. It thirdly intimated how new materialist theorisations of democratic self-governance reflected in climate change rationalisation were activated as a governing programme through resilience. The chapter argued that both new materialism and climate change perspectives frame the human autonomous subject as an illusion that needs to be overcome through democracy promotion.

For new materialists a more genuinely democratic and inclusive form of governing is tantamount of curtailing anthropocentrism. It has been demonstrated that two pivotal and interrelated elements of new materialism and its democratic project are of great relevance for understanding democracy promotion through climate change adaptation. The first aspect is the embrace of ontology or the "real". The vision of the real in new materialism

describes and invokes the pure contingency of the world as complex interactionism as the basis of its democratic project. To this complex dynamism, in which humans appear as embedded once all layers of imposed meaning are taken away, new materialism concedes truth and thus declares that human autonomy is not merely normatively undesirable but an empirical falsity. In other words, from a new materialist perspective of the real, human autonomy is an illusion: we have never been autonomous. It certainly makes a difference for theorising and for politics reflecting this theorising whether something is held to be normatively undesirable or whether it is held to be untrue. Secondly, for new materialism, it is based on interpellating complex contingency and human embeddedness as truth from which everything else must appear false, that human hubris is to be overcome. In other words, for new materialists it is important that we deepen our lack of autonomy in order to overcome the modern subject that we have never been. New materialism's democratic project therefore consists in an embrace of necessity and adaptation in order to, to paraphrase Connolly, become who we are. Crucially, this implies that democratic self-transformation in this view is not a forward-looking project but rather a form of unwrapping what always already is – what is real rather than constructed.

The chapter found that, like statebuilding, climate change serves as a framing through which previous problematisation can be consolidated into a coherent critique. Policy discourses concerned with climate change thus openly declare a wholesale failure of governance in general and renounce frameworks and subjectivities of representation, in particular mental models. On this basis three crucial similarities between new materialism and climate change concerns become manifest. Firstly, constructs of representation, both politically as well as mentally, are renounced on the grounds that representations are not reality but always already partial and truncated and lead to prioritisation of some issues or groups over others. Epistemologically building up on the double layer of reality emerging in statebuilding discourses as a result of the turn towards informality, in climate change discourse representation and their subjectivities and politics are rejected on the grounds of not only constituting a façade but a fake. Climate change policies and new materialism thus display considerable epistemological and ontological similarities. This, the chapter demonstrated, becomes particularly obvious with regard to the discursive framing of the world as socio-ecological system(s) propelling a humans-in-nature perspective. Secondly, this framing, it has been demonstrated, crucially also understands the contingency of complex systems into which humans are integrated to constitute a reality without

extraction and representation. Inclusion and participation emerge as an irreducible necessity rather than a choice. Thirdly, the policy framing not only frustrates, and even openly rejects, the idea of human authorship and intentionality. In this way, the nature-culture divide profits from the same logic of falsification as new materialism: once the world is approached as a socio-ecological system, which constitutes an undeniable truth, this divide simply appears as false. For instrumental reasons, since this perspective is the foundation from which humans are problematised and approached, it has been called the socio-ecological episteme, also indicating its distinction from a liberal episteme of autonomy, rationality and artificial subjectivity.

It has been argued that from a socio-ecological systems perspective particular sites of resistance emerge which revolve around non-adaptive decision-making, judgement and preoccupation. Crucially, not only are these problematised from a hyper-real biological-cognitive point of view, but also come to be perceived as barriers to understanding. That is, on the one hand, decision-making, judgement and preoccupation appear as an empirical falsity under conditions of complexity, on the other hand, their problematisation in terms of barriers for greater awareness and learning indicate that there is a programme for governing implied (rather than just an abnegation of the human). The chapter suggested that the biological-cognitive problematisation mirrors the vital and hugely consequential new materialist argument that we have never been modern. In an equally as consequential extension, decision-making, judgement and interest are treated as an illusion (as it is cognitively-biologically impossible for us to make decisions, judgements and have interests beyond our immediate evolutionary attention span). As barriers to learning and adaption, the chapter has argued, these illusions become blockages of the human subject that prevent us from becoming who we really are: another contingent element of the “real” – the complexity of global life –, decisively, however endowed with an inner life.

The chapter further argued that two interlinked agendas of new materialism, here in a particular Connolly’s version, and resilience resonate with the sites of resistance the socio-ecological episteme generated, and are key for capturing climate change democracy promotion. Connolly’s programme of constant self-cultivation to become who we already are – never modern – means that we are encouraged to actively seek necessity and subdue ourselves against our own illusion of being a decision-making subject. Here it is important to bear in mind that undoing the illusion of the subject *is* democracy promotion. Resilience does not approach the subject as lacking but rather in terms of its inherent capacity to

adapt. Resilient subjects are understood to actively and positively embrace change rather than resist it and realise that participating in necessity to foster self-realisation and self-transformation through adaptation. Here it is important to bear in mind that unblocking the human blockages must be understood as the promotion of democratic self-governance. The chapter consequently scrutinised how this was activated. It argued that climate change discourse realised that subjects do not automatically adapt. They need to be locked-in into conditions and situations that leave no choice. The chapter found that climate change adaptation framings try to lock in the human in the interplay between the extreme and the everyday. In the realm of absolute necessity subjects are compelled to make decisions before thinking and are therefore empowered to engage in adaptive learning process of constant self-emptying and self-discovery. Resilience (or democracy, in new materialist understanding) promotion in climate change as a way of self-knowledge and self-transformation the chapter showed, works through stimuli and duplication as a way of enabling humans to untie their own blockage and become what they always were: always already embedded and adapting; we therefore never had freedom and will never have freedom. Our realm is the inner life: adjusting our attitude and perceptions. In this way, climate change's democracy promotion project – as a democratic project of the real in which participation, engagement and inclusion are promoted through necessity – consists in unlogging these blockages of the human subject.

Democratisation, in other words, is a process through which the embedded human being comes to realise and enjoy its lack of autonomy. After its failed convergence with liberalisation, democracy and its promotion seem to have been revamped. In the new democratic governance agenda, the only role the external world plays is to provide us with change for adaptation. In a world in which little can be known and little can be done, it seems, there are finally no problems in the world anymore. We could perhaps even say that the Cartesian doubt emerging, unfolding and reconfiguring in the trajectory of democracy promotion has finally dissolved: we do no longer need to worry about making reality reveal itself or whether our constructs have anything to do with it, because now it would undermine the rationality of democratic (self-)governance with the promise of constant self-experience and self-transformation, if we actually revealed it for ourselves. While no more problems, there are no rights, laws or legitimate claims either. In the context of contemporary post-Cartesian democracy promotion, we may have to turn

around Foucault's oft-invoked postulate: the Enlightenment did not only invent the disciplines; it also discovered the liberties (Foucault 1993: 222).

CONCLUSION

THE PROMISE OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN A COMPLEX WORLD

This study explored the new role and meaning of democracy promotion in international policy-making resulting from its trajectory since the end of the cold war. While having retreated from the limelight cast on democracy promotion in the early 1990s, the thesis argued that democracy promotion demonstrated considerable staying power in coming to work silently but vigorously across, and even through, other international policy areas such as conflict management, statebuilding and even climate change. Conditioning this displacement and resurgence of democracy promotion is a shift in the understanding of democracy from an institution-centred concept of government to an agency-centred notion of (self-)governance. Comprehending this staying power in the context of democracy's reworking through the three policy fields of conflict management, statebuilding and climate change was the main concern of this thesis.

Democracy promotion as a discourse has thus been subject to a double transformation: a brief period of inverting state-society relations, followed by the dissipation of the boundaries between artificial frameworks of the political and the unmediated, lived relations of the social. In genealogically tracing the relocation of democracy promotion as a particular policy concerned with formal political processes and institutions in the constituted sphere of the public to its generalisation throughout other policy concerns, the thesis argued that far from disappearing, democracy promotion has taken on an unnoticed but central role at the core of contemporary international policy-making. This mediation of democracy promotion through other policy concerns is imbricated with an increasing focus on participation, empowerment and inclusion. Agency-centred notions of democracy crucially, however, today are not directed at the individual subject's status and role to influence public decision-making but focus on the relational and regulatory capacity of networks to influence subjective perceptions and attitudes.

It has been argued that the rise of the social since the 1990s is of pivotal importance for the new role and meaning of democracy promotion in international relations. The double

transformation at play in the trajectory of democracy promotion must be understood to be intimately linked to a growing focus on social dynamics and relationships, norms and informality and their role for governing and policy interventions. The thesis traced the trajectory of democracy promotion in relation to three interconnected manifestations and effects of the rise of the social: firstly, its discovery or exposure as the result of a loss in political meaning and purpose of democracy and its promotion; secondly, in the way a growing attention to lived relations of the societal became catalytic for an unfolding political and epistemological crisis of governing on the underside of the “happy 1990s” culminating in a profound frustration of liberal-universal paradigms and representative frameworks; and finally, the way in which the social opened psychological processes as a new sphere and site of governing in which democracy promotion became operative in terms of adaptive self-governance under conditions of embeddedness. In this light, the way democracy has come to be understood and the rationalities for its promotions through the prism of the social have radically revoked liberal forms of power, subjectivity and knowledge. The promotion of democracy today works through an essentially transformed understanding of the world, the human subject and the relation of the human to this world.

This concluding chapter will begin by recapturing and summarising the research problematique that underpinned this study on democracy promotion. Following this, the main genealogical findings will be presented which first focusses on the conditions, role and inversion of Cartesian doubt for the trajectory of democracy promotion before highlighting the way in which democracy today is being promoted by activating contingency and necessity as a means for constant participatory self-adjustment and self-experience as the democratic promise under conditions of complexity. It then recapitulates the argument. The final section takes these findings to respond to the question opened up in this thesis as to how we could conceptualise this trajectory and the new meaning and role of democracy and its promotion in international policymaking.

Recapturing the Thesis Problematique

After the end of the cold war, most Western states as well as international organisations adopted a democracy agenda into their international of foreign policy framework (see Chapter 2). As the West somewhat unexpectedly had been helped into the role of the winner of ideological bloc confrontation by the one-sided demise of the Soviet Union,

liberal representative democracy remained and was conceived of as the sole system of government able to fulfil human needs and aspirations. This understanding translated into the belief that its promotion not only could but should be the grand – liberal – international strategy that would guide international politics after the alleged stalemate of ideological superpower rivalry. In the course of the 1990s, however, disillusionment grew in the absence of tangible success. Whether through direct intervention or through more incremental approaches, promoting democracy had not led to the establishment of liberal democracies. It was held that rather than progressing towards liberal democracy, most countries ended up in a grey zone with formal procedures and institutions in place but without substantive democratic governance.

While the era of grand declarations of promoting democracy was over, and a realistic mood began to spread after initial euphoria, two developments appear as noteworthy. Firstly, the disenchantment was not replaced by a discernible political alternative. Secondly, following the growing belief that democracy cannot be promoted, donor discourses and policy concerns have more quietly and obliquely adopted democratic principles, such as participatory approaches, empowerment and inclusive governance into their policy programmes (Miraftab 2004; Chandler 2010; Joseph 2012; Kurki 2013). After the ‘crash’ of liberal-linear assumptions (Carothers 2002: 14), it seems, democracy promotion rolled on and began to thrive on its own crisis (Kurki 2013: 5). It did so, however, increasingly outside of the juridical-political edifice of representation and hidden away in policy programming (see also Kurki 2013).

Based on these observations the thesis asked how we are to understand and conceptualise this survival of democracy promotion. It was interested in unearthing how democracy promotion worked outside the juridico-political framework of the constituted public. That is, it asked for ways through which we could analytically apprehend and conceptualise the rationality of governing that unfolds with the hidden nature of promoting agency-centred forms after the crash of core assumptions. These questions have been addressed by examining the way in which this displacement of democracy is reflected in the three principal policy fields that have been at the centre of international policy-making since the mid-1990s; that is, civil conflict management (Lacina 2004), statebuilding (Fukuyama 2005 [2004]) and climate change (OECD 2009). These three fields have roughly superseded each other as the most pressing policy concerns of their time, with climate change as the most recent one (as a mainstream policy concern).

In the wider context of rationalities of governing the changed nature of democracy promotion unfolding in international policy-making is also reflected in some of the critical literature on democracy (Chapter 1). In implicitly or explicitly confirming the displacement of democracy promotion towards agency-centred notions, it is particular Foucault-inspired studies on (neo)liberal governmentality that were instrumental for framing the thesis problematique (Abrahamsen 2000; Duffield 2001; Chandler 2006; Chandler 2010; Joseph 2012). These approaches understand democracy promotion as a way of engineering (neo)liberal, responsabilised individuals and societies through programmatic and interventionist practices that are geared towards rational, entrepreneurial conduct. As a consequences of seeing in agency-centred democracy promotion an expression or (re)production of Western liberal hegemony and power, much critical emphasis is put on the modality and exercise of disciplinary power.

While these Foucauldian framings have contributed much to open the truncated study of democracy to more critical and conceptual approaches, the thesis asked whether their attachment to (neo)liberal governmentality can help us to adequately capture and conceptually engage with the displacement of democracy promotion and its implications for forms and modalities of governing. It has been intimated that framings based on liberal forms have become epistemologically too constricted to still analytically grasp the role and understanding of democracy in the context of the rise of the social as an elevation of the embedded condition of human life – or as Foucault has indicated, the rise of the milieu-bound subject (Foucault 2009: 21-2; see Introduction). The thesis critically asked whether a crucial shortcoming of governmentality framings is that these cannot create analytical space to the possibility that it is the promotion of democracy, divorced from and even against liberal forms, that is manifesting itself as the more persistent (if radically reworked) rationale underpinning international policy-making in a complex, globalised world. It has been suggested that global liberal governmentality approaches may have overestimated the ability of liberal forms to create the conditions for liberal governmentality and underestimated the difficulties of reverting to pre-liberal forms and modalities of exercising power out of a liberal episteme. In this context it is indicative and consequential that democracy promotion literature entirely ignores recent developments in radical democratic theory that, in radically revoking liberal forms of power, subjectivity and knowledge, has become highly relevant for the way democracy is currently promoted in international policy-making.

Genealogical Findings: Democracy Promotion's Trajectory

From Constituted to Relational Power: Democracy Promotions' Trajectory and the Role of Cartesian Doubt

It has been argued that rationalisations of democracy promotion and political change during the cold war, as drawn out in Chapter 2, hold the key for unpacking the trajectory of democracy promotion through the three policy areas examined in this thesis. Democracy promotion developed as a foreign policy agenda firmly rooted in the epistemological and political context of the cold war. Epistemologically, the ruling paradigm still appeared as one of rationalism; politically, the ideological rivalry gave political purchase and meaning to representative democracy as such (why the democratic game should be played) as well as to its promotion as a containment strategy. It has been shown that cold war rationalisation of democracy and democracy promotion were based on five core principles: a particular understanding of representative democracy as artifice, of the means necessary and available for constituting this artifice, of the source of legitimacy, of the role of context and, lastly, of political struggle.

Firstly, and crucially, the understanding of democracy revolved around the constituted sphere of the public as a construct that did not exist naturally and whose space needed to be occupied by an artificial – public – agent able to generate artificial – public – interests that did not exist naturally in society. In other words, political parties, or political society, here played a central role for the understanding of representation and participation. Secondly, this understanding translated into democracy promotion in an important and, for post-cold war democracy promotion, consequential, way. It was understood that public authority needed to be created before it can be limited through liberal checks and balances. In other words, constitutive power was considered essential for the feasibility and viability of democracy promotion. At the same time, it was also understood that representative democracy, bound up with an episteme of curtailing public authority, did not dispose of mechanisms to create its own governance condition – the constituted realm of the public as the space from which governing agendas would be drawn. Here the availability of forms of political mobilisation and organisation of communism as a rational alternative of organising collective life provided a crucial source for thinking and conceptualising democracy promotion as achievable. Democracy therefore was promoted primarily by way of supporting and fostering political parties (making sure that the agenda

was pro-Western). Thirdly, in this light, however, neither the understanding of democracy itself nor of democracy promotion were primarily concerned with individual liberties. Representative government and its promotion required social control and to an extent coercion exercised through the political agents of the public. This was considered legitimate and justifiable because both democracy as well as democracy promotion were means for other ends: in the case of the former, the rational progress of society and societal achievement, in the case of the latter, containment. Fourthly, there was therefore little doubt about the model of democracy and its legitimacy; and based on the model the means could be designed to intervene into local contexts with the clear idea of radically transforming what already existed. How these contexts worked specifically in terms of their particular culture, norms and traditions was secondary or irrelevant to the extent that these were subject to change according to the model. Fifthly, it was also acknowledged that democracy promotion did not necessarily come easy and that political struggle was involved. However in the international context of superpower rivalry political resources could be cohered for engagement.

Democracy promotion, and political change, in other words, involved hierarchies, power projection and struggle. However, the point for this thesis was to highlight how, at the same time, there was a profound belief in the human and organisational capacities to effect change and intentionally transform the conditions of collective life, according to an ideal or cause beyond what always already “naturally” existed as the precondition for meaningful political participation (see Arendt 2005: 93 and 180-7; see Introduction). This is important because none of these essentials of democracy promotion should survive the utterly unexpected end of the cold war.

It has been argued that from this vantage point two developments in the post-cold war era with regard to theorising democratisation and political change strike as noteworthy and revealed themselves as highly consequential for the course and resignification of democracy promotion: the introduction of the notion of consolidation – a process of habitualising democracy until it becomes a psychologically ingrained condition – as a necessary second step after transition, on the one hand; and the emergence of social constructivism as a new international theory that sought to bring the human back into the theoretical edifice of international relations and proposed an allegedly emancipatory agenda of effecting political change through norms change, on the other. The former,

consolidation, has been argued to reflect a loss of politics, the latter has been argued to reflect a loss of meaning. Both encapsulate a turn to the social.

The chapter demonstrated that the consolidation debate is reflective of the way democracy promotion entered the post-cold war era as an essentially hollowed-out institutional edifice, emptied of its principal agent: political society or political parties. Moreover, the understanding of democratisation as socialisation and habitualisation seemed to substitute for the loss of political reason as to why one should play the rules of the game. Without political means and meaning, what the notion of consolidation introduced thus was the idea that democracy was a social condition. It has been argued that it is in this context that the turn to civil society as the epitome of democracy was epistemologically possible.

The idea of political change underwent a similar reconceptualisation with the emergence of social constructivism as an increasingly influential theory of international relations with close affinities to democratic consolidation. While wishing to re-introduce man as the author of the world, what constructivists did was to introduce the human-as-social-being, determined in his outlook and decision-making by the norms edifice into which he is embedded. Political change was thus reworked as a socialisation process. The chapter argued that the full implication of this turn to the social for democracy promotion needed to be further contextualised within social constructivism's criticisms. A self-professed critique of the alleged relentless pessimism and anti-humanism in rationalistic IR theorising, the chapter found that social constructivism expressed an anxiety provoked by the realisation that the end of the cold war demonstrated that available theoretical constructs and foundational assumptions did not capture and reveal reality. The way the cold war ended could not be reflected through any of the theoretical and foundational assumptions about international politics and change. In this light, the chapter has drawn out that constructivism is not a new IR theory but an anti-theory with a noticeable inclination to the real. The mutual constitutiveness of agency and structure and its mergence into an organic social process not only bars theorising since there is no foundation upon which a theoretical edifice could be built, but it also posits an undeniable fact and necessity of human life as the centre of its conceptualisations: that there is a social fabric to human life.

The point here for thesis' concern with the role and understanding of democracy promotion is that the turn to the social is a turn towards the real based on a 1989-version

of Cartesian anxiety that our artificial theoretical models and constructs may deceive us about reality. Hence, instead of proposing a theoretical alternative, it is reality that is pitched against the representational framework. This modality of critique cannot be overestimated for the trajectory, relocation and reconceptualisation for democracy promotion – to be understood a governing rationality in itself. It has fundamental implications for the way unintended consequences begin to be problematised and then become inversed as a policy programming for democracy promotion. Criticising the artifice from the vantage point of the real begins to emerge with the failure of democratic institution-building for civil conflict management and consolidates via statebuilding discourses finally in climate change framings. This critique and the underpinning understanding of the world is essentially the epistemological base for contemporary democracy policy programming for activating adaptive self-governance through participation in reality as it actually is.

What seemed to have allowed for this critique – a critique that starts from contingency to falsify artificial constructs, and policies or decision-making that derive from these – to emerge as a valid form of “knowledge” is the ‘crash’ of universal linear assumptions and trajectories that occurred within the discourse of democracy promotion in the context of civil conflict management (Chapter 3). This is also the moment in which a turn occurs away from democracy promotion as a concern with formal processes and institutions towards agency-centred concerns, such as empowerment, inclusion and engagement.

As Chapter 3 demonstrated, the discursive and programmatic consequences of the break-away of cold war essentials for democracy promotion reveal themselves forcefully in the context of civil conflict management. What is important to note is that in the 1990s, reflected in the way it was initially approached for conflict management, democracy promotion had become “differently” liberal. Instead of political and economic modernisation, democracy promotion was conceived as political and economic liberalisation. That is, the kind of knowledge and understanding about representative democracy as artificial construct within a paradigm of constituted power of the political had been lost almost overnight. This is important for understanding the second manifestation of the rise of the social as a frustration of universal liberal trajectories and models, expressed in the idea that liberalisation leads to the establishment of liberal

representative democracy. A second important point concerns the nature or understanding of civil conflicts as deeply-rooted identity or ethnic conflicts.

Democracy promotion, now understood along liberal-trajectorial power, underwent a quick but crucial succession of approaches: from election promotion to institution-building to empowerment promotion. The chapter revealed that this development is underpinned by the frustration of three essential assumptions of liberal forms. The first assumption concerned the linear trajectory from elections to the establishment of representative democracy; the second revolves around the liberal equilibrium of governing through a public-private divide; and the third, finally, concerned the universality of the model itself. What became apparent in the wake of this frustration was the lack of constitutive or transformatory power of representative democracy's institutional framework once it became politically and epistemologically fully congruent with a liberal episteme of curtailing public authority. Concretely, it turned out that elections did not lead to the establishment of liberal democracy and, moreover, exacerbated conflicts more than pacified them. People immersed in deeply-rooted ethnic conflicts, it became understood, conducted politics and voted the same way they conducted the conflict: according to their social identity. With the promotion of democracy as political liberalisation, deeply-rooted social identities now appeared within the public sphere. In other words, as a consequence of liberal democracy's (unnoticed) political exhaustion, taken in conjunction with the assumed automatism of liberalisation, unmediated social realities and contingencies spilled onto the politically hollowed-out public realm of governing.

This has been demonstrated to constitute a central caesura for democracy promotion and its subsequent trajectory and displacement. Crucially, having appeared within the realm of the public edifice, these social realities, complexities and contingencies are now a governing concern. But their "power", that is, the sphere where these are generated and become effective, are rooted deep down in the social fabric. While the electoral approach to conflict management is replaced by an approach to democracy promotion which sought to design institutional arrangements that would cancel conflict from appearing in public decision-making, the equilibrium between the public artifice with public interests and the private sphere of social contingencies, processes and dynamics that need not be of immediate concern for public government has been fundamentally impinged upon. In other words, the institution-building approach to democracy promotion from its very beginning was bound to become conceptually and practically overburdened. This reason

being that it was compelled to reach and regulate were public institutions do not reach: deep down into the social fabric, into processes in which humans as social beings become who they are.

The thesis argued that the failure of democratic institution-building triggers two decisive self-allegations through which democracy promotion begins to be fundamentally reworked from a concern with formal decision-making structures to private decision-making structures, from an institution-centred to an agency-centred conception of democracy and from a foreign or international policy with a clear division between donors and targets into a more general or “global” rationality of self-governance. On the one hand, promoting a liberal democratic model was no longer held to be universal and hence legitimate but became criticised by donors themselves as the imposition of an alien construct that did not fit local contexts. On the other hand, the idea that institutions could be externally designed onto local contexts became understood to be a sign of Western hubris, followed by a call for more humbleness.

The chapter argued that it is important to take note of the actual rationalisation behind the self-charge of hubris and the particularity of local contexts and realities. The basis from which the self-charge of hubris and the revocation of universality was launched was from the vantage point of unintended consequences. In other words, in the discourse of democracy promotion the problem was that institution-building was hubris because it missed something about reality. It revealed itself that local realities distorted and perverted the way institutions were thought to work. As has been further argued, in the wake of the self-allegation of hubris, we see the emergence of a critique that considers the main problem of democracy promotion as institution-building to rest in an erroneous notion of governance institutions: in reality, governance institutions were not political abstracts but concrete social conventions. An essential consequence of this rethinking of governance institutions as social conventions in the discourse of democracy is that from now on one cannot think about context as an empty space or void with regard to institutions and governance. The point being made here is that the Cartesian doubt at play in social constructivism with regard to theoretical frameworks, towards the end of the 1990s, finds a practical, policy-making equivalent with regard to political frameworks, with a similar recourse to the real. It means that little can be done in terms of intervention because little can be known about the nature, reality and context of substantive problems (in the

Introduction this stage has metaphorically been called the “handing over” of power to the social)

In this context, it has been argued, the shift to the promotion of agency-centred conceptions of democracy occurs. Importantly, however, in the context of conflict management it emerges that this shift is enabled by a redefinition of the problem of conflict. Here the New Wars debate has been shown to play a decisive role. Within this debate, which has been adopted into policy discourse, conflict is predominantly addressed as a problem of violence. With the main problem of conflict being violence, conflict is reframed from a question of identity politics to a predatory social condition. While the former warranted a political settlement, conflict as violent social condition is a problem of behaviour. It thus needs a therapeutic approach – it is a question of re-socialisation. As a question of behaviour and socialisation the agents of democratic transformation thus become different ones. It has been argued that empowerment with the reinterpretation of the conflict as violent behaviour aims to empower precisely those that are held to be politically powerless and are never envisioned to appear in public. Rather the targets of empowerment are those that are understood to have the greatest socialisation potential or capacity because they are principally agents of informality. In other words much discursive and programmatic emphasis is put in empowering communities, women and youth.

This kind of relational power, of course, is not consciously exercised. Democracy promotion hence is not or no longer a question of empowering individuals in terms of changing their political status nor is it a question of directly responsabilising the individual to exercise its autonomy safely. Rather what is being empowered is the network epitomised by women, youth and the marginalised which out of their position of powerlessness and embeddedness are interpellated as those that are compelled to exercise their agency indirectly, through nudging and influencing. As such, they are empowered as the socialised agent holding sway over the violent subject’s attitudes, perceptions and behaviour as the realm where change now needs to be effected. The site that begins to open up as the realm of democratic governance and transformation, in other words, is socio-psychological processes. With this the conception of democracy and its promotion becomes entirely detached from public decision-making and inserted into invisible but always already existing dynamics of lived societal relations. Thus detached from the public and associated with attitude change as a problem-solving mechanism, democracy promotion can now travel through other policy fields. Not only, however, can it

travel, as a problem-solving mechanism attached to changing perception and behaviour it becomes increasingly indispensable – and unfolds its new promise – in a world of growing complexity in which little can be done because little (and ever less) can be known.

Moreover, what clearly emerges in terms of democracy promotion is that with the shift from institution-centred to agency-centred conceptions, the social, as the reality of unmediated relational contingency, which originally provoked the crisis of institutional forms of governing, culminating in a radical doubt about the relation between institutional artifice and reality, is beginning to be reworked into a positive governing rationality. This positivisation of an epistemological and political crisis unfolding between the constituted artifice and the contingent real is essential for understanding how democracy promotion works very differently through statebuilding and climate change. To simplify, agency-centred democracy promotion in the realm of relational power becomes a governing rationality aimed at self-governance, and as such it seems to have become a rationality that positively operates through radical uncertainty, contingency and embeddedness.

Democracy Promotion and the Real: Activating Democratisation against the Illusion of the Subject

The thesis argued that from this epistemological and political moment captured by hubris, democracy promotion's trajectory through statebuilding and climate change concerns is becoming radically reworked and accorded with a new role, meaning and rationality that undermines the donor-target distinction. As this understanding and rationality is no longer immediately recognisable from conventional perspectives on liberal and participatory democracy, these two policy fields were discussed in relation to their epistemological and ontological affinity to recent radical democratic theories in which democracy is being reformulated as a way of self-transformation, self-cultivation and self-emptying for more ethical awareness towards others and a general openness to the world.

It has been argued that with regard to understanding the emerging governing rationality unfolding in democracy promotion through the prism of statebuilding a double change in analytical perspective is helpful (Chapter 4). While agency-centred notions such as dialogue, participation and empowerment appear in statebuilding discourses, these are not substantially different from the rationale of empowerment promotion in conflict management. More interesting and relevant for tracing the hidden nature of democracy promotion, is the way statebuilding itself works as a democracy promotion mechanism for

inculcating learning processes aiming at ethical self-transformation and self-emptying. In this context, the second change concerned a shift from focusing on postcolonial, non-Western targets of statebuilding and democracy promotion to understanding Western donors to be recipients themselves.

Essential here is the epistemological juncture at which statebuilding emerged. As a positive epistemology and policy discourse, statebuilding surfaced after institution-building had been discarded as hubris and universality of the liberal representative model revoked as a misfit with particular realities of local contexts. It has been demonstrated that rather than being concerned with building institutions, one of the central roles of statebuilding emerges to be the provision of a platform through which the epistemological upheavals of the 1990s could be synthesised under a single framing. Most importantly, as a discourse, statebuilding consolidates the critique of artifice through the real. That is, statebuilding discourses adopt a reality perspective of the world that frustrates and devaluates abstraction and generalisation as knowledge – as yielding any truth about reality. It is through this sociologicalised view on reality that local context emerges as always already permeated by governing relationships which, however, due to their informal nature are never visible and discernible for the outsider. Outside knowledge, outside problematisation and outside policy solutions are therefore devalued and problematised as being necessarily detached from local realities. The policy discourse of statebuilding is thus first and foremost a self-critique. Based on this amalgamation a novel democratic governance agenda of self-transformation through the renunciation of generalised knowledge and the realisation of essential difference is activated.

It has been argued that, in order to grasp the radicalism with which the possibility of extraction from contingent conditions and the validity of universal or generalisable knowledge about the world have been revoked, the statebuilding agenda's conceptual foundation in new institutionalist economics play a central role (see Fukuyama 2005 [2004]; Chandler 2010). What has been unearthed as the most consequential contention of new institutionalism in relation to a reworked democracy promotion regime – concerned with the donors themselves – is the renunciation of the rational subject and its replacement with a socially-embedded subject as the result of a human cognitive deficiency. New institutionalists found that humans are fundamentally dependent on norms and customs due to our incapacity to process all information available for making informed decisions. Without informal institutions we would not be able to cope with

reality. This means, however, that all human understanding and decision-making is coloured by a contingent social filter. In this sense, rationality becomes an absurdity disproven by the undeniable – but thus far largely irrelevant – reality that humans indeed do not possess and process all information and that there is a social dimension to life. “Being local” is thus a human condition; that is, reality to the human can only ever be a subjective perception of reality coloured by a social filter.

Based on this rationalisation, in *reality*, there can be no such thing as externally-led statebuilding. In adopting this perspective into its problem framings, the chapter demonstrated that the programmatic tools of contemporary statebuilding are geared towards a learning process, or rather an un-learning process, mediated through a ‘deep appreciation’ of local context ‘without preconceived or fixed ideas’ (OECD 2011: 36). In this light, contemporary statebuilding discourse display a noticeable emphasis on the need for changing staff perceptions, self-reform and even a direct problematisation of statebuilders’ mental constructs and the prefabricated assumptions these generate that ‘get in the way’ (IDS 2010: 70). In this way, donors are encouraged to learn that “less is more”, signposted and inculcated by the necessity of unintended consequences that any outside intervention must produce since these are based on understandings that, in originating elsewhere, are at odds with local realities. In other words, the Cartesian doubt that the models and assumptions through which we view, engage and intervene in the world may have nothing to do with reality is turned around: with reality only ever being a subjective perception of reality, we are told that, for sure, our frameworks have nothing to do with the condition of others. In statebuilding discourses this celebration begins to be employed for a new democratic project of self-emptying from prefabricated assumptions and fixed ideas that produce problems that do not really exist. What seems to become essential for novel forms of democracy promotion aimed at self-emptying is a constant deep engagement and ever growing context-sensitivity through which the real and true particularity of local realities can be retrieved as an undeniable fact and the essential difference of others and their problems and solutions can be appreciated. Effectively, democracy does not longer need to be promoted, it needs to be activated; all elements already exist: local realities and particularities (ensured, given one digs deep enough), the self and the mediating fact that out of irreducible embeddedness reality is a subjective perception of reality.

Finally, climate change concerns have been shown to be instrumental for the activation of democracy as a new problem solving mechanism through engaged self-

emptying and self-transformation (Chapter 5). In policy discourses, climate change is presented as a problem fundamentally different from other, previous problems. Indeed, not only is it a genuinely global problem affecting and thereby including all of us but also a problem that in itself is not associated with a genuinely human activity, like civil conflict, or construct, like the state. Importantly, policy perspectives on climate change share close epistemological and ontological ties with new materialism, which has recently emerged as a radical posthuman democratic theory. In new materialist understandings, a more genuinely democratic and inclusive form of governing is tantamount with undoing human exceptionalism. It has been argued that two central elements of new materialism's democratic project are crucial for understanding the activation of democratic self-governance through climate change. In spite of new materialist claims to radically intervene into common epistemologies, these elements build on and extend the ongoing and intensifying critique of artifice through the real, that is, a critique that falsifies from a perspective of reality as it actually is. It does not criticise through reasoning but highlights the illusory nature of artifice from a hyper-real perspective of necessity. This critique culminates in new materialism and translates into democracy promotion through climate change policy programming. While new institutionalism pointed out the illusion of rationality based on the reality of computational limitations of the human, new materialism points out the illusion of autonomy based on the effects produced by contingent complexities of global human-nonhuman interactions. In other words, its democratic project of undoing the autonomous subject is not a forward looking project but one that simply undoes or deconstructs an empirical falsity and thus liberates what always already was the case. The point being made in the chapter is that, with today's inclination towards the real, undoing the illusion of the autonomous decision-making subject *is* democracy promotion.

Climate change discourses in framing the world as a dynamic complex socio-ecological system adopt a similar hyper-real perspective for its policy problematisations. No one is excluded and everyone is embedded in this complex interactive system. What climate change discourse can therefore openly falsify is intentionality by pointing to emergent causality. In socio-ecological systems thinking of climate change discourses, particular sites of resistance open up. These revolve around fundamental human characteristics, such as strategic decision-making, inference or abstraction and judgement. Within a socio-ecological systems "episteme" these features, however, become problematised from two

interlinked positions. On the one hand, from a cognitive-biological view under conditions of global complexity, strategic decision-making, interference and judgement are impossible – the way we have evolved and the way our brain works in conjunction with the way we are globally embedded simply because we exist, for instance, means that strategic decision-making cannot be strategic. In other words, judgement, inference and decision-making are illusions because they are biologically impossible under conditions of complexity. On the other hand, these features of the human subject are understood to be barriers to understanding and learning. Taken together, then, illusion and barriers to understanding indicate the site that needs to be worked at in order to liberate what now emerges as a blockage to become truly who we are.

In this context, the chapter discerned a second central commonality between the new materialism's democratic promise of adaptive self-cultivation, which is envisioned as a project of actively letting oneself be affected to overcome the hubris of the human subject, and the discursive emphasis on resilience. Both programmes resonate with the governing agenda emerging out of the sites of resistance. Crucially, resilience does not approach subjects as lacking. A resilient subject does not need to be engineered to fulfil its potential. Rather it is endowed with an inherent capacity and potential to adapt to the circumstances it finds itself in. Resilient subjects are thus construed to actively and positively embrace change rather than resist change for it is in the adaptive process that lies the great and real potential of its agency. Here humans can engage in self-realisation and self-discovery; here, in their inner life, humans can make a difference and effect change. What programmatic policy framings of climate change have recognised, however, is that while the resilient subject does not need to be engineered, it needs to be unblocked. Unblocking the resilient subject, in other words, is the core of today's democracy promotion – or activation – agenda.

It has been argued that it is the policy framing of climate change that is exceptionally well equipped for contemporary democracy promotion. First of all, its legitimacy is unquestionable as it is the survival of humanity that is at stake. Secondly, in understanding the world and the human as a global complex socio-ecological system, it has unlimited access. What climate change framings thus do in order to promote democracy is to tie the human into the interplay between the extreme and the everyday. In between these two poles humans are compelled to make decisions without thinking. Under these conditions

the adaptive potential for self-discovery, self-experience and self-transformation can be realised.

It would seem that while statebuilding developed the new democracy agenda, it lacked the “constitutive” mechanism for its implementation. Climate change policy-making, in turn, appears to dispose of the political and programmatic mechanism to undo the illusion of the autonomous and rational human subject and enable us to become what we always were: contingent beings in a world of unmediated contingency, endowed however with an inner life. On condition that that we govern ourselves democratically (by letting our environment take an active part in our self-governance) we are thus perfectly equipped for thriving and growing under conditions of complexity, since we were never meant for the world. Our sphere is the inner life. The world is there to provide us with change for adaptation, not with problems. We do not need to reveal anything about reality; the more it roles on its own and the more unexpectedly it does so, the greater the possibilities for exercising our agency. In this sense, democratisation is a process through which the embedded human being comes to realise and find fulfilment in its lack of autonomy.

Summarising the Argument: Understanding Contemporary Democracy Promotion

In sum, the main argument made in this thesis was that with the shift in the understanding of democracy from an institution-centred to an agency-centred conception today democracy promotion no longer aims at liberalising others from unfreedom nor is it concerned with engineering responsibilised liberal subjects able to safely exercise their autonomy. Instead, democracy promotion describes a constant socio-psychological learning process through which the inextricably embedded human subject is enabled to unlock its full potential of adaptive self-transformation and self-experience. In this way, contemporary democracy promotion no longer distinguishes between the Western donor and the post-colonial other but instead distinguishes between the illusion of autonomy and the promise of self-governance. In other words, the promotion of democracy as participatory self-governance denotes a project of overcoming the decision-making self as a problematic subject.

The internalisation of democratic agency as a concern with the self, however, does not entail an abnegation of the world. To the contrary, making sure that no one is excluded and that full participation in the contingent interactions of reality as it actually is provide the “material” for realising the promise of democracy. In other words, the primary sphere of

human agency – the sphere where humans can make a difference – is the subjective rather than the public, but always and only through relationships and attachment to others and the environment whose effectivity provides us with the impulse of making a difference on ourselves. Self-transformation in contemporary democracy promotion therefore does not describe a forward-looking project but instead a project that constantly adapts to and thrives on the movements of a complex world. This means that the democratisation process is a fully internalised one, activated and maintained through the direct interplay between the contingent effects of unmediated relations and the dynamic capacity of the inner life of the human to learn and adjust.

Conclusion: Conceptualising Contemporary Democracy Promotion – Tentative Suggestions

The conclusion that can be drawn from this thesis' genealogical investigation is that more than the hidden nature of democracy promotion it is its radically reworked nature that accounts for its secret and invisible working in contemporary international policy-making. To round up this investigation some tentative suggestions will be made with regards to the problematique of how we can conceptualise the new form and meaning of democracy and its promotion. That is, these concluding remarks seek to briefly sketch out the broader paradigm which is emerging and the rationale imbricated in the survival of democracy promotion.

Understanding the afterlife of democracy promotion essentially requires a translocation of when its "life" was: not in the 1990s but in the political and epistemological context of the cold war. From this vantage point the 1990s appear as a period of great epistemological upheaval and doubts rather than certainty. Moreover, taking into account the notion of democracy and political change centring on the constitution of the public and the creation of its authority that dominated the discourse during the cold war shows the fleeting but momentous period of democracy's merging with liberal forms of the 1990s. This thesis has argued that rather than through a liberal framework, therefore, the afterlife of democracy promotion – its trajectory, its displacement and its profound reworking – can better be conceptualised through the prism of the social.

With the end of the cold war, the social rises as the unmediated contingency of lived relations and irreducible attachments of the human into political and conceptual frameworks. After the loss of political means, purpose and imagination with the demise of communism, the social begins to fill the deserted spaces of the constituted public artifice. Drawing on Foucault (Foucault 2009: 21-2; see Introduction), it would seem that something fundamental happens to our – liberal – political edifice and its power relations once the relentless dynamism of the milieu – the socio-ecological attachments of the human – appear within its realm. Something fundamental is bound to happen since the purpose of the edifice, the reason for artificial structures and spaces, once was understood to bar precisely these attachments to appear in public. The rationale of artifice is to abstract and transform the ‘absolute chaos of difference’ into commonality (Arendt 2005: 93; see also Arendt 1998: 136-7) for appearance in public government and thus curtail the power that unfolds in the dynamic contingency of human existence whose movement follows reality as it really is; neither linear nor circular. In other words, the essential purpose and promise of representative democracy was to make life, as ‘the muddy, messy world of reality’ (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki 1975: 41), subject to purposeful governing. What this implies, however, is that the moment this reality appears in the artifice signifies the end of representative frameworks of governing. These frameworks thereby have lost their purpose and meaning. In allowing the social into the public, democracy as institutional governance has failed (see Kofi Annan; Chapter 5).

Once this reality, as the epitome of institutional failure, emerges within the edifice reality’s relational and regulatory capacity of the network presents itself as the real realm of governance. In the muddy messy world of reality the subject – its conduct and its decision-making – is already collectively governed. In this real, natural realm of governance both the subject and its power relations also become mystified and obscured. As soon as the unmediated reality of (everyday) life processes and attachments call for attention, it thus casts fundamental doubt. That is, once the social has crept not only into our political but also our conceptual frameworks of democracy there seems no anchor left from which to generate meaningful assumptions and the world is no longer ‘amenable to our appropriation’ (Chandler 2013: 30).

From here, the “always already” of relationships – relationships as always already existing and governing (see Arendt 2005: 180-7) – launches a constant attack against the constructedness of governing, sense-making and decision-making. The “always already”

has indicated failure and now sets out to disprove and unravel all that was associated with constructedness. Local reality turns interventions along the permanent idea(l) of models and frameworks into hubris. Social reality turns the idea(l) of rationality, autonomy and externality into a farce. Cognitive-biological reality, taken in conjunction with the complexity of reality, turns the idea(l) of human intentionality and autonomy into a fake. With the rise of the social the human subject has become an illusion.

In this way, it would seem that the new struggle which democracy promotion has become part of after its rivalry with communism during the cold war is the struggle between the real and the artifice. The promotion of democracy as the promotion of reality as it actually is rivals the artifice of representation. However, the parameters of this rivalry seem to be very different. Democracy promotion of the “always already” does not seek to assert itself against constituted and engineered artificiality; rather its project is to disprove and falsify by pointing to the real. The promotion of democratic, participatory and engaged self-governance today, it would seem, problematises the way decision-making is necessarily based on assumptions that cannot ever be real or reflect reality as it always already is. It is the misconception of decision-making and judgement that generates problems, constraints and failures.

Democracy promotion’s legitimacy and its programme design are garnered on the basis that we are living an illusion, that we live as subjects that we are not and cannot possibly ever have been or become. Stripped from any meaning, the real governs us as an illusion. We are not autonomous, rational and there is no external world; we are beings that exist in the world and have an inner life that directly links us to this world. The promise of new, “real” democracy lies in the link; and it would seem that the task for its promotion is to activate this link. In this democracy of the real, participation, inclusion and engagement are promoted by circumscribing the sphere of agency where it always already is the case – conditions under which participation and engagement are an actuality rather than a choice (such as in the socio-ecological system and in the everyday). In this sense, the trend in democracy promotion that is manifesting itself from post-hubris conflict management via statebuilding to climate change is that political and decision-making structures that distort this link need to be undone. As this democracy programme derives its legitimacy from facticity and is carried by an immediate and paradoxical promise of both genuine and necessary emancipation from falsity, there are no political or legal limits and there is no subject that curtails the power to be exercised to liberate the illusion of artifice.

In understanding inclusion and participation exclusively as part of an unchanging agenda of global liberal governmentality, Foucauldian critiques seem to miss the kind of global democratic governance that emerges as being geared towards activating the link between the inner life of mind and the complexity of global life as the most real form of governing beyond the problem-generating façade of artificial forms of government and subjectivity. Contemporary democracy promotion after the illusion of universal benchmarks, intentionality and authoritative knowledge does not seem to dispose of the requirements and reasons for exercising disciplinary power. The rationale seems to have been reversed: it is not about engineering the liberal subject (individual or collective) according to an ideal but about liberating the subject from the illusion of an ideal. Democracy promotion is not about engineering the subject to become a responsible master of his autonomous agency in the external world but realising an adaptive, learning subject of internalised self-transformation under the auspices of the governance of reality. The coercive nature of this policy programming is not disciplinary. It is not underpinned, exerted and legitimised by the absent ideal or end and the idea of constructing ‘artificial multiplicities’ (Foucault 2009: 12 and 17); it may simply be the power necessary to undo the obstruction of constructs and structures that appear as empirically false from a hyper-real perspective on reality as it “actually is”.

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