



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The Legitimacy of Free Trade Agreements as Tools of EU Democracy Promotion

Theuns, T.

Citation

Theuns, T. (2019). The Legitimacy of Free Trade Agreements as Tools of EU Democracy Promotion. *Cambridge Review Of International Affairs*, 32(1), 3-21.
doi:10.1080/09557571.2018.1552247

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Licensed under Article 25fa Copyright Act/Law \(Amendment Taverne\)](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3620477>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).



The legitimacy of free trade agreements as tools of EU democracy promotion

Tom Theuns

University College Roosevelt, Utrecht University

Abstract *This article questions whether the European Union (EU) strategy of using free trade agreements (FTAs) as tools of democracy promotion is, currently, normatively coherent and legitimate. It focuses on FTAs with proximate autocracies and makes four main claims. First, FTAs raise significant legitimacy concerns in that they can ordinarily be expected to generate both economic ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the target country without democratic processes in place to legitimate these costs. Second, the EU risks empowering autocrats (rather than catalysing democratic transition) in the way it negotiates FTAs. Third, ‘leverage’ strategies of withholding or suspending cooperation as a result of violations of democratic and human rights norms are applied inconsistently by the EU, undermining leverage credibility. Fourth, the best-case impact of regulatory convergence with the EU *acquis communautaire* on the democratic character of sector-level policymaking is mixed: increased transparency and accountability can improve democratic credentials, while, paradoxically, increased stakeholder participation is normatively suspect in the absence of a democratic framework.*

Introduction

Free trade agreements (FTAs) are amongst the most important tools of European Union (EU) foreign policy.¹ In particular, the EU uses FTAs to pursue its foreign policy agenda, including furthering the ‘normative’ goals of EU foreign policy: democracy, human rights and good governance.² Of course, the EU also has other tools for promoting these ends, most famously incorporation

¹ This article is a revised version of part of the fourth chapter of my PhD, ‘The legitimacy of EU democracy promotion in the neighbourhood’, which I defended in October 2017 at Sciences Po Paris. I would like to thank my supervisor, Justine Lacroix, as well as my examiners, Ben Crum and Kalypto Nicolaïdis, and jury members Ariel Colonomos and Annabelle Lever for invaluable comments. I would also like to thank the participants of the panel ‘Justice in Europe’ at the 2018 European Consortium for Political Research Standing Group Conference on the EU for comments, particularly co-panelists Joseph Lacey, Glyn Morgan, Barbara Oomen, Orsolya Salát, John Pitseys, Andrea Sangiovanni, Juri Viehoff and Bertjan Wolthuis.

² Some might argue that FTAs ought not be considered tools of democracy promotion. However, the EU does consider them in this light, speaking of such agreements as ‘key instruments in support of democratic transformation’ (European Commission 2013, 15) and ‘democratic reform’ (European Commission 2011, 9). Furthermore, FTAs and democracy promotion are both, at least independently, unquestionably goals of EU foreign policy; it thus makes sense to examine the coherence of these two goals with one another.

into the EU itself. This article, however, focuses on the EU's use of FTAs to promote democracy.

Specifically, this article questions whether the EU strategy of using FTAs as a tool of democracy promotion is normatively coherent and legitimate. 'Normative coherence' refers to a 'weak' coherence where a set of policies, rules and principles do not contradict one another on a normative plane, rather than a 'strong' coherence which requires such policies, rules and principles to follow from a single foundational principle (Raz 1992). Normative legitimacy, in contrast, gives political agents a claim to normative authority. It is to be clearly distinguished from two forms of 'descriptive' legitimacy: (1) the 'internal' sociological (or 'Weberian') legitimacy of EU democracy as perceived by citizens; and (2) the 'external' sociological legitimacy of such action as perceived by relevant foreign policy actors. In focusing instead on normative legitimacy, this article is centrally a work of applied political theory. Where relevant, the analysis suggests certain reforms to EU democracy promotion policy. Here, though, institutional recommendations must remain embryonic and focus mainly on developing the right principles by which EU democracy promotion could be more coherent and democratically legitimate. Although the degree to which policies are politically illegitimate and, especially, incoherent will negatively impact on their efficacy, the central object is not to ascertain how effective it is to pursue EU democracy promotion through FTAs, which would be better assessed by an empirical study.

The arguments in this article are directed at countries where the EU desires to achieve political reforms and uses FTAs as part of the range of foreign policy measures to accomplish them. This is most clearly the case in countries with which the EU has signed various 'Association Agreements' (AAs), which include commitments to democratic and human rights norms as well as to free trade, especially in the areas geographically proximate to the EU. Proximity to the EU also structures the normative questions surrounding AAs in an important way, given that proximate countries rely to a far greater extent on trade with the EU, and that real integration with the EU internal market is a feasible ambition only for proximate states. The geographical focus of the argument is therefore on the periphery of the EU, including the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa. In the Balkans, AAs are known as 'Stabilization and Association Agreements' (SAAs)³. The main other policy avenue for pursuing AAs has been the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)⁴. In three cases, ENP-negotiated AAs known as 'Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements' (DCFTAs) go much further than the lowering of customs tariffs:

³ SAAs have been signed with Albania (2009), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2015), Kosovo (2016), Macedonia (2004), Montenegro (2010) and Serbia (2013).

⁴ In the context of the ENP, AAs have been signed and are in force with Algeria (2005), Egypt (2004), Georgia (2016), Israel (2000), Jordan (2002), Lebanon (2006), Moldova (2016), Morocco (2000), Tunisia (1998) and Ukraine (2017). The EU negotiated an AA with Armenia in 2013, but this did not come into force given Armenia's decision to join the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. Negotiations for an AA with Azerbaijan were stalled due to tensions regarding the EU's position in the Azerbaijan–Armenia dispute. The AA with Syria, initialled in 2004 (and again in 2008), has not yet been signed due to political tensions and, subsequently, the Syrian Civil War. Turkey, as a state with whom the EU is still (at least officially) pursuing future membership, has its own AAs outside the ENP framework: the 1963 Ankara Agreement and the 1995 Customs Union.

they offer access to the EU's internal market in selected sectors, further regulatory approximation to a much greater degree, reduce non-tariff barriers to trade and create investment conditions similar to EU member states'.⁵

Beyond focusing on AAs with proximate countries, the arguments made in this article target *non-democratic* partner countries⁶ for two reasons. First, the relevant normative questions are significantly different in the context of non-democratic partners. Second, the empirical context of targeting democratic transition (the progression from non-democratic to democratic) is different in ways that I argue precisely raise the question of the legitimacy of FTAs.

There are roughly four ways FTAs have been taken to contribute to a democracy promotion agenda. First, if we are optimistic about the effects of free trade agreements on the aggregate wealth of partner countries, then signing them will make partner countries richer. Some democratization theorists hold wealth to be a prerequisite of democratization (Lipset 1959; Lipset et al 1993; Boix and Stokes 2003). On this view, FTAs could be considered an indirect way of bringing about a perhaps necessary condition of democratization. This is the *free trade modernization* argument and is considered in the first section. Second, increasing the 'linkages' between autocratic countries and democratic EU member states could be considered an effective tool in socializing the elites of those countries to democratic norms (Levitsky and Way 2005; 2006; Freyburg et al 2015; compare Sasse 2013). Since FTAs certainly increase economic and trade linkages, they can therefore be evaluated in this light. This is the *free trade linkages* approach and is examined in the second section. Third, FTAs, and especially the asymmetric liberalization of customs tariffs by the EU and the granting of privileged access to the EU's internal market can be offered conditionally in order to incentivize political reforms (Pace 2009; Börzel and van Hüllen 2014). This is the *free trade as leverage* method and is discussed in the third section. Finally, increasingly comprehensive FTAs require increasingly demanding regulatory convergence between partner countries and the EU's *acquis communautaire*. The rules that partner countries adopt in light of these demands of convergence include commitments to sector-level reforms of transparency, accountability and increased participation in policymaking (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009; Freyburg et al 2009; 2011; 2015). These reforms may themselves be considered to constitute or further

⁵ DCFTAs are currently in force as part of the AAs with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The European Commission has a mandate to negotiate DCFTAs with Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia, though it is currently negotiating only with Tunisia (Morocco requested negotiations to be paused in 2014).

⁶ I define 'non-democracies' (or 'autocracies'—I use the terms interchangeably) as those countries which have scored less than 7/12 points in any of the five previous years (so 2013–2017 for a 2018 coding) on the Freedom in the World Index's sub-category A, 'electoral process', and/or have scored less than 20/40 points in any of the past five years over the entire category 'political rights'. The data are available on the Index's website, <<https://freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-world>>, following the link for Aggregate and Subcategory Scores, 2006–2016 (Excel). The inverse of this formula is what the Freedom in the World Index used (albeit per year rather than over five years) to code what they call 'electoral democracies' prior to the methodological review of 2016–2017, which was first applied to the 2018 index. On the above definition, the proximate states Algeria, Egypt, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Lebanon, Macedonia, Morocco, Syria and Turkey were coded as non-democracies in 2017 (using 2012–2016 data). Other autocracies proximate to the EU that the EU is not currently pursuing AAs with, but to whom the normative arguments of this article *would* apply if it *were* to, are Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Gaza Strip, Libya and the West Bank.

democratization. This is the *sectoral convergence through free trade* method and is analysed in the fourth section.

Correspondingly, this article has four substantive sections. The first, ‘The paradox of free trade modernization’, argues that, even if one is optimistic about the link between rising wealth and democratization, FTAs as tools of democracy promotion raise significant legitimacy concerns: they can ordinarily be expected to generate both economic ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ in the target country, which may lack the democratic processes that might legitimate the situation. The second section, ‘Are free trade linkages counterproductive?’, argues that the EU risks empowering autocrats (rather than catalysing democratic transition) in the way it negotiates FTAs and provides material benefits to autocratic regimes. The example of Azerbaijan illustrates this concern and suggests the EU should adopt a more cautious approach to engagement with autocratic partners. The third section, ‘The inconsistent application of free trade leverage’, argues that ‘leverage’ strategies of withholding or suspending cooperation as a result of violations of democratic and human rights norms are applied inconsistently by the EU, undermining the credibility of this approach. The final section, ‘Free trade and sectoral democratic governance promotion’, questions the impact of regulatory convergence with the EU *acquis communautaire* on the democratic character of autocratic partners. While sector-level transparency and accountability promotion can usually be considered to serve democracy promotion by increasing the expected reflexivity of government to civil society, greater participation by stakeholders in sector-level policymaking fails, paradoxically, to qualify as legitimate democracy promotion activity. This is largely due to the unavoidable illegitimacy and arbitrariness of deciding which persons constitute ‘stakeholders’ in the absence of democratic processes.

The paradox of free trade modernization

Free trade agreements clearly cannot qualify as *direct* democracy promotion. However, there are also ‘indirect’ approaches to democracy promotion that try to promote conditions that are considered an important backdrop to democratization. In their extensive studies of the substance of EU democracy promotion, Wetzel and Orbie (2015, 7) call these kind of conditions ‘external supporting conditions’ or ‘external context conditions’ (Wetzel and Orbie 2011; 2015, 237), and, following Wolfgang Merkel (2004), consider four types: state-ness, state administrative capacity, civil society and socioeconomic context (Wetzel and Orbie 2015, 7–8). This section focusses on the legitimacy of promoting the socioeconomic context through FTAs.

Two things must be true for FTAs to function as a socioeconomic context condition supporting democratization. First, FTAs must generate aggregate economic improvements for partner states. Though this thesis is controversial,⁷ it is accepted here for the sake of argument. Second, aggregate economic improvements must positively impact on democratization. Whether or not this actually happens is also uncertain. Consequently, the legitimacy threshold

⁷ In fact, evidence even for the aggregate positive effects of the economic liberalization policies associated with EU FTAs is mixed (Easterly 2001; Mkandawire 2002; Vreeland 2003; Barro and Lee 2005), especially if we consider income inequality (Nel 2003; Azzimonti et al 2014).

regarding what constitutes aggregate economic improvements for such strategies should be higher than for 'direct' democracy promotion activities.

For the time being, however, suppose, again for the sake of argument, that a certain number of conditions are indeed necessary for democratization. A normative dilemma may nevertheless arise. On the one hand, *ex hypothesi*, these conditions are necessary for democratization to take place. On the other, their promotion may violate democratic norms. Standard justifications for the value of democratization are based on whether or not the process respects and furthers democratic legitimacy, in which political equality is fundamental (for example, Rawls 1993; Buchanan 2002; Christiano 2008). Political equality entails that people's differing 'conceptions of the good' are weighted equally when one decides what will count as authoritative rule (call this the 'equal value demand'). It is not hard to imagine circumstances where the promotion of certain external conditions may fall foul of these normative standards.

Take a stylized example (one, thankfully, far removed from the substance of EU democracy promotion). Some democratic theorists argue for the 'demos-thesis': in order to have a successful democracy one needs a *demos* that is sufficiently culturally homogeneous to ensure what Joseph Weiler has called 'a sense of social cohesion, shared destiny and collective self-identity which, in turn, result in and deserve loyalty' (Weiler et al 1995, 10). Cultural homogeneity could therefore be considered, on this view, an 'external condition'. Now suppose democracy promoter A seeks to promote democracy in culturally heterogeneous autocratic State B. State B has two distinct ethnic populations that are characterized by a lack of intergroup social cohesion and collective self-identity and comprise, respectively, 80 per cent and 20 per cent of the total population. If the demos-thesis is correct, is it a legitimate strategy for democracy promoter A to recommend the expulsion of the minority population as an external condition for democratization?

Clearly, it would *not* be legitimate to promote the expulsion of the minority population. Democratic legitimacy requires that citizens, and their interests, be treated equally in politics (in line with the 'equal value demand'); thus it cannot support the denaturalization-through-expulsion of a proportion of State B's population. Denaturalizing a subset of the citizenry would undermine the core principle on which the value of democratization is premised. In other words, even accepting, *ex hypothesi*, that a particular action may (indirectly) further democratization, it may nevertheless be illegitimate as a tool of democracy promotion if it undermines the normative principles that motivate democratization in the first place. Some (effective) tools of democracy promotion may thus be normatively unacceptable on normative standards internal to the practice: this is the 'democracy promotion paradox'.

The democracy promotion paradox may arise in less stylized examples as a result of the 'sequencing' of democratization. Prior to the democratization of an autocratic state, the governance of that state is, according to any reasonable standard of democratic legitimacy, illegitimate. Policies and rules that are passed in an autocratic state, even where they do not *directly* undermine democratic values and standards, are therefore nevertheless procedurally illegitimate, even if the same policy may be legitimately passed in a democratic state. Does this paradox arise in the context of promoting FTAs with autocratic partners?

That there is a statistically relevant relationship between democracy and economic development is undisputed in the empirical literature. There are, however, broadly two relevant theories of the relation between economic development and democratization. The original, now much-criticized account, popularized by Seymour M Lipset, holds that economic development is a driver of democratization, perhaps even a prerequisite (Lipset 1959; Lipset et al 1993; Boix and Stokes 2003); Przeworski and Limongi (1997, 157) call this the ‘endogenous’ theory—a common alternative is ‘modernization theory’. The second theory of the relationship between economic development and democracy prioritizes the idea that democracies are more likely to *survive*—as democracies—when they are wealthy than when they are poor. That account, the ‘exogenous’ theory (Przeworski and Limongi 1997, 157), gives strong (if not definitive) empirical evidence that it is prudent for democracies to pursue economic growth for the sake of the survival of the regime.

The legitimacy of FTAs as tools of democracy promotion differs according to whether the endogenous or the exogenous theory is right. If, as Przeworski and Limongi (1997) argue, economic development affects the stability of existing democracies but not the likelihood of the democratization of autocracies, then FTAs cannot function as tools of democracy promotion (although they may function as tools of democracy *support*). If, however, the endogenous, or ‘modernization’ theory is correct, then, even assuming the general economic benefit of FTAs for partner countries, FTAs may be illegitimate as tools of democracy promotion for three reasons. First, a focus on economic development as an external condition allows ENP partner states to liberalize *selectively* in what van Hüllen (2012) has called a ‘survival strategy’ of autocratic states. If, in this sense, autocratic states pursue secondary or surface reforms of their economies while maintaining their autocratic character, it is hard to see how economic development assistance contributes positively to their democratization pathway (van Hüllen 2012, 118). Second, promoting external conditions that impose transitional economic costs on partner countries may destabilize relations with these countries in the short term, especially if the EU is ‘blamed’ for these costs (Kienle 2010). Third, FTAs will inevitably have *mixed* economic effects, including social costs to be borne by some citizens and the asymmetric adjustment costs (Prasad et al 2005). Where this is the case, democratic theory insists that the only neutral way to adjudicate across different preferences, interests and judgements is through democratic procedures. In other words, even on the (charitable) assumption that free trade always causes aggregate economic growth and the (charitable) assumption that economic growth is a driver of democratization, the ‘democracy promotion paradox’ may still arise.

It is not the task of this paper to adjudicate between these empirical theories. Rather, the question arises as to *what democracy promoters should do* given uncertainty over the role of economic development in democratization. A proportional and pragmatic approach suggests that given the uncertainty of the evidence between ‘endogenous’ and ‘exogenous’ accounts, the bar for the legitimacy of external conditions promotion through the pursuit of FTAs such as AAs and DCFTAs should be set high. Where such economic policies can be reasonably expected to generate economic ‘winners’ and ‘losers’, they ought to be avoided, since the goal to be furthered—democratic legitimacy—requires that no particular political preferences are elevated above others outside the

democratic process (the 'equal value demand'). Pushing them through in the absence of a democratic mandate undermines the values that are foundational to any reasonable account of the value of democracy. If and when, however, pursuing FTAs can be reasonably expected to generate *roughly egalitarian Pareto improvements* (no 'losers' in the economic sense), then, given the plausibility of the endogenous account, they can be pursued as a legitimate democracy promotion strategy.

With this standard in mind, it seems that the particularities of EU FTAs render them unfit as a strategy of democracy promotion premised on the endogenous account of democratization. The FTAs the EU pursues, especially the DCFTAs, but also to a more limited extent the AAs, require partner countries to adopt aspects of the EU *acquis communautaire* (regulatory convergence) in order to gain favoured access to the single market. If one took seriously the endogenous theory discussed above, such agreements could constitute a step towards these countries' democratization. However, AAs and DCFTAs with autocratic partners raise a version of the 'democracy promotion paradox' by, in some senses, 'imposing' a free trade framework that can undermine democratic norms. The case of economic development promotion in Georgia illustrates the illegitimacy of this approach.

In the context of ENP relations with Georgia, the EU has promoted regulatory convergence and economic liberalization through trade relations (Börzel et al 2009; Kostanyan 2015). Despite initial resistance, the EU cajoled Georgia into launching negotiations for a DCFTA (Delcour 2013, 347–350). While the EU is rhetorically committed to differentiation and co-ownership (Theuns 2017), the EU pressured Georgia into accepting a 'standardised and non-negotiable' DCFTA (Kostanyan 2015, 347). It may be responded that the Georgian case is misleading, and that FTAs negotiated with the EU contain important elements of asymmetry. Where they are negotiated with developing countries, those countries ordinarily are allowed longer transition periods, are offered technical support and can unilaterally exclude sensitive sectors from the agreement.⁸ Thus, the worry about the (anti-democratic) imposition of a pre-set and symmetrical framework is arguably somewhat alleviated. However, despite some differentiation and asymmetry, EU-negotiated FTAs bring to mind a much-cited metaphor about bilateral agreements between partners of different strengths: 'Bilateralism is like cooking an elephant and rabbit stew: however you mix the ingredients, it ends up tasting like elephant' (Drahos and Braithwaite 2002, 194).

Furthermore, given that regulatory convergence, economic liberalization and integration with the EU single market have at best mixed economic effects, creating 'losers' as well as 'winners', we cannot reasonably expect that there will be a consensus on the desirability of these policies. Even if the aggregate picture is one of macroeconomic growth, the only way the plurality of views regarding these economic policies can be neutrally and fairly adjudicated in a way that treats all citizens' views and interests equally (in line with the 'equal value demand') is through democratic electoral processes. Decisions to pursue such policies by autocratic states do not live up to the procedural norms demanded by theories of democratic legitimacy. This tension between the

⁸ I thank an anonymous reviewer at the *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* for this point.

economic and the political aims of DCFTAs and the ENP has been noted (Gstöhl 2016). Regulatory convergence, economic liberalization and integration with the EU market—key goals of the EU in its pursuit of DCFTAs—thus seem *prima facie* illegitimate as strategies of democracy promotion.

In contrast to strategies promoting economic development through FTAs, some other poverty reduction strategies seem legitimate given the plausibility of the endogenous theory of democratization, even with the high legitimacy threshold we have set. What strategies of economic development promotion are, then, legitimate forms of democracy promotion? The strategies must not, like pressure for economic liberalization and trade integration through the adoption of the *acquis communautaire*, raise politically contentious questions that ought, on any plausible theory of democratic legitimacy, be settled by democratic procedures (which are unavailable in autocratic partner states). That leaves only policies that can be reasonably expected to have no ‘losers’, including non-contentious public infrastructure projects, and investment in education and healthcare, financed in such a way (direct investment as opposed to loan structures) as not to burden citizens of these partner countries in ways that democratic legitimacy demands be authorized through competitive electoral processes.

Are free trade linkages counterproductive?

The terms ‘leverage’ and ‘linkage’ have been used extensively in the literature to describe EU democracy promotion. Both of these concepts are useful for evaluating the legitimacy of FTAs as tools of democracy promotion. While both elements have always had their place in EU democracy promotion, EU strategy has changed over time. Initially, linkage was the focus, followed by leverage from the 1990s up to the eastern enlargements in 2004 and 2007 (Freyburg et al 2015, 12–20). In the last decade, an alternative strategy focused on *governance* has been predominant, especially in relations with proximate countries, reflecting the fact that leverage has proven ineffective in the absence of the incentive of membership of the EU (Freyburg et al 2015, 20–24). This section raises some concerns with ‘linkage’, while the subsequent sections evaluate ‘leverage’ and ‘governance’.

The term ‘linkage’ has had a broader use than that currently used in the literature on EU democracy promotion. Developed by Steven Levitsky and Lucan Way (2005; 2006), ‘linkage’ denoted the ‘density of ties and cross-border flows between a particular country and the U.S., the EU, and Western-dominated multilateral institutions’ (Levitsky and Way 2006, 383). They subdivided this approach to democracy promotion into five categories: economic linkages including trade and aid, geopolitical linkages such as participation in treaties and international organizations, social linkages involving populations flows like tourists and migrants, communication linkages constituted by information flows including the penetration of Western TV and radio, and transnational civil society linkages such as ties to Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs), religious groups and political parties (Levitsky and Way 2005; 2006).

Current EU democracy promotion literature separates the strategy of linkage into ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ versions (Freyburg et al 2015, 14–17). Indirect linkage is related to what I have called ‘economic conditions promotion’—the

idea that the economic development of an autocratic partner state can pave the way for 'bottom-up' democratization (Freyburg et al 2015; Sasse 2013). The direct linkage strategy, in contrast, is understood as 'EU-support for pro-democratic societal organizations' (Freyburg et al 2015, 17). This can be material support, such as financing, or the supply of infrastructural resources, or the organization of collaborative meetings, workshops and conferences to support these organizations, their strategies and the collaborative possibilities among them.

FTAs, clearly, facilitate the 'indirect' more than the 'direct' linkage approach to democratization. In the previous section, concerns regarding FTAs as tools of democracy promotion were discussed which also apply more generally to indirect linkage strategies. The controversy over the empirical accuracy of the endogenous theory of democratization ought to set the bar higher for strategies grounded on increasing the wealth of target countries. Focusing on a narrow type of economic development ('indirect linkage') has also been argued to be less effective than pursuing a broad-based linkage strategy (Sasse 2013).

Tina Freyburg, Sandra Lavenex, Frank Schimmelfennig, Tatiana Skripka and Anne Wetzel (2015, 16) agree that the benefits of economic development promotion should be 'spread out as broadly and evenly as possible across the population'. However, they also formulate a second principle, which holds that strengthening mobile assets should be prioritized over strengthening immobile assets (Freyburg et al 2015). Consequently, they have argued that the indirect linkage approach should prioritize developing secondary and tertiary sectors through trade and investment. In the above section, such strategies were warned against—where they require autocracies to liberalize their economies—on the grounds that they undermine the foundational democratic norm of political equality.

A separate worry from the democratic concern with legitimating policies that generate economic 'winners' and 'losers' looks at the potential for FTAs to strengthen the *power* of autocratic partner regimes. This raises a different kind of practical 'democracy promotion paradox', whereby the promotion of an external context condition, under some circumstances, can undermine democratization by empowering autocratic actors. In particular, primary sector indirect (economic) linkages, recommended by Freyburg et al (2015), can entrench and strengthen autocratic regimes.

Gwendolyn Sasse (2013) gives a convincing account that this occurred with European economic linkages with Azerbaijan in the early 2000s. The primary investments into Azerbaijan were into the Baku–Tbilisi–Ceyhan oil pipeline, the Baku–Tbilisi–Erzurum oil and gas pipeline, and the EU-sponsored Nabucco pipeline.⁹ These are precisely the kind of investments that Freyburg et al (2015) argue should be attenuated on their second principle. Sasse (2013) notes that the high economic growth in Azerbaijan between 2004 and 2009 as a result of the boom in the energy sector correlated to an almost 500 per cent increase in military spending. According to reports from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Azerbaijani weapons imports increased a further 249 per cent from 2010 to 2014 compared with the five years before that. This highlights, in Sasse's (2013, 576) words, 'that Western economic

⁹ While Azerbaijan does not have an AA with the EU, it is in the process of negotiating a new comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement to replace the 1996 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

linkages can effectively amount to an indirect means of consolidating an authoritarian regime'. It seems to be a striking example of the kind of linkage that ought to be resisted under what could be called the 'empowering autocrats objection'. The warning can be formulated as a general principle: to be legitimate qua democracy promotion, one must ensure that promoting an external context condition does not inadvertently empower autocrats.

In sum, the legitimacy of FTAs as a tool of EU democracy promotion in light of the 'linkage' approach to democratization is doubly suspect. On the one hand, as an indirect economic linkage, it rests on the controversial empirical premises of the endogenous theory of democratization and the link between FTAs and economic growth. On the other hand, when FTAs are accompanied by large infrastructural investments, or otherwise result in a significant increase in the resources available to the autocratic partner regime, it must be considered whether and when such support will further democratization, given that evidence suggests it can, conversely, entrench and strengthen autocratic regimes.

The inconsistent application of free trade leverage

The 'leverage' strategy is the approach that uses positive and negative economic and political conditionality. Like the term 'linkage', 'leverage' was popularized in the work of Levitsky and Way (2005; 2006). The leverage approach has its roots in development policies. Neither in development policies nor in the more famous use of conditionality—the EU enlargement process—have negative and positive conditionality been used symmetrically. The EU has tended to use negative conditionality only in extraordinary circumstances. This started with withholding development support for Idi Amin's regime as a consequence of human rights abuses in Uganda. In the EU neighbourhood, the decision not to implement the Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Belarus following the authoritarian turn of the Lukashenka regime in 1995 is a good example. Targeted negative conditionality is more common; examples include the EU-imposed travel bans on Transnistrian elites in 2003 (Giumelli 2011) and the sanctions against selected Tunisian, Egyptian, Syrian and Libyan elites following the Arab Spring (Giumelli 2013).

Scholars have argued that the extremity of the circumstances are not the only factors in determining whether the EU will use negative conditionality, and that the EU imposes sanctions selectively and with the EU's economic and strategic interests in mind (Lehne 2014; Grimm and Leininger 2012; Dandashly 2015). The primacy of economic interests can be seen, for instance, in the failure of the EU to change tack in negotiating the AA and corresponding FTA with Azerbaijan in 2005 under the auspices of the ENP, despite widespread electoral fraud during the Azerbaijani legislative elections in 2005, including reports of miscounts, vote-rigging and voter intimidation having widespread results on the election (Raik 2012).¹⁰ The soft approach of the EU to Azerbaijani autocracy can be explained by the strategic and economic interest the EU has in gas piped through Azerbaijan as part of the Nabucco pipeline into Bulgaria and beyond. That security interests can clash with democracy

¹⁰ As I have pointed out, Azerbaijan ultimately backed out of the AA negotiations unilaterally to pursue further economic cooperation with Russia.

promotion interests is also evident from the EU response to the Arab Spring (Pace 2009; Reynaert 2015). Tanja Börzel and Vera van Hüllen (2014, 1041) make the point pithily: 'promoting democracy is likely to thwart stability in the short run'. Their study of ENP action plans shows that the EU pushes a democratization agenda less as ENP countries become more unstable, 'clearly favouring stability over change' (Börzel and van Hüllen 2014, 1044). Their second finding is more damning still: the *more* autocratic a partner country, the *less* the EU has promoted democracy (Börzel and van Hüllen 2014).

These examples clearly illustrate how the agenda of promoting democracy through expected economic incentives from FTAs as leverage can be undermined through inconsistent application. Such inconsistency not only damages the credibility of negative leverage mechanisms, but risks undermining the integrity of normative EU foreign policy goals more generally. The case of Moldovan banking fraud in 2015 illustrates this risk. Initially, the failure to sanction Moldova led to a decrease in trust of Moldovans in the EU.¹¹ In the words of Francesco Montesano et al (2016, 15), 'less strict conditionality on the part of the EU undermines the Moldovan citizens' trust in Brussels, as they associate this with collusion with their corrupt local elites'. As further evidence, they point out that Moldovan support for the European project increased when the EU finally did decide to suspend budget support for Moldova (Montesano et al 2016).

Leverage through positive conditionality has been much more confidently used by the EU, especially in enlargement politics. In the absence of much political appetite for further enlargement, free trade deals are a major carrot that the EU offers to proximate states. Attaching political conditionality to such deals makes a 'linkage' strategy (economic linkage) into a 'leverage' strategy. However, as discussed earlier in relation to Georgia, the EU sometimes seems to be offering trade and market integration agreements in a 'take-it-or-leave-it' manner (Delcour 2013). Offering standardized rather than differentiated packages of economic integration reduces the potential incentive level of the policy.

Further, as argued in the previous section, the relevant legitimacy standard in the case of economic integration qua democracy promotion requires that the economic effect is broadly egalitarian and constitutes a Pareto improvement. It seems likely that the only way to achieve this kind of result through FTAs will be with a very asymmetric approach to economic integration where partner economies are protected from EU competition while still being able to compete in the EU market. Though there is asymmetry in current EU FTA policies, especially those negotiated with developing countries, the level of asymmetry required to generate broadly egalitarian Pareto improvements is not met in current AAs and DCFTAs (in the terms of the metaphor cited above, the stew still tastes like elephant). Therefore, to be legitimate, the terms of integration ought to be subject to democratic decision-making processes that do not exist in proximate autocracies.

That they can be reasonably expected to generate broadly egalitarian and Pareto-efficient effects are minima on which the legitimacy of a policy of

¹¹ The arguments of this paper do not apply to Moldova directly, as Moldova is not considered an autocratic state on the criteria described in the introduction. The example is nevertheless illustrative, and was chosen in light of the data reported by Montesano et al (2016).

positive leverage through the promotion of FTAs is to be tested. Of course, the efficacy of the leverage strategy, much questioned in the literature in the context of economic leverage, constitutes a further important desideratum. Procedurally, however, the question again is the extent to which such agreements require partner countries to adopt EU regulations. This demand is common in AAs and especially in DCFTAs that the EU pursues in the neighbourhood, again calling into question the use of FTAs as an incentivizing strategy of democracy promotion.

In sum, the problems of FTAs as tools of EU democracy promotion from the perspective of the ‘leverage’ strategy are fourfold. First, the strategy has questionable efficacy. Second, it is undermined by the inconsistent application of leverage conditions. Third, inflexibility in the content of free-trade rules in specific bilateral negotiations further undermines the attractiveness of these agreements (and thus their quality as a positive incentive, or ‘carrot’). And, fourth, the rule transfer involved in FTAs, and especially DCFTAs, imposes a set of substantive policy choices regarding trade which democratic legitimacy requires be authorized by competitive electoral processes that are absent in autocratic countries.

Free trade and sectoral democratic governance promotion

Sectoral democratic governance promotion (SDGP), also known as ‘democracy promotion by functional cooperation’, arose in EU studies in part due to a disappointment with the efficacy of the other two approaches to EU democracy promotion—especially leverage in the absence of a membership option (Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2009; Freyburg et al 2009; 2011; 2015, 1–2). There are several formulations of this view, but the most recent extensive treatment occurs in *Democracy promotion by functional cooperation: the European Union and its neighbourhood* by Freyburg et al (2015). SDGP relies, minimally, on conceiving of democracy ‘below the state’ concurrently with recognizing that state government can be (more or less) democratic. If we accept that sub-state or sectoral-level *governance* can be more or less democratic concurrently with state-level *government* being more or less democratic, we end up with four ideal-types: democratic states with democratic governance (call these ‘full democracies’), democratic states with undemocratic governance (call these ‘partial democracies’), undemocratic states with democratic governance (call these ‘partial autocracies’) and undemocratic states with undemocratic governance (‘call these ‘full autocracies’).¹² SDGP suggests that, *complementary* to ordinary democracy promotion—which attempts to secure the democratization of the *government* of autocratic states (both ‘partial autocracies’ and ‘full autocracies’)—democracy promoters should attempt to push ‘full autocracies’ to become ‘partial autocracies’ by democratizing their *governance*.

This claim raises the immediate question of what constitutes sectoral democratic ‘governance’. Freyburg et al focus on the promotion of three procedural goals in sector-level institutions and policymaking. The first is *transparency*, at what Freyburg et al, somewhat confusingly, label both the ‘policy level’ and

¹² ‘Full’ and ‘partial’ here refer to whether or not states are sufficiently democratic in terms of their government and governance, not the *extent* to which they are.

the 'governance level'. Policy-level transparency is focused on how transparent particular policies are. It can be improved by, for instance, making relevant statistical information available to the general public, and commissioning and publishing studies on how people are expected to be affected by particular policies. Governance-level transparency focuses, in contrast, on the responsibilities of those in office, the policymaking process and which actors are involved in policymaking (Freyburg et al 2015, 49).

Alongside increasing the transparency of sector-level governance, SDGP promotes horizontal and vertical *accountability*. Whereas horizontal accountability is usually understood as comprising checks and balances between the branches of government, SDGP focuses on accountability measures between different agencies of the state. Further, in the absence of elections, which are the typical measure of 'vertical accountability', SDGP promotes increased accountability between civil society and state agents (Freyburg et al 2015, 50). Complementing improved transparency and accountability of governance, SDGP encourages 'democratic' *participation* at the sectoral level. Again, in contrast to democracies, the citizens of autocracies obviously cannot participate freely in state-level politics. SDGP, however, posits the desirability of increasing 'non-electoral participation such as the involvement of non-state actors in administrative decision making and policy implementation' at the sectoral level (Freyburg et al 2015, 51).

Based on 'what' SDGP seeks to achieve, 'how' are EU FTAs expected (or designed) to bring these goals about? The basic idea is that FTAs, especially DCFTAs, require partners to adopt large portions of the *acquis communautaire*. Throughout the above sections, this article has raised concerns about the democratic legitimacy of the consequent *substantive* rule transfer. However, SDGP advocates correctly point out that the *acquis communautaire* also contains provisions regarding *procedural* democratic governance—transparency, accountability and participation. As such, FTAs may further the sectoral democratization of the *governance* of autocratic states.

For example, in the water management sector, the EU has adopted two directives on transparency and accountability that apply to environmental regulations in the EU in general: Directive 2003/4/EC on Public Access to Environmental Information (targeting transparency) and Directive 2003/35/EC Providing for Public Participation in Respect of the Drawing up of Certain Plans and Programmes Relating to the Environment (targeting participation).¹³ Free trade deals such as AAs and DCFTAs push partners to adopt these or similar regulations (regulatory convergence) in order to access the internal market. For instance, a 2007 Italian-led twinning project attempting to converge EU and Moroccan legal standards in environmental regulation recommended that Morocco adopt a law similar to Directive 2003/4/EC. Where such activities are successful, this kind of rule adoption, according to the SDGP view, brings autocracies like Morocco closer to the norms of democratic governance.

After 'what?' and 'how?', the thorniest question with regard to SDGP is 'why?' Freyburg et al (2015) not only analyse SDGP as an *aspect* of democracy promotion that has been largely ignored, but also discuss the generally premised *desirability* of SDGP. They are careful though in acknowledging that SDGP does not *constitute* democracy promotion. Indeed, SDGP, as Freyburg et al (2015, 234)

¹³ The example is taken from Freyburg et al (2015, 77–78).

recognize, is ‘a strategy designed to foster progressive approximation to the EU’s *acquis communautaire* ... not ... with the primary aim of fostering democracy’. They nevertheless sketch out two accounts, one optimistic and the other pessimistic, about the impact SDGP can have on democratization (Freyburg et al 2015, 61). The optimistic account, while cautious on whether sectoral democratic governance adoption will lead to state-level democratization, holds that SDGP can lead to ‘democratic enclaves’ in autocratic states (Gilley 2010, 390), may ‘contribute to, or even trigger, the democratization of the [autocratic] polity’ (Freyburg et al 2015, 60) and, generally, will ease any eventual democratic transition by preparing ‘the legal and bureaucratic bases on which every democratic transition can draw’ (Freyburg et al 2015, 8). In general, while somewhat pessimistic about the efficacy of SDGP given the gap they find between rule adoption and rule application, Freyburg et al (2015, 239) do endorse SDGP as perhaps ‘the EU’s best chance in the short term’.

The pessimistic account emphasizes the possible disjunction between formal democratic governance adoption in autocratic states and its *application* (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Where autocrats can enjoy benefits from adopting a veneer of procedurally democratic sectoral governance, this may have unintended counterproductive consequences. Freyburg et al (2015, 8) suggest two. First, ‘sector-specific cooperation with only dead-letter democratic governance provisions may ... stabilize authoritarian regimes’ by giving autocratic governments ‘a powerful argument against claims regarding their undemocratic rule’ (Freyburg et al 2015, 61). Second, getting autocratic governments to implement reforms at the sectoral level may lead to an ‘overall resentful approach to [state-level] democracy’ (Freyburg et al 2015, 61). To the two concerns Freyburg et al raise, two more can be added. A recurring concern in this article, that democracy promoters should worry about providing benefits to autocratic elites instead of generating broadly egalitarian benefits to their populations (the ‘empowering autocrats objection’), may apply as a third counterproductive effect of SDGP. Finally, a fourth objection based on the democratic illegitimacy of identifying certain stakeholders as ‘affected’ by a policy area (and thus eligible for enhanced participation) in the absence of state-level democratic procedures is discussed below.

In line with the approach taken above to evaluate economic development promotion, the main question regarding the legitimacy of SDGP as democracy promotion concerns whether we can expect any normative contradictions to arise between SDGP and the democratic ideal. Arguably, only some versions of sector-level transparent policymaking (specifically, policy-level transparency) and sector-level accountability ordinarily (specifically, vertical accountability) do not raise these potential contradictions.

Democracy requires that citizens have a right to access information about government activities. Without this, it would be impossible for them to accept or reject these activities at elections. Transparency, particularly *policy-level* transparency, therefore seems a prerequisite of democratic accountability.¹⁴

¹⁴ Governance-level transparency is more complex. Jon Elster’s (2013) argument in *Securities against misrule* is convincing on this point—that more transparency of a democratic deliberation or decision-making process can encourage grandstanding by participants and impede constructive compromises between representatives of different interests.

While transparency does not constitute democracy, as the example of SDGP illustrates perfectly, furthering the transparency of sectoral policymaking in autocratic states can therefore be considered an indirect advancement of democratization.

A similar point can be made for sector- and policy-level accountability. Arguably, the notion of sector-level *horizontal* accountability does nothing to promote democratization. Increasing the accountability of autocratic state agencies to one another may, at best, further the rule of law and reduce arbitrary rule. It is hard to see even in this best-case scenario what the link is to democratic government. Improving sector-level *vertical* accountability, however, is in service of democratization. Such arrangements may, for instance, demand that officials respond to concerns of the public by giving written justification of their actions. If effective, such accountability would improve the reflexivity of sector-level policies to civil society, even in the absence of elections (so long as the pessimistic account of the link between SDGP and democratization does not hold). A condition that should be stated explicitly is that this logic is premised on the *kind* of vertical accountability secured by SDGP empowering civil society in a roughly egalitarian way—if accountability is selectively promoted, for example by making government officials in the sector in question accountable only to religious leaders, men or members of a particular industry, then this would be in conflict with the ‘equal value demand’ and ought not be considered an advancement of a democratic ideal.

Promoting increased participation in sector-level policymaking does not, however, meet the requisite legitimacy standard of not contradicting democratic ideals. This seems counterintuitive, but my claim is that increasing participation in policymaking necessarily falls foul of the ‘equal value demand’, outside the full democratization of a particular sector. The illegitimacy of limited increased participation in policymaking is most clear when certain non-governmental actors are deemed (by the bureaucrats or principals of the autocratic regime) to be well suited to participating in policymaking on an ‘epistemic’ standard. It may seem *prima facie* plausible to include, for example, religious leaders in policymaking over subsidies for the maintenance of historic houses of worship. The assumption of value pluralism, foundational to democratic theory, underlines, however, the essential *arbitrariness* of decisions regarding who would and who would not constitute a putative authority on a policy decision, for two reasons. First, the simple fact of making a top-down choice to include some but not others in an otherwise autocratic policymaking process breaks with procedural democratic norms. Second, under conditions democratic legitimacy recognizes, no pre-procedural standard to measure the appropriateness or success of a policy is authoritative.

An alternative approach would be to try to include more ‘stakeholders’ in the decision-making process. In other words, first try to identify who would be likely affected by a particular policy, and then include those people or groups in the policymaking process. The main problem with attempting to include ‘affected’ parties in the design and implementation of policies, however, is that deciding who is and who is not affected by any particular policy proposal is an inherently political decision; this decision therefore ought to be subject to democratic legitimation itself (Goodin 2007). Any top-down attempt to impose a particular view over which parties or individuals are and are not

affected by a decision is a departure from the democratic principle that all views are to be given an equal stake.

In sum, the innovative approach to democracy promotion that focuses on democratizing certain sectors of autocratic governance (SDGP) ought to be treated with caution. Empirically, such policies may backfire, by stabilizing autocratic partner regimes, by generating a resentful attitude of state-level democratic governance (Freyburg et al 2015, 8, 61) or by empowering autocratic elites through increased resources or status. More empirical research is needed to better understand these potential consequences. Improving an autocratic state's policies in terms of their transparency, accountability and participation seem at first blush to further democratization. However, I have argued that only 'sector-level' improvements to transparency straightforwardly service democratization, and only improvements in terms of 'vertical' accountability ought to be celebrated by democracy promoters. Finally, and somewhat paradoxically, I have argued that increasing the levels of participation in sector-level policies is unlikely to ever function as a normatively coherent advance towards democratic legitimacy in autocratic states. With regard to participation, then, democracy promoters should maintain a single-minded focus on state-level improvements and not be distracted by the allure of SDGP.

Conclusion

In conclusion, careful attention to the specificities of the EUs pursuit of FTAs with proximate autocracies shows that they are neither normatively coherent nor legitimate in their current form. The first section of this article argued that the mechanisms by which the EU pursues free trade deals (centrally the demand for regulatory convergence with the *acquis communautaire*) directly undermine a core democratic principle—the 'equal value demand'. If one is optimistic about the endogenous account of democratization, more successful strategies could focus on unilateral transfers directed at broadly egalitarian Pareto improvements in the economies of target states. This conclusion invites further empirical research seeking to ascertain precisely which sorts of economic linkages generate such improvements in autocracies. It is also further motivation to undertake additional research that would perhaps settle the controversy over the role of wealth increases in the democratization pathways of autocratic states. In the second section the role of FTAs in autocracies were considered: although FTAs were argued to enhance linkages, which can be instrumentally important for democratization, they also risk empowering and thus entrenching autocratic rule and ought to be treated with more caution than current policies seem to do. Further, the third section argues that if the EU wishes to maximize the impact of the 'leverage' incentive that free trade with the EU internal market offers, it must apply negative conditionality in consistent and not merely politically expedient ways. The fourth section also suggests that the adoption, by autocrats, of elements of the *acquis communautaire* may, however, benefit democratic governance through regulations committing autocratic states to procedurally democratic governance at the sectoral level, somewhat offsetting the earlier worry.

If the arguments in this article are convincing, we thus have several strong reasons for doubting the current EU strategy of using FTAs to promote

democracy amongst proximate autocracies. In general, given that FTAs empower partners, the default position of pursuing such agreements with autocrats should be sceptical. Still, the article flags several potential reforms whereby the EU could continue to use FTAs with autocratic partners in the service of democracy promotion. The EU should take care to ensure that the economic gains of FTAs are as broad as possible, and do not result in the counterproductive empowerment of autocratic elites. In terms of negative leverage, the EU must decide in a principled way how the desiderata of democracy promotion, material benefits and the EU's security interests are prioritized in order to avoid normative incoherence and charges of hypocrisy. Regarding rule transfer, more attention needs to be given to the anti-democratic effect of imposing a particular economic model on partners. Still, in line with SDGP, some procedural rule transfer associated with FTAs can be celebrated by democratizers. In this light, agreements should push for sectoral regulatory convergence on selective transparency and accountability measures and should be wary of autocratic convergence to EU norms regarding participation in sectoral policymaking.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

Funding

Horizon 2020 Framework Programme (since February 2018).

Notes on Contributor

Tom Theuns is postdoctoral researcher at University College Roosevelt, Utrecht University, working on the Horizon 2020 project ETHOS. His research focuses on the intersect between democratic theory and European Union studies, particularly in the context of foreign policy, and on the right to vote. His PhD, defended in 2017 at Sciences Po Paris, examined the Legitimacy of EU Democracy Promotion in the European Neighbourhood Policy. He has published articles in journals such as the *Journal of European Integration*, the *Journal of Contemporary European Research* and the *Australian Journal of Politics and History*. Email: tjh.theuns@gmail.com

References

- Azzimonti, Marina, de Francisco, Eva, and Quadrini, Vincenzo (2014). 'Financial globalization, inequality, and the rising public debt', *The American Economic Review*, 104:8, 2267–2302.
- Barro, Robert, and Lee, Jong-Wha (2005). 'IMF programs: who is chosen and what are the effects?' *Journal of Monetary Economics*, 52:7, 1245–1269.
- Boix, Carles, and Stokes, Susan (2003). 'Endogenous Democratization', *World Politics*, 55: 4, 517–549.
- Börzel, Tanja, Pamuk, Yasemin, and Stahn, Andreas (2009). 'Democracy or stability? EU and US engagement in the Southern Caucasus'. In Amichai Magen, Thomas Risse,

- Michael McFaul (eds) *Promoting democracy and the rule of law*. (Houndmills, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan), 150–184.
- Börzel, Tanja, and van Hüllen, Vera (2014). 'One voice, one message, but conflicting goals: cohesiveness and consistency in the European Neighbourhood Policy', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21:7, 1033–1049.
- Buchanan, Allen (2002). 'Political legitimacy and democracy'. *Ethics*, 112:4, 689–719.
- Christiano, Thomas (2008). *The constitution of equality* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press)
- Dandashly, Assem (2015). 'The EU response to regime change in the wake of the Arab revolt: differential implementation'. *Journal of European Integration*, 37:1, 37–56.
- Delcour, Laure (2013). 'Meandering Europeanisation: EU policy instruments and policy convergence in Georgia under the Eastern Partnership'. *East European Politics*, 29:3, 344–357.
- Drahos, Peter, and Braithwaite, John (2002). *Information Feudalism: Who Owns the Knowledge Economy?* (London: Earthscan Publications)
- Easterly, William (2001). *The elusive quest for growth: economists' adventures and misadventures in the tropics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, United States: MIT Press)
- Elster, Jon (2013). *Securities against misrule: juries, assemblies, elections* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press)
- European Commission (2011). 'Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: a partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean'.
- European Commission (2013). 'Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: European Neighbourhood Policy: working towards a stronger partnership'.
- Freyburg, Tina, Lavenex, Sandra, Schimmelfennig, Frank, Skripka, Tatiana, and Wetzel, Anne (2009). 'EU promotion of democratic governance in the neighbourhood', *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16:6, 916–934.
- Freyburg, Tina, Lavenex, Sandra, Schimmelfennig, Frank, Skripka, Tatiana, and Wetzel, Anne (2011). 'Democracy promotion through functional cooperation? The case of the European Neighbourhood Policy'. *Democratization*, 18:4, 1026–1054.
- Freyburg, Tina, Lavenex, Sandra, Schimmelfennig, Frank, Skripka, Tatiana, and Wetzel, Anne (2015). *Democracy promotion by functional cooperation: The European Union and its neighbourhood*. (Houndmills, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan)
- Gilley, Bruce (2010). 'Democratic triumph, scholarly pessimism'. *Journal of Democracy*, 21:1, 160–167.
- Giumelli, Francesco (2011). 'EU restrictive measures on the Transnistrian leaders: assessing effectiveness in a strategy of divide and influence', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 16:3, 359–378.
- Giumelli, Francesco (2013). *The success of sanctions: lessons learned from the EU experience* (Farnham, United Kingdom: Ashgate)
- Goodin, Robert (2007). 'Enfranchising all affected interests, and its alternatives', *Philosophy & Public Affairs*, 35:1, 40–68.
- Grimm, Sonja, and Leininger, Julia (2012). 'Not all good things go together: conflicting objectives in democracy promotion'. *Democratization*, 19:3, 391–414.
- Gstöhl, Sieglinde (ed) (2016). *The European Neighbourhood Policy in a comparative perspective: models, challenges, lessons* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge)
- Kienle, Eberhard (2010). 'Ambiguities and misconceptions: European policies towards political reform in the Southern Mediterranean', *Al-siyasa al-dualiyya*, Special Issue, September/October 2010, 11–16.
- Kostanyan, Hrant (2015). 'Neither integrated nor comprehensive in substance: Armenia and Georgia'. in Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie (eds) *The substance of EU democracy promotion: concepts and cases* (Houndmills, United Kingdom, Palgrave Macmillan), 134–148.
- Lavenex, Sandra, and Schimmelfennig, Frank (2009). 'EU rules beyond EU borders: theorizing external governance in European politics'. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 16:6, 791–812.

- Lehne, Stefan (2014). 'Time to reset the European Neighbourhood Policy', *Carnegie Europe Policy Brief*, February 2014.
- Levitsky, Steven, and Way, Lucan (2005). 'International linkage and democratization'. *Journal of Democracy*, 16:3, 20–34.
- Levitsky, Steven, and Way, Lucan (2006). 'Linkage versus leverage. Rethinking the international dimension of regime change' *Comparative Politics*, 38:4, 379–400.
- Lipset, Seymour M. (1959). 'Some social requisites of democracy: economic development and political legitimacy', *American Political Science Review*, 53:1, 69–105.
- Lipset, Seymour M., Seong, Kyoung, and Torres, John (1993). 'A comparative analysis of the social requisites of democracy', *International Social Science Journal*, 45:2, 154–175.
- Merkel, Wolfgang (2004). 'Embedded and defective democracies'. *Democratization*, 11:5, 33–58.
- Meyer, John, and Rowan, Brian (1977). 'Institutionalized organizations: formal structure as myth and ceremony'. *American Journal of Sociology*, 83:2, 340–363.
- Mkandawire, Thandika (2002). 'Incentives, governance, and capacity development in Africa'. *African Issues*, 30:1, 15–20.
- Montesano, Francesco, van der Togt, Tony, and Zweers, Wouter (2016). 'The Europeanisation of Moldova: is the EU on the right track?' *Clingendael Report*, July 2016.
- Nel, Philip (2003). 'Income inequality, economic growth, and political instability in Sub-Saharan Africa', *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41:4, 611–639.
- Pace, Michelle (2009). 'Paradoxes and contradictions in EU democracy promotion in the Mediterranean: the limits of EU normative power'. *Democratization*, 16:1, 39–58.
- Prasad, Esvar, Rogoff, Kenneth, Wei, Shang-Jin, and M Ayhan Kose (2005). 'Effects of financial globalization on developing countries: some empirical evidence'. in Wanda Tseng and David Cowen (eds) *India's and China's recent experience with reform and growth*. (Houndmills, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan), 201–228.
- Przeworski, Adam, and Limongi, Fernando (1997). 'Modernization: theories and facts', *World Politics*, 49:2, 155–183.
- Raik, Kristi (2012). 'EU and mass protests in the neighbourhood: models of normative (in)action', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 17:4, 553–575.
- Rawls, John (1993). *Political liberalism* (New York, United States: Columbia University Press)
- Raz, Joseph (1992). 'The relevance of coherence', *Boston University Law Review*, 72, 273–292.
- Reynaert, Vicky (2015). 'Democracy through the invisible hand? Egypt and Tunisia'. in Anne Wetzel and Jan Orbie (eds) (2015). *The substance of EU democracy promotion: concepts and cases* (Houndmills, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan), 149–161.
- Sasse, Gwendolyn (2013). 'Linkages and the promotion of democracy: the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood'. *Democratization*, 20:4, 553–591.
- Theuns, Tom (2017). 'Promoting democracy through economic conditionality in the ENP: a normative critique', *Journal of European Integration*, 39:3, 287–302.
- van Hüllen, Vera (2012). 'Europeanisation through cooperation? EU democracy promotion in Morocco and Tunisia', *West European Politics*, 35:1, 117–134.
- Vreeland, James (2003). *The IMF and economic development* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press)
- Weiler, Joseph, Haltern, Ulrich, and Mayer, Franz (1995). 'European democracy and its critique', *West European Politics*, 18:3, 4–39.
- Wetzel, Anne, and Orbie, Jan (2011). 'Promoting embedded democracy: researching the substance of EU democracy promotion', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 16, 565–588.
- Wetzel, Anne and Orbie, Jan (eds) (2015). *The substance of EU democracy promotion: concepts and cases* (Houndmills, United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan).