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Governmentality and EU democracy promotion: The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the construction of democratic civil societies

Milja Kurki

Abstract

Democracy promotion has become an important 'symbolic' facet of European Union's (EU) foreign and development policy and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) is often considered, despite its moderate budget, the 'jewel in the crown' of the EU's democracy promotion. The EIDHR's (reformed) mandate, crucially, encompasses the funding of democratising civil society organisations and thus the facilitation of the emergence of democratic publics 'from below'. But what are we to make of EU's 'soft edge' democracy promotion through civil society support? It is argued here that if we apply Foucauldian governmentality tools to the analysis of the workings of the EIDHR we can see that, despite the pluralistic rhetoric that guides it, the Instrument's objectives and management structures facilitate very particular kinds of democratic visions and democratic actors. Neoliberal governmentality is, it is argued, hidden deep within the expectations set for EU-funded civil society 'democratisers'. This has important consequences for how we understand the model of democracy that the EU promotes and the power relations of the EU's 'locally owned' democracy promotion.

Key words: governmentality, democracy promotion, civil society support, European Union, neoliberalism

Introduction

Work with, for and through civil society organisations will give the response strategy [of European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights] its critical profile. It will, on the one hand, promote the kind of open society, which civil society requires in order to thrive, and on the other hand, will support civil society in becoming an effective force for dialogue and reform relying on the role of men, women and children as individuals with the power, capacity and will to create development (EC, 2006: 5).

Coinciding with the push for a new model of active European citizenship within the borders of the expanded Union (Hager, 2009: 115), the European Union's external policies too have turned to the facilitation of the emergence of self-sufficient, innovative, critical, and entrepreneurial citizens and civil society organisations in the Union's 'neighbourhood' and 'third countries'. Indeed, the EU democracy promotion system has seen an important shift in the last few years: while previous attempts at democracy promotion focused firmly on facilitating the functioning of the democratic state, its rule of law structures, and its institutional bases, recent drives among democracy promoters have involved a focus on fostering the right kind of democratic culture 'from below' (Youngs, 2001, 2003; see also e.g. Diamond, 1999; Burnell, 2000). But what are we to make of the EU's new 'soft edge' democracy promotion strategy involving civil society support? Does it entail, as democracy promoters often contend, locally sensitive and locally owned processes of democracy facilitation and, if so, with what consequences for EU democracy promotion?

This piece seeks to analyse the EU's civil society-focused democracy promotion tools, notably the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. Rather unconventionally vis a vis the dominant literature on democracy promotion, the analysis here takes as its starting point the insights of Michel Foucault with regard to the nature of liberal governance in late 20th century societies. I seek to place Foucault's reflections on governmentality in advanced liberal societies within the context of the EU's civil society-focused democracy promotion strategy. This is a somewhat unusual exercise, for democracy promotion, let alone EU foreign policy, has been rarely analysed from a Foucauldian perspective. This is despite the proliferation of 'governmentality analyses' in the study of international relations more generally (see e.g. Dillon and Reid, 2001; Duffield, 2007; Dean and Henman, 2004; Kiersey, 2009; Sending and Neumann, 2006; Abrahamsen, 2004) and of critical politico-economic analysis of the European Union more widely (see e.g. Apeldoorn et al, 2009; Bieler and Morton, 2001). It is argued here that considering a Foucauldian perspective in interrogating the practices of democracy promotion is a fruitful exercise – even for those who tend to be sceptical of poststructuralist theoretical perspectives in the study of politics. This is because a Foucauldian perspective, despite its imprecisions and limitations, provides an innovative angle into the analysis of democracy promotion techniques, its power-dimensions, and its politico-economic foundations.

The analysis here is based on an engagement with Foucault's late works on liberal governmentality. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008 [1979]) Foucault reflected on the role of economic rationalities of a specific liberal kind in facilitating the functioning of 'governmentality' in late modern society. He argued that since the 1930s, and somewhat more intensively since the 1950s, there has been a decisive, although often missed, move away from both 'social welfare liberalism' and 'classical liberalism' as the guiding principles of government towards the development of 'neoliberal' logics of governmentality. For Foucault, the practices of neoliberal governmentality do not aim to centralise power, facilitate negative freedom, or complete 'redistributional' projects in society. Rather, they foreground specific kinds of liberal economic rationalities and interventions as essential in fostering 'free' and 'prosperous' liberal democratic society. This article examines the extent to which such rationalities, and the governmental techniques they are linked to, may be present in contemporary democracy promotion as practiced by the EU.

What precipitates an interest in such an analysis? First, it is precipitated by Foucault's claim that neoliberal governmentality logics present themselves in very interesting ways in the European context, where they are embedded within the societal and discursive logics of these

advanced liberal states, albeit in unique forms (Foucault, 2008; see also Apeldoorn, 2009). Given this claim, it is interesting to ask: what is the role of the European Union, and its policy programmes in facilitating, reflecting, or advancing neoliberal governmentality?

Many studies on neoliberal governance have been conducted in recent years. A number of critical political economists, for example, have identified shifts in the direction of neoliberal ideals within the European Union's governance structures (see e.g. Ryner, 2002; Apeldoorn, 2009; Bieler and Morton, 2001). While these neo-Gramscians identify the source of neoliberal logics among specific groups of people within the EU, for example, among transnational capitalist elites (see e.g. Apeldoorn, 2009), the Foucauldian perspective points us in a somewhat different direction. It is, for better or for worse, less focused on identifying specific sources of power and elites in charge of ideological projects, and more interested in the analysis of diffuse forms of governmental rationalities. Such a perspective provides an interesting addition to the existing literature on neoliberal logics in EU governance, which often, somewhat problematically it would seem, assumes the existence of coherent ideological elites.

Second, and more importantly, this paper is driven by the impetus to understand the curious nature of EU democracy promotion. The EU has become an important democracy promotion actor; yet, its approach to democracy promotion is uniquely complex as well as uniquely vague and 'non-ideological' in nature. To avoid opening up divisive contestation between EU actors and member states over what kind of democracy should be promoted by the EU, questions of normative, political and ideological nature are typically avoided in EU democracy promotion in favour of programmatic and technical forms of discussion. The EU has sought to depoliticise its democracy promotion. This does not mean that hidden political logics are not present, however. Foucault's analytical starting point is one way of digging deeper into the kinds of logics or hidden rationalities that might be embedded within EU democracy promotion, despite its non-political non-ideological veneer.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, this piece is driven by the wish to understand better the EU's new civil society instrument, the EIDHR. This funding instrument has been hailed as the new tool through which the EU can encourage democracy from a 'bottom-up' perspective, rather than relying on forms of coercion and incentivisation at the level of state elites and high diplomacy. In this sense, the EIDHR's funding is often perceived as the tool that has ensured that there is a uniquely 'soft edge' to EU democracy promotion, one that takes account of cultural and local sensitivities in target states and one that actively prioritises the wishes of civil society organisations and target populations over those of the EU administration or dominant member states. What is interesting about a Foucauldian perspective is that it provides an angle that forces us to probe further the claim that civil society promotion is locally sensitive, non-interfering or non-coercive in nature. Governmentality techniques, if present in the EIDHR practices, would entail quite a different reading of the role of the EU's civil society-focused democracy promotion. Creation of particular kinds of 'free individuals' and a 'productive and active' democratic civil society would be seen, not as simply an unbiased facilitation of freedom, but as, potentially, a deep-running form of governmental control over the nature of individuals, society and governance in target states.

It is argued here that indications exist to the effect that neoliberal economic rationalities and governmentality techniques may indeed be present in EU democracy promotion through the EIDHR. Specifically, indications of their existence are identified in the logic of the EIDHR's

objectives, calls for proposals and management structures. Just how ‘successful’ these logics are in shaping the civil society actors and target publics remains an open question that I cannot claim to holistically answer here. Indeed, this piece is not focused on evaluating the impact of governmentality practices in target states, civil society organisations, or target publics, but rather on their manifestations in the EIDHR’s strategy and management structures (cf. Hager’s approach to neoliberalism in citizenship approaches of the EU, 2009 or Abrahamsen, 2004). While this analysis is but a first step in getting to grips with the workings of governmentality in the EIDHR, the rationalities and governance techniques noted here seem to suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the possibility that specific assumptions about the nature of civil society actors and their expected ‘freedom-facilitating’ activities are being made in EU democracy promotion, with important consequences for how we should perceive civil society ‘ownership’ of EIDHR projects and the power relations of EU democracy promotion more widely. Specific kinds of entrepreneurial individuals and organisations, it seems, are ‘called forth’ through the EIDHR’s calls for proposals and facilitated through its management structures with deep consequences for how the economy, democratic culture and the functions of civil society vis a vis the state are perceived.

The article is divided into three sections. The first sets out a Foucauldian framework for the analysis of neoliberal governance. The second section sets out the core aspects of EU’s democracy promotion and the role of the EIDHR within it, highlighting the rationale for an investigation of these practices from a Foucauldian perspective. Section three then conducts an analysis of the EIDHR’s democracy promotion by examining in detail some of its core strategy documents, calls for proposals, and management structure. The final section seeks to draw some conclusions about the consequences of neoliberal governmentality in the EU’s democracy promotion as well as the future challenges posed for governmentality analysis.

Foucault and liberal governmentality

Foucault developed his reflections on governmentality and biopower in a series of lectures to College de France in 1978 and 1979 (Foucault, 2008). These have only been recently published, and as many commentators have noted, constituted still very much work in progress (Joseph, 2009). It follows that there is a significant degree of vagueness to the concept of governmentality. But what should we, broadly, understand by the idea of governmentality? The most common definition utilised in the literature identifies governmentality as the ‘conduct of conduct’ (Weidner, 2009: 389). Governmentality is a notion that refers to the workings of power outside the sphere of formalised or centralised material sites of power: governmentality refers to forms of power on the micro-level. It is the life of the population or individuals that is the target of governmentality; governmentality is, as Joseph has noted, ‘power at a distance’ but nevertheless influential on thoughts, desires, bodies and actions. Governmentality involves, for Foucault, ‘a question not of imposing laws on men, but of disposing things’ (Foucault, quoted in Sending and Neumann, 2006: 656). The governmental form of power is not, however, exclusive of other types of power, and is intimately tied to coercive and disciplinary forms of power (Joseph, 2009; Sending and Neumann, 2006).

But how does governmentality, or biopolitics¹, within liberal governance function? In *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault was particularly interested in the functions of new forms of 'governance of life' that governmentality started to involve in the mid- to late 20th century. He was particularly interested in what he called a *neoliberal governmentality*. This referred to a form of governmentality which was focused on governing through the idea of freedom. Neoliberal governmentality, for Foucault, is a particular type of liberal technique of control that has as its aim the utilisation of the principle of freedom as a mode of moulding the individual and society.

One way to gain a better sense of what neoliberal governmentality meant for Foucault is to understand its meaning in relation to classical liberalism. Classical liberals understood the individual as a rational agent and the aim of the state, law and society to facilitate their freedom from external constraints (which would compromise their freedom to exercise their rational faculties). Yet, classical liberalism no longer sets the terms of the debate, Foucault argues (2008). Classical liberalism is a misleading framework for understanding late 20th century society and economics, for Foucault, for since the 1930s and 1950s the central notions of liberalism have, in fact, stressed the importance of governing and producing free subjects of a particular kind, not simply on providing them with a space to exercise their 'freedom'.

Liberal discourse presents [the societal] realm as based on the rational conduct of individuals free from state interference. However, this freedom and liberty is clearly a construction that is reinforced through a particular set of social practices and a normative discourse (Joseph 2009: 416).

What is central for neoliberalism, Foucault argues, is that in order to be free, the subject has to be 'guided and moulded' to conform to a particular kind of vision of free and prosperous individual (Dean in Joseph, 2009: 416).

Crucially the liberal economy – the market competition within it – become the key reference points for moulding the kind of freedom that is envisaged. As Barry Hindess (2004) points out, the market 'epitomizes' the liberal view of society as 'self-regulating' and individuals as 'autonomous, self-directing'. Yet, economic rationality of a very specific kind is seen as central to the generation of the active exercise of freedom of the individual. In the advanced liberal society, Foucault argues, neoliberal governmentality seeks to mould into existence an 'enterprise society' and 'entrepreneurial individuals' who take the market, and specifically the competitive functions of the market, as their guiding principle in thought, desire, and action. Neoliberal governmentality then is about the extension of the market vision of competition throughout the society, not just in the sphere of the economy. It involves the encouragement of the right ways of being free and rational: competition within the market is the ideal that actively moulds the self-understanding, the desires, and the actions of the 'free' individual. Thus, through neoliberal governmentality logic any aspect of societal life – from marriage to crime – can be interpreted as sites for 'rational calculation' by the free individual: while marriage can be seen as a form of a rational contract between individuals with specific kinds of human capital, crime is an action which puts an individual, and his productivity, at risk of punishment. Neoliberal governmentality refers then to the expansion of the market

¹ Biopower is a notion often applied in relation to governmentality. This notion it seems, refers to a sub-section of governmentality techniques: forms of intervention in social life that specifically focus on governance of life: governance of 'wealth and health' of liberal subjects.

logic to all spheres of social life and its 'mainstreaming' into the psychology and social interactions of subjects.

Liberal governmentality, Foucault also notes, means devolving powers away from the state to the people. Rather than the 'state' disciplining subjects in physical and material ways, governmentality allows us to access the ways in which people regulate themselves and others in the societal sphere. While the state can tap into the micro-level forms of governmentality, neoliberal governmentality is not reducible to government's objectives or intentions, but in fact involves the decentralisation of power to individuals. Indeed, a key aspect of neoliberal governance, argues Foucault, is the emphasis on the local ownership of the processes of decision-making. This entails the prioritisation of indigenous decision-makers, specialists or indeed civil society organisations in 'governance'. This makes it appear as if power is devolved and that control over lives is exercised by the people, not by the state or other authorities. Yet, Foucault's framework seeks to show that local ownership is itself an idea that is framed within a governmental rationality: while it encourages responsibility-taking by the individual and subjects, it also forces upon them a fierce form of self-regulation with regard to what constitutes the right kind of a rational and responsible action.

In reading Foucault on (neo)liberal governmentality, I take him to highlight four core analytical claims/assumptions, which will be of interest in our analysis of democracy promotion and its politico-economic underpinnings.

- 1) Foucault offers us a discursive perspective on the political but also, crucially, on 'the economy'. The economy is analysed as a set of practices, and as a rationality given rise to by practices, not as an 'objective science'. Economic science and economic rationality then are denaturalised and seen as contingently produced spheres, forms of knowledge and sets of practices. It follows that the economic is seen as a sphere that is intricately tied to other spheres or disciplines: social, political, anthropological, and psychological. It is no longer an independent sphere exclusive of social and political life but deeply embedded within societal logics in a holistic sense. One of the key aspects of neoliberal governmentality for Foucault is that it embeds economic rationality into all spheres of society, not just the economic. This view challenges the classical liberal understanding of the economic sphere as 'natural' and as 'independent' of the social and the political. Contrary to classical liberalism, Foucault sees economic rationality as a crucial aspect in the production of the meaning of the social and the political. 'The economy produces political signs that enable the structures, mechanisms and justifications of power to function. The free market, the economically free market, binds and manifests political bonds' (Foucault, 2008: 85).
- 2) In neoliberal governmentality logics, the economic market rationality is actively productive of individuals, politics and governmentality of the state. The economy is no longer the 'natural economy' but rather involves the active creation of an (unnatural) state of 'perfect' competition through active intervention. The paradox of the liberal state for Foucault always was that it has to be justified, but on 'minimal' grounds. Neoliberal governmentality is a particular way of trying to resolve/dissolve this dilemma. The liberal economy is not about freedom anymore but about the active production of the use of freedom. 'We have then the conditions for the creation of a formidable body of legislation and an incredible range of governmental interventions to guarantee production of the freedom needed to govern' (Foucault, 2008: 65).

Economic freedom, and freedom in general, necessitates active and deep-running interventions in society.

- 3) The key mode of production of the 'free' individual is through the creation of the 'entrepreneurial' self. The entrepreneurial agent sees his or her role as not simply exercise of freedom but as a productive exercise of freedom. Man is now (in American neoliberalism especially) seen as a form of human capital. 'This is not a conception of labor power: it is a conception of capital ability, which...receives a certain income that is a wage...so that the worker himself appears as a sort of an enterprise for himself (Foucault, 2008: 225). Because it is not a worker's labour power but his skills (that cannot be separated from his constitution) that is the origin of human capital, we see men not as classical homo oeconomicus 'in exchange' but as homo oeconomicus in all spheres of social life (Foucault, 2008: 226).
- 4) Civil society is seen as something fundamentally tied to the production of liberal governmentality and economic rationality. Instead of being seen as separate from the state or governmentality, the neoliberal civil society is seen as a sphere that is ideally suited to fostering the homo oeconomicus in all spheres of social life, and also a sphere where state power is mediated (see e.g. Sending and Neumann, 2006). Civil society becomes a sphere for co-opting and shaping of the right kind of rational conduct. Indeed, 'civil society is...a concept of governmental technology' (Foucault, 2008: 296), and it is the homo oeconomicus that inhabits the civil society: 'civil society is the concrete ensemble within which these ideal points, economic men, must be placed, so that they can be appropriately managed' (Foucault: 2008, 296).

But how do these sorts of insights direct our analysis of democracy promotion of the EIDHR?

The EIDHR as a potential site for a Foucauldian analysis

Democracy promotion has emerged as a major theme in international political practice during the last two decades and, it follows, has gained increasing attention in the analysis of international affairs (see e.g. Burnell, 2000; Carothers, 2004; Diamond, 2008; McFaul, 2010; Burnell and Youngs, 2009; Teixeira, 2009; Barany and Moser, 2009). Although much has been written about the US democracy promotion efforts, it should also be noted that the EU has emerged as a significant democracy promotion agent in recent years. Democracy promotion has been advanced as an important new symbolic policy agenda for 21st century EU foreign policy.

In line with the profile rise of this policy agenda, manifold analyses of EU democracy promotion have been conducted in recent years (see e.g. Youngs, 2001, 2003, 2009; Barbe and Johanssen, 2008; Hyde-Price, 2008; Schimmelfennig, 2006). Many of these analyses focus on investigating whether the EU is a genuinely 'normative' actor or whether it applies realist self-interested principles to its democracy promotion activities. The assessments come to various conclusions, many of the analyses agreeing that the EU is both a normative and a realist actor (see e.g. Barbe and Johanssen, 2008). These kinds of evaluations are interesting, yet they are not exhaustive of the manifold theoretical and empirical insights that could be gained of EU democracy promotion, its role in EU foreign policy, and in relation to the target states. Indeed, the complex EU democracy promotion scene remains rather rarely, and rather

poorly, theoretically conceptualised. So remains, arguably, the role of its most innovative civil society support instrument, the EIDHR.

What is the EIDHR?

The EIDHR, a thematic funding instrument embedded within EuropeAid (the implementer of EU's external assistance programmes), was formulated in 2006 and is the successor to the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights that has functioned since 2000. It is, as was the Initiative, part of the EU's agenda to move towards a more locally sensitive democratisation approach (see e.g. Ferrero-Waldner, 2006: 2). The EIDHR's focus is explicitly on funding democratic and human rights activities within the civil society of states. It has, as Ferrero-Waldner highlights (2006: 5), four key benefits for target countries: it is a flexible instrument, it is an instrument that is rapid to adapt and respond to requirements that may arise, it is broad in the scope of actions funded, and it is independent of governmental control.

The EIDHR is an instrument which overlaps and complements four other external assistance instruments of the EU envisaged for 2007-2013 period: the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA), European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) and the Instrument for Stability. The EIDHR is, however, also distinct from these aid initiatives: it is independent in its budget line and works with reference to its own internal objectives. These objectives are five fold: the EIDHR aims at 1) enhancing respect for human rights in countries where it is most at risk; 2) strengthening of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform; 3) supporting actions on human rights and democracy in areas covered by EU guidelines; 4) supporting international and regional frameworks for protection of human rights and rule of law and 5) assisting and organising electoral observer missions (Rihackova, 2008).

Various reforms took place in the negotiation of the EIDHR II, the framework for EIDHR's current work (between 2007 and 2013). In this new framework, heavier emphasis on civil society support has become apparent, and various complaints made by civil society actors with regard to the inflexibility of EU funding streams were taken on board (see Rihackova, 2008). The main operating system of the EIDHR is still the calls for proposals, although some non-calls-for-proposal-based projects have also been allowed in the EIDHR II. Grants are given primarily to civil society organisations and non-profit organisations, although room still exists for 'traditional' electoral observation missions (objective 5). The amounts of funding provided by the EIDHR are relatively small – despite the rise in overall budget to 145.8 million Euros by 2010. This means that most of the projects funded are of limited in scope, both in terms of their timelines and the scale of their activities. Since 2007 the EIDHR has co-funded 502 projects, 'representing a combined funding of 194.2 million euros' (EC, 2009: i). Of these 337 are Country/Local based support Schemes (CBSS) projects managed by local country delegations - a 'manifestation of the importance that EIDHR gives to partnerships with local actors on the ground' (EC, 2009: i). The EIDHR then seeks to put in place the core aims of EU's (and now most development agencies') emphasis on development aid that is locally owned (see EC, 2004: 4).

The programmes the EIDHR funds span a wide range: from support to educational institutions, women's groups, and human rights NGOs to rule of law and governance missions, electoral encouragement and observation missions, ICC and justice related missions

and organisational support, to work focused on advocacy of anti-torture policies, to dialogue enhancement and reconciliation work, to disability rights work, to freedom of expression and civil society support missions. Torture is one of the largest focal points. In target countries range from Congo and Uganda to Serbia and Macedonia, Ukraine and Moldova to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Nepal to Turkey, Guatemala, Brazil and Peru, Haiti, Jordan. Most projects are between 12 and 24 months in length and the average funding for individual projects tends to be less than 100 000 Euros. Crucially, the EIDHR does not as a matter of course fund civil society projects in their entirety: as a rule they offer grants that cover up to 50% of costs of projects proposed.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to examine the individual EIDHR projects in detail. What is interesting to note, however, is that it is difficult to characterise these projects ‘ideologically’ or ‘politically’, for not only are the projects not characterised in political terms – and are rather adverse to explicitly political language – but also, it could be argued that various sets of political and ideological leanings could be seen present among them (see EC, 2009).

But why might it be interesting and important to analyse the EIDHR from a Foucauldian governmentality perspective?

The role of civil society support in EU democracy promotion has been recognised to be increasingly important. Indeed, as many commentators have highlighted (Youngs, 2001; 2009), EU democracy promotion is nowadays far from merely electoral and procedural in nature and it is the EIDHR that constitutes the cornerstone of EU’s civil society support: it is the instrument that is directly charged with the production of civil society support projects in target states (EC, 2006; 2008). In the academic literature on EU democracy promotion, the EU’s civil society support is in many ways glorified: it is seen as proof that the EU has moved away from procedural liberalism and narrow elitist conceptions of democracy (see e.g. Robinson’s critique, Robinson, 1996) towards more civil society focused and culturally sensitive logics of democracy promotion (Pridham, 2005; Youngs, 2009). This is seen as a positive development and a key aspect in defence of the EU’s unique democracy promotion approach (Youngs, 2003).

A Foucauldian perspective, however, provides quite a different starting point for evaluating the shift to civil society support within EU democracy promotion, for it directs us to be rather more circumspect towards the view of civil society and population governance as non-coercive and neutral. It directs us to examine with some scepticism, and in more detail, the practices of governance of civil society support. A circumspect perspective is not of course unique to a Foucauldian viewpoint. Important criticisms of civil society support (Hulme and Edwards, 1999; Cooke and Kothari, 2009; Ottaway and Carothers, 2000; Hearn, 2000) and indeed of EU’s civil society support (see e.g. Bell, 2004; Crawford, 2008) have been made from various empirical and theoretical starting points. Yet, Foucauldian concepts provide a unique angle to such earlier analyses by highlighting the implicit and in important respects (or at least seemingly) non-intentional rationalities that can emerge within democracy promotion activities. Before I move to the analysis, a few caveats with regard to the limitations of such an analysis are in order, however.

First, it is important to note that it is not the aim here to identify a ‘global governmentality’ in EU democracy promotion. Jonathan Joseph (2009) has powerfully argued that the attempts to argue that there is a global form of governmentality ‘out there’ are problematic for we can

neither assume the universality of governmental practices, nor the applicability of governmental analysis in non-liberal settings. I agree with Joseph's analysis and make no attempt to analyse or draw conclusions about global governmentality here. The focus here is rather narrowly on the specific formulations and techniques of governmentality in the EU democracy promotion framework, and specifically within the EIDHR.

Second, Jonathan Joseph and others have asked whether the Foucauldian governmentality approach can fruitfully be applied in non-liberal contexts. This is a pertinent question, but one that is deliberately side-stepped here. Governmentality here is analysed in the EIDHR's democracy promotion framework, not 'on the ground' in target states. This creates some limitations to this analysis (see the conclusion), yet the limited analysis advanced here is perceived as an important first step towards a more detailed analysis of governmentality within EU democracy promotion.

Third, what about the role of material, coercive and disciplinary power vis a vis governmental power? Joseph (2009) and Selby (2007) have argued that we should not reduce all forms of power to governmental power, simply because this form of power may be present. This is an important insight: it is important to note that with EU's democratic conditionalities in Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa, clearly coercive, material, and disciplinary forms of power are also involved in EU democracy promotion. Yet, this does not mean that we should not *also* analyse whether there are governmental forms of power at work. Indeed, as we will see, we can arguably say something new about the EU's civil society assistance programmes through a governmental, rather than a more traditional power political perspective, partly precisely because the EIDHR's funding does not involve hard conditionality in the same sense as other EU democracy promotion policies do.

Governmentality in and through the EIDHR

To elucidate what a Foucauldian analysis might reveal within the context of EU democracy promotion, I reflect here on a selection of sources that guide the work of the EIDHR and its project management systems. Notably, I analyse the objectives set out in the Strategy Paper that guides the EIDHR's current work (EC, 2006), the structure of the funding calls of the EIDHR, and the wider project management framework within which the projects are managed. The analysis here does not claim to be exhaustive or final, and is clearly limited in not focusing on identifying the functions of governmentality in individual cases of EIDHR support. Nevertheless, I suggest that the EIDHR does seem to facilitate neoliberal governmentality functions within its objectives and through its management systems.

Governmentality techniques: 'disposing' civil society of liberal entrepreneurial individuals

For Foucault governmentality involved not the imposing of laws and institutions on individuals, but rather their 'disposing' in particular ways. He suspected that civil society, instead of being the sphere of passive freedom, actually acted as the key site for the 'conduct of conduct' of *homo oeconomicus*, a site where governmentality techniques functioned to create specific kinds of market-minded liberal individuals. But does the EIDHR funding 'dispose' publics and civil society in the ways Foucault's account might suggest, and if so, how? I start the analysis here by interrogating the assumptions that the EIDHR makes about the actors that it seeks to fund as democratisers in local contexts.

Governmentality in objectives

The EIDHR has five core objectives. It is the first three of these objectives that are the focus of the analysis here. Objectives 4 and 5 relate to support for fairly classical liberal democratic democracy promotion measures focused on institutional support for elections and rule of law systems within target countries and the facilitation of international co-operation in the area of democracy support. These objectives, while interesting, do not centrally concern the analysis here. From a Foucauldian perspective the most interesting aspects of the EIDHR (EC, 2006: 2) relate to Objectives 1, 2 and 3, which aim, respectively, to ‘enhance respect for human rights in countries most at risk’, ‘strengthen the role of the civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reform’, and to ‘support actions on human rights and democracy issues’.

These three objectives speak in interesting ways to the Foucauldian system of analysis, for what is notable about them is that they equate democracy promotion not with institutional changes within the state or in the international context, but rather with specific changes in the power-relations and attitudes of target state publics. The aim of democracy promotion in these objectives is to intervene to effect changes in the views, mindsets and assumptions of target state populations and civil society organisations. The aim is specifically not to coerce ‘the state’ through traditional diplomatic means to adopt democratic processes; rather it is to facilitate pressures of a democratic kind ‘from below’ through intervening in productive ways in the conceptions of ‘good life’ held by target populations so as to produce ‘capacity’ for them to challenge authoritarian practices within their home states.

But what kind of civil society and individuals do the EIDHR objectives in question envisage? I note here six aspects that are of interest from a Foucauldian perspective.

First, the civil society that is envisaged has to be such that ‘defend[s] fundamental freedoms which form the basis of all democratic processes’. This means civil society organisations that are encouraged should accept ‘fundamental freedoms’ as central to their activities and should actively push for political reform in their target countries on the basis of them. It is important to note that it is not ‘any’ type of civil society support that the EIDHR is after, but rather a specific kind which places fundamental freedoms at the centre of it. There is a specific vision of the role of democratising civil society at the heart of the EIDHR: one within which individuals actively fight for individual and collective freedoms of the kind specified in EIDHR’s guidance and EU documents on fundamental freedoms (see e.g. EC, 1995).

Second, the EIDHR perceives civil society as ‘autonomous’ and ‘effective’ change-inducing set of actors and it is this civil society effectiveness that the EIDHR seeks to support and augment (EC, 2006: 2). Crucially, the civil society organisations (CSOs) that are chosen as partners within the EIDHR are not just ‘any’ organisations but ones that are seen, and that see themselves, as active and effective change-inducers in local contexts. The CSOs are to take on the development and democratisation aims of the EU and for this reason must have the intentionality and self-belief to see themselves as crucial democratising actors. Since the EU must ensure that they can rely on the local actors to direct, manage and implement its external assistance, the CSOs too should conceive of themselves as autonomous, active and effective change-inducers.

Third, what is striking about the assumptions underlying the EIDHR objectives is that their vision of civil society actors implicitly assumes that CSOs have the courage to actively challenge excessive state controls over society. Civil society is, arguably, conceived as something of a check against the state, and the individuals and organisations funded are those who are willing to enter the fray in challenging the state when it infringes on freedoms. Governments are interestingly perceived as a potential threat to the kind of active democratic civil society support that EIDHR envisages: this emphasis can be seen in EIDHR's (EC, 2006: 2) insistence that it offers 'independence of action', allowing assistance 'without the need for government consent'. This view of civil society conforms to a fairly classical liberal notion of civil society (see e.g. Baker, 2002). Unlike in participatory or social democratic traditions where the aim of civil society is the fostering of group or national solidarity or collective learning, the focus of the EIDHR's vision is on rights-defending liberal democracy-enhancing pluralist civil society.

Fourth, aligned to the assumptions of civil society as a 'check on state' and as 'effective producer of change' is the notion that civil society is and should be autonomous, active and 'entrepreneurial' in defence of freedoms. According to the Foucauldian logic, a key aspect of neoliberal governmentality is the fostering of entrepreneurial actors who not only think of themselves as autonomous actors, but who are aware of the capacities and skills that they have to 'sell' in societal context. Such individuals have already been encouraged by the EU in the context of its own citizenship agenda in the Lisbon agreement. At the heart of new citizenship model of the EU (Hagel, 2009: 115-116) is a citizen as self-reliant, risk-taker, entrepreneur and innovator, who has no need for social welfare structures or state support and who take responsibility for finding and adapting themselves to the market opportunities. It is, interestingly, precisely these sorts of individuals that seem to stand at the heart of the kind of vision of civil society that the EIDHR too sets out in its objectives. Because elites can remain 'unaccountable and unresponsive to citizens' expectations', active, rights-informed, competitively motivated, modernising, prosperity-seeking individuals – and by extension civil society organisations – are needed (EC, 2006).

Indeed, rather interestingly, not only are individuals to be entrepreneurial and responsibility taking but so are civil society organisations. They must take active responsibilities in competing for funding, applying for funding and in initiating activities. Indeed, interestingly, CSOs are at times conceptualised as 'lobby groups', much like those lobbying for more economically driven interests within pluralist 'market democracies' (see e.g. the rise of the EDP, 2009). Arguably, the assumption is that the individual in the social sphere should act much like the individual in the market sphere: actively, constructive and entrepreneurially. She should transfer her wishes and interests through the civil society organisations, and these organisations should seek to compete with each other in order to lobby governmental and international programmes for funding. A competitive market logic requiring entrepreneurial actors is central to the logic of EIDHR democracy promotion: what arguably emerges then is a 'liberal' pluralist vision of civil society.

However, fifth, and crucially, within the EIDHR civil society is not simply 'let be' (as within classical liberal pluralist vision); it is turned into an 'active object of governance' (Sending and Neumann, 2008). Since the EIDHR, and EuropeAid more generally, envision the role of a 'partner' for the civil society organisations, it is not simply enough to let civil society to grow on its own accord. It must be facilitated in its ability to take on the functions envisaged for it. Since the CSOs are to take on the role of delivering and managing aid – they are to 'own' and 'take responsibility' for the projects and their governance – their capacity to be

such kind of democratising actors must be facilitated. The EU audits the projects it funds and sets the framework for their functioning (see next section), yet the EIDHR devolves powers to the civil society organisations to manage and implement these, and indeed, expects that with correct facilitation the CSOs will embrace these tasks. '[T]hrough [partnership] contracts... recipients are enlisted as active agents of their own reform according to accepted and agreed standards' (Abrahamsen, 2004: 1461).

Sixth, it is important to note that not just a specific set of understandings about the individual or civil society that emerge from EIDHR objectives, a specific vision of the democratic state also emerges, and crucially one that is distanced from classical liberal or social welfare states. A privatised service provision role is envisaged for the NGOs and CSOs within states. A conscious effort has been made to widen the scope of EIDHR's funding in recent years as there has been a shift in EIDHR II towards facilitation of organisations the aims of which may not be directly focused on democracy or human rights issues, nor 'advocacy' and 'watchdog' functions as traditionally conceived (Youngs, 2008: 165). Wider issue areas, it is acknowledged, can also indirectly link up with the overall aims of the EIDHR. Indeed, just as aid policies more generally have come to see 'service provision' as a crucial aspect of civil society functions (EC, 2010: 19), so has the EIDHR moved to support of service provision, rather than mere 'advocacy' projects. These are considered crucial in 'capacity building' of societies, civil society organisations and individuals. It follows that increasing attention is paid to the facilitation of capacity building for vulnerable groups of people: women, children, the disabled, the poor, the working class (EC, 2006: 8).

However, it is interesting to note that with the widening scope of activities, civil society actors are expected to achieve more in the target states, and, conversely, the state rather less. Arguably, implied in the EIDHR's approach is the assumption that civil society groups are to actively encourage people to become full participating democratic citizens. This entails that the civil society comes to take on a role as 'service providers' for weak groups of people, thus removing the responsibility of the EU or the state from such service provision. Indeed, it is envisaged that non-state actors start taking on public roles 'as if these services had been 'contracted out' by the government (EC, 2004: 9). As the state's role is seen as diminished, paradoxically state level democratic processes are also sidestepped, while the 'third sector' becomes a 'service provider' that fills the gap that emerges in the traditional role of the social democratic state (see also Leubolt, Novy and Beinstein, 2008 for a fascinating discussion). As a result, far from moving socio-economic governance of the system towards more social democratic directions, which is what one might assume by observing a plurality of social welfare based organisations being supported by the EIDHR, the direction of action could be argued to be quite the opposite: the encouragement of the minimisation of the role of the state, and social democratic consensus and structures of facilitation within it.

This initial analysis of the hidden assumptions embedded in EIDHR's strategy documents reveals some interesting insights as to EIDHR's understandings and expectations with regard to target populations, civil society and the state. But are they put into practice in EIDHR's actual funding and management systems?

Calling forth the 'civil society': calls for proposals

The key tool of the EIDHR in terms of provision of democracy support is through the calls for proposals: these are now 'the general rule when dealing with non-state actors' within EU

development policy more generally (EC, 2004: 17). Calls for proposals are seen as a non-intrusive and fruitfully ‘passive’ and ‘democratic’ method of encouraging democracy from below because they facilitate the local ownership of projects on the ground and thus highlight the importance of partner-led, civil-society-directed democracy promotion efforts. As is noted by the EC, with the calls for proposals ‘the responsibility for identifying, formulating and implementing projects is...passed on to those who apply for co-funding’ (EC, 2004: 17). But are the CfPs unstructured opportunities for the exercise of free will by civil society actors, or are there governmentality techniques involved in the way they are framed?

First, it has to be noted that the way in which the expectations for the calls for proposals are structured are specified by the EU. This inevitably introduces an element of disciplinary power to the EIDHR’s democracy promotion. Despite the moves to introduce greater flexibility within the calls for proposals, with regard to the eligibility criteria, length and objectives of the projects, as well as the legitimate partners and financial structuring of the projects (Rihackova, 2008), the framework for projects under the auspices of the EIDHR are defined by the EU. Standard formats for CfPs are used by the EIDHR and by the country delegations that introduce CfPs on EC’s behalf.

This is understandable, of course, for the EIDHR distributes public money, and it would be dangerous not to insist on structures of oversight over how aid is spent. Yet, the level and nature of the managerial set up is also somewhat paradoxical given the claims to encourage ownership of projects by local organisations. It is quite clear that limited room exists for CSOs to set up their programmes and projects outside the specified criteria set out in the calls for proposals. If an organisation lacks the financial structures to manage the EU money or refuses to engage with the expected practices of management, it will not receive funding. It is then important to note that not all organisations are embraced by the EIDHR; and that preference is (has to be) given to those who are willing to (and in many cases, accustomed to) EU management practices set out in the calls for proposals. The calls for proposals, one could argue, are in and of themselves a disciplinary method of filtering out trustworthy participants in creation of democratic realities in target states.

There is another aspect that is interesting about the calls for proposals, however, and one that is reliant on a more neoliberal governmentality form of ‘self-regulation’ (not the fairly standard mode of bureaucratic regulation above). Calls for proposals tend to be fairly open in nature, relating for example, to human rights support actions in target states, yet hidden within them are important forms of linguistic and ideational regulations that the applicants must internalise, or at least seemingly internalise in their applications for funding. Thus, the EU’s (often vague) language of rights and democracy is expected to be used in the applications; as is the language of civil society effectiveness. It would seem inconceivable for a CSO to admit that it does not aim for rights or democracy promotion in the liberal democratic vein envisaged (broadly) by the EU, that it does not seek to support citizen activities that encourage critical engagement with the state and rights frameworks within them, or that it did not believe in the effectivity of its activities in bringing democratic change about. It is no surprise then that such language is characteristic of the self-descriptions of the funded projects (EC, 2009).

Another crucial aspect of the language to be adopted by CSOs centres around the language of trustworthy ‘responsible’ project management. In line with EU’s calls for proposals, the project proposals must conform to expectations of responsible management, cost-effectiveness, and observable measurability of projects. Effectiveness is promised and

measured for the EIDHR, as the projects become self-regulating and self-managing for the EIDHR. This self-management and regulation is re-enforced by another aspect in the EIDHR funding calls – the need to accept and conform to structures of competition. Civil society organisations are to understand, precisely because of the calls for proposals, that they compete with other actors and that they have to, in order to obtain funding, compete against the other applicants. Competitive calls demand precision and re-enforced self-regulation by CSOs.

This is not all, however, for it could also be argued that the partial (50%) nature of the funding given to CSOs reinforces even further the self-regulation of CSOs as competitive actors in their societies. This partial funding is part of the EIDHR's incentive-led approach: EIDHR seeks to incentivise CSOs so as to become actively competitive actors. In not funding them at 100% levels not only are relations of dependence to the EU avoided, but also, from a Foucauldian perspective, the civil society organisations are forced to remain attuned to and competitive and attractive in the civil and market society contexts that they seek to influence. Civil society organisations compete, and should compete, in the funding market in a holistic and general way; they should not develop direct 'monopolistic' relations of dependence to specific funders. Civil society organisations should act as competitive agents – as *homo oeconomicus* – in their political, cultural and economic scene.

Management tools as a governmentality technique

Besides ticking the boxes with regard to the proposals, what is also necessary is that projects commit to management practices required by the EU. One of the key criticisms that EIDHR I faced was that it was overly rigid in its management structures (see e.g. Crawford, 2002, 2003a; 2003b). As a result EIDHR II has placed great emphasis on allowing flexibility of action and, especially, move towards more local ownership of project management. This reflects a wider move within the EU's development aid policy, and indeed aid effectiveness debates more generally, towards a participatory approach to development, which highlights the movement away from states towards civil society organisations as real partners in development (see for example, the EC's Structured Dialogue initiative, EC, 2010). But what does this movement towards flexible and devolved approach to management mean within the Foucauldian framework? Interestingly, it implies not the attenuation, but rather a shift in the governmental techniques involved, and a shift that has been noted in development aid circles more widely (Duffield, 2007; Gould, 2008; Abrahamsen, 2004; see also Ferguson, 1994).

EIDHR II, as a reflection of the paradigm shift towards ownership in aid policy (EC, 2010: 16), has given more and more powers for local delegations and committees to make decisions on funding. It also makes it clear that the CSOs take responsibility for their own management. Yet, it is striking that despite the devolution of powers on decision-making to local EC/EIDHR delegations, the structure of the management and requirements for the acquisition of grants remain standardised. Every call for proposal includes the same, rather demanding requirements, for the CSOs to meet in managing projects. Crucially, besides the financial management tools, the logical framework (log frame) project management system remains a general requirement for all projects. Moreover, within EuropeAid, a clear set of guidelines are provided for the project management cycle, and criteria to be used in interpreting EIDHR objectives (Channel Research, 2005). Clear cut objectively and observably identifiable effectiveness of grant projects is required to be proven in the management of the projects.

These management tools, while eminently understandable within publically funded schemes, are not inconsequential from the point of view of governmentality. From a Foucauldian perspective the EIDHR management framework is interesting not just because it is rigorous and standardised and hence reveals disciplinary control over actors, but also because of the kind of self-regulating 'aesthetic' it creates as to what is required from civil society actors and how they should behave as civil society actors (Gould: 2008).

The log frame provides an interesting example of the hidden governmentality within the EIDHR's standardised management tools. The log frame management framework seeks to set out a clear and comprehensive logic for development aid, action and management, by setting out a set of objectives and expected results against which activities and hence funding can be measured. Its core assumption is that clearly defined criteria can be produced even for the most ambitious and vague set of objectives, and that it is the role of CSOs to think ahead of time about how they isolate causal effects within their areas of operation so as to be able to clearly measure the effects of their own projects. Attached to the log frame are a set of documents that specify what kinds of indicators the projects should use to approximate the effects of their actions vis a vis the general objectives of the EIDHR (Channel Research, 2005).

The log frame is an interesting management tool for it is, while partly disciplinary, largely reliant on CSOs themselves identifying the core parameters and limits of their projects, as well as defining the scope of their actions. It is not the EU that is required to know the ins and outs of the individual societies but the CSOs: they become the knowledge producers on the local context, as well as project interveners in that context through isolation of causal influences and construction of clear measurable manipulations of target environment through project activities.

At the same time, the EU remains in control of the requirement that log frame must be used, and forces the CSOs to not only manipulate their environment in clearly defined, variable-aware ways, where specific actions and effects are sought (while holistic aims or non-activity centred objectives are set to one side). Simultaneously, the log frame forces the CSOs to focus on activity based projects, with clearly observable effects and isolatable, measurable contexts. It is not any kind of activity or project that is funded by the EU, but specific activity related projects, defined and measured in relation to a defined set of legitimate kind of criteria.

The log frame framework is an important tool of development aid and remains extremely popular among many actors. Yet it is not a neutral tool, Foucauldians remind us: it facilitates particular kinds of activities and disciplines the kinds of projects that can be envisaged (Gould, 2008). Crucially, the log frame is, one could argue, a central component of the development aesthetic which increasingly guides development aid:

[I]t is... considerations of style which determine success in securing a project and thus ensuring the availability of assets for elite accumulation. These include meticulous audits and a complex array of formalized reporting procedures: stakeholder analysis, project documents based on logical framework analysis, standardized monitoring and evaluation reports, financial summaries based on strictly prescribed formats. Indeed, the internalisation of a rigorously formalized aesthetic for the production of such documents is considered a prime indicator of improved capacity....Because 'aesthetic' discipline is

about form as against content, there is little overt conflict between the rhetoric of ‘empowerment’ and demands to conform to externally imposed criteria of ‘style’ (including, standards of leadership and management structure). This form of disciplinary power can comfortably co-exist within a patron organization alongside an empowering self-image and the rhetoric of partnership (Gould, 2008: 103).

The management structures of the EIDHR thus not only reinforce the assumptions of civil society actors as effective, empowered and empowering, change inducing actors, but also as active owners and managers of their own democratic development, albeit within the confines of pre-defined notions of what should constitute, broadly, the scope of democratising actions and trustworthy democratising actors. An auditable measure-driven organisation is a trustworthy democracy-enhancing organisation. Capacity to democratise becomes equated with capacity to obtain and manage funding.

Non-ideological but neoliberal democracy promotion?

The EU has explicitly shied away from proposing a clear-cut and specific democracy promotion strategy for its neighbourhood or its near abroad. Instead, a variety of different kinds of programmes and initiatives are set up that reflect a complex set of negotiations between the Commission (and its DGs, notably DGs EXREL and DG DEV), the members of the management committee for the policy area (involving representatives of member states), European Parliament’s Democratic Caucus and Human Rights committee, and a selection of civil society and NGO actors (see e.g. Rihackova, 2008). The result is a ‘compromise’ approach to democracy promotion and one that is, as a result, explicitly evasive of specific political or ideological leanings or stances. There is in the EIDHR too a depoliticising tendency: vague liberal democratic language is used but no specific political leanings or interpretations are adopted with regard to how human rights or democracy should be conceived and what kind of actors should be funded. Although ‘governance aid is now embedded in European aid bureaucracy...[it is] not readily guided by political direction’ (Youngs, 2008: 168).

What does this mean for democracy promotion of the EIDHR? That all kinds of democratising political actors are funded? Or simply that the question of politics is sidelined, and that as a result, inadvertently, some kinds of actors are funded while others are not? It seems that the latter is the case, and, importantly, that the Foucauldian perspective can help us shed new light on the workings of the seemingly non-ideological tendencies in EU democracy promotion. It allows us to understand that despite the non-ideological background discourse, the EIDHR’s policies and practices, may still amount to, if not an explicit ideology, a set of ‘rationalities’, which constrain and dispose actors funded in specific ways.

But what kind of actors are funded and how limiting is the scope defined for them? Without conducting individual analyses of civil society organisations it is difficult to answer this question fully. Yet, some concluding reflections can be made.

First, the actors that are funded are those that accept that democratisation is a progressive process, and an inevitable process, for modernising actors. Non-democratic or non-democratising civil society forces have no room within the EIDHR’s funding streams. It is also expected that actors accept, as the EIDHR does, that democratisation enforces the wealth and prosperity of the target countries and their populations. The EIDHR’s Strategy Document

(EC, 2006) is replete with unstated assumptions to the effect that democratisation is something to be pursued for modernising progressive states, individuals and civil society organisations, and, indeed, rationally efficient and prosperity-enhancing for the target countries. To be, or to aim to be, democratic is what is deemed as 'rational', and this rationality is arguably tied to a wider developmental rationality.

The above analysis would also suggest that liberal sets of assumptions underlie the practices of the EIDHR. It is broadly a liberal pluralist set of assumptions that are made about civil society, as a check on state and as site for critical activity by autonomous actors. Yet, there is a curious aspect to this liberalism as we have seen. First, as we have noted, it is curious in the sense that it is seemingly non-ideological. Very rarely does the EIDHR openly acknowledge its liberal principles: they are instead simply assumed as background assumptions. Second, and to which I will now turn, this liberal rationality, it would seem, is far more active and interventionist in nature than one would expect with classical liberal ideals in mind.

As we have seen, the rationality that emerges in the EIDHR implies that democracy is something to be facilitated through active intervention. The EIDHR envisages an active interference in the target countries in order to bring about the right kind of conduct and freedoms within them. In this sense, the EIDHR is in Foucauldian terms, precisely about the 'conduct of conduct'. Its calls for proposals and management tools envisage particular kinds of actors, ones that with the right active incentivisation will become advocates of the right kinds of freedoms and active self-regulators and managers of their own projects and activities.

Furthermore, it is notable that a neoliberal set of rationalities seem to emerge from the documents and management structures. While it is not openly specified what individuals or societies should look like, from the practices of the EIDHR emerges a vision of entrepreneurial individuals and civil society organisations that actively control and delimit the state, that compete with each other for resources, and that market themselves and their solutions and services to productive citizens. Even if seemingly social democratic civil society organisations are funded, the logic is that civil society organisations should take on the role of service provision from the state, or facilitate its functioning through their 'privatised' capacity-building.

As a result an implicit market model of democracy (see e.g. McPherson, 1977) emerges from the practices of EIDHR – both in terms of the dominant conception of what democratic civil society and state should look like in target states (liberal entrepreneurial) and in terms of what 'democratic' democracy promotion involves (competition for funds). Although the EIDHR takes no sides in the ideological debate about what kind of democracy should be promoted, it seems that implicitly its objectives, CfPs and management structures create an environment where a specific model is encouraged. Even if lip-service may be paid to social democracy or participatory democracy, or to political pluralism, dispositions that seem to contradict the core elements of these models (which emphasise democratic control of markets, strong regulating state, solidarity-enhancing and democratically functioning civil society of voluntary actors), seem to nevertheless be implied. This, arguably, creates some limits to the scope of democratic alternatives that are funded and assisted by the EU. Not all organisations stand in good stead to receive EU funding, such as: radical democratic organisations with 'overly' ambitious structural or non-activity based objectives; local organisations without an international framework or reach; non-competitive organisations or organisations without ability (or will) to compete for external funding; non-activity-based (and hence measurement-

evasive) organisations; or non-professionalised non-managerially inclined organisations. The governmentality logics in the EIDHR create not only limitations to the kinds of ‘pluralistic’ alternatives the EU can fund, but also, the system itself creates self-regulating limitations as to how CSOs (even when radical, socialist or social democratic in nature) should conceive of themselves and their role in their democratic societies.

Conclusions: Governmentality in and through EIDHR

Paradoxically, the people responsible for producing and reproducing development rhetoric – policy-makers, managers and consultants – are themselves largely captive to their own words and concepts (Gould, 2008, 2).

The EU democracy promotion framework provides a particular set of tools, and truths, for the democratic masses of the 21st century. As admirable as democracy promotion activities can be at their best, it is important to note that they are not power-free. Indeed, we have seen here that even despite the move towards civil society support and local ownership in democracy promotion, it can imply the prioritisation of some democratic visions over others. Democracy promotion may then shape the nature of target states and publics in deep and thorough-going ways, even if it adopts non-ideological and technical framework and language and devolves powers to civil society actors. This paper, employing the Foucauldian perspective, has suggested that the rationalities and techniques that emerge from objectives and practices of the EIDHR are not necessarily intentionally applied by bureaucrats or desk officers for specific strategic ends. Yet, nevertheless, rationalities may emerge, and as a result, not all kinds of democratic actors or economic visions stand in equal stead to be facilitated by the EU democracy promotion programmes. Many voluntary organisations, small-scale organisations, non-funded organisations, non-professionalised organisations, anti-EU, or non-internationalised organisations do not feature within the purview of the EIDHR. And this is not all for, simultaneously, the CSOs that are funded are disposed in specific ways by the funder.

The EU promotes an active and productive civil society. However, it also promotes rights-based CSOs and ones that will take on the responsibility to keep the state in check. At the same time it promotes a civil society that will take on the functions of the state, when needed, and a civil society within which *homo oeconomicus* can productively function. It encourages a civil society takes on the role of ‘service’ provision in areas where it is more beneficial for it to do so than for the state. And moreover, the EIDHR promotes a civil society of this kind, not by ‘letting it be’ but by actively bringing it about – interventions are necessary for the creation of the right kind of ‘freedoms’. It encourages civil society organisations to realise themselves as entrepreneurial actors competing for funding and ‘pitching’ themselves as rational and progressive actors for change. At the same time, the project management tools of the EIDHR ensure that organisations and individuals within them regulate themselves to act in ways that are decentred, yet precise, action-centred, cost-effective and objectively measurable. In so doing, the EIDHR seek to manage the publics of the target states, pushing them in the direction of the right kind of freedoms and away from the wrong kind of civil society activities.

But how successful are such efforts? This is an important question, but also one that is very difficult to answer. It is difficult to answer for two reasons. First, it is difficult to obtain proof of the success or otherwise of governmentality techniques and rationalities. From a cursory

survey it seems to be the case that the language and hence the underlying assumptions of the neoliberal rationalities and techniques pointed to here do get adopted by many civil society organisations that work with the EIDHR (EC, 2009). It may of course be the case that the CSOs may merely ‘play’ the funder, and that governmentality does not then have direct effect in governing the CSO actors. Yet, it is reasonable to assume that language itself can play, even unconsciously, an important role in shaping and guiding the very beliefs of organisations themselves. Indeed, it is because of the power of language to shape actions that the EU has from the start attached great importance to language of democracy and human rights in its co-operation with target states (see e.g. EC, 1995). Language is rarely in long-term merely rhetorical but it comes to guide ideational understandings of the world. Thus, even if CSOs themselves treat EIDHR funding requirements and aesthetics strategically, they are likely to be shaped by them. Curiously that is precisely the way in which governmentality techniques tend to function: without the full knowledge or awareness of their implicit effects on those to whom they are applied. Obtaining clear evidence of success then is deeply problematic, for not only is it difficult to access CSOs intentions, but further they may not provide us with trustworthy answers.

Second, we must also note that, as Foucault himself always powerfully asserted, governmentality techniques and rationalities are never complete, nor should we expect them to be. They are logics, which can be and inevitably are, mediated when encountered in different contexts. They do not work as universal mechanistic ways but must be analysed in their complex societal and cultural contexts. Analyses that delve into the many contexts that mediate the EIDHR’s practices in different countries should be conducted to gain a better sense of how such logics are, in practice, mediated and shaped. We need to gain a better sense of the kind of effects governmentality has on CSOs, but also of the room for negotiation and resistance to these governmentality techniques within the EIDHR framework.

But if we accept, on the basis of the initial and incomplete analysis advanced here, the role of governmentality techniques and rationalities pointed to, what does this mean for how we should approach and evaluate EU action in the area of democracy promotion? It by no means entails we need to do away with democracy promotion. Yet, it does raise for consideration five important points.

First, it needs to be recognised that EU’s civil society support and local participation in democracy promotion may not be the golden goose that it seems to be for some. Despite emphasis on local ownership, this does not mean that local ownership is practiced unconstrained. As we have seen various forms of self-regulation and disciplining function in the EIDHR’s policies. As a result, the EIDHR does not support all kinds of civil society, nor necessarily ‘authentically’ grass-roots reflective civil society.

Second, we need to be more finely attuned to the hidden politics, and hidden power politics of EU’s depoliticised democracy promotion system. Even in the absence of a clear cut and explicitly delineated ideology certain rationalities and assumptions, and power relationships or effects may emerge from practices. Thus, EU democracy promotion cannot be perceived as unbiased, non-ideological and non-interfering in the political and economic systems of states. It is, as is all democracy promotion, deeply political and economical facilitation of particular visions of good life, not all of them.

Third, we need to recognise the possibility that hidden economic as well as political visions are implicit in democracy advocacy. The Foucauldian framework sensitises to understand that

even when economic rationalities are seemingly not present, they may be hidden deep within frameworks of thought in relation to political and cultural activities. The civil society support through competitive funding calls for example is not a neutral non-economic exercise but about the facilitation of an image of homo oeconomicus within civil society. Socio-economic functions within states too may (inadvertently perhaps) be fragmented away from the state through civil society support.

Fourth, the analysis here suggests that EU democracy promotion may be constrained in the extent to which it can take account of and promote 'democratic dialogue' about the meaning of democracy, a stated aim of some actors within the EU. Democratising democracy promotion (de Sousa Santos, 2005) and dialogue surrounding it may be a valuable end goal but we need to be reflective of what models of democracy are used to 'democratise' democracy promotion: a market model of democracy at the centre of the EIDHR is not arguably the model of democracy in mind of many political and social actors in target states and may in fact render it more rather than less difficult to bring about real democratic dialogue on democracy.

Fifth, we need to recognise the effects of rationalities for debates on coherence within the EU framework. The EU has been struggling to render its democracy promotion, development and external aid policies coherent, while simultaneously devolving practices. This analysis reminds us that while search for coherence is made all the more challenging by pluralistic civil society support, simultaneously rationalities of certain kind can unite even the most seemingly disparate forms of democracy promotion practice. Coherence can be seen as both an elusive aim and paradoxically a hidden aspect of democracy promotion.

Finally, the analysis here directs us to think critically about the nature and aims of democracy promotion. If there is indeed a hidden prioritisation of style over content, well-managed practice over substantive effects or implementation of strategic visions, this raises the question: 'what is the role of democracy promotion within the EU?'. The Foucauldian analysis suggests the possibility that an important target of democracy promotion may in fact be its effects on legitimation of the EU as an actor and a particular kind of an actor, not necessarily simply its effects on the ground. Aims of democracy promotion may not be what they seem to be, and target of governmentality may be as much the internal constitution and 'actorship' of the EU as the target states and populations.

In sum, the Foucauldian perspective forces us to recognise that civil society democracy promotion is both an important and far less 'soft' and self-evidently benevolent process than is often recognised. This is an important insight, for it hastens us to consider a level of realism and humility when evaluating EU democracy promotion. We need to recognise not just the mistakes or programmatic problems of projects, but more deeply, their underlying conceptual underpinnings and conditions. In so doing, we are in a better position to recognise the politics of democracy promotion, and its economic visions, hidden deep within its presently technical and depoliticised discourse.

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