Don’t do it again. Recalibrating the agenda of democracy promotion after failed democracy imposition in Afghanistan and Iraq

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Abstract: Although the local context was disadvantageous for quick and easy transition to democracy, both in Afghanistan and in Iraq the Western community extensively exercised the promotion of democracy toolbox. Right from the beginning, the drafting of the democratic constitutions and the conduct of democratic elections revealed the challenges of promoting democracy in weak (Iraq) or even non-existing states (Afghanistan). Furthermore, the disappointment about the US occupation of Iraq respectively the ongoing foreign domination by the new, but powerless government in Afghanistan let many took up arms. The failure of improving the living conditions and the lack of security let Afghans and Iraqis doubt the value of democracy promoting and made them criticise the externally driven imposition of democratic institutions. Despite of good intentions, Western efforts did not produce the expected short-term results of institutional stability and local support. It seemed that external democratization did not stabilize but even destabilized these two post-conflict societies. Analyzing the failures of Western efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the international democracy promotion community should downgrade of what can be achieved by externals in post-conflict societies.

Key Words: Democracy Promotion, Multilateral Governance, Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Intervention
The Disastrous Effects of Multilateral Democracy Promotion: Comparing Afghanistan and Iraq

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External democratization, i.e., the international intervention in internal transition processes, seeks to foster democratic institution building, stabilize a sustainable democratic political system, and to support the transformation from a warring society to a peaceful one by changing fundamental norms. Following the UN *Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali 1992) and the UN *Agenda for Democratization* (Boutros-Ghali 1996), all UN led or authorized multidimensional peace operations include democratization as an integral part of peacebuilding in order to prevent violent conflict, find and resolve its root causes, and to pave the way for political, social, and economic reconstruction.

The political vacuum after the fall of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and after the fall of the Baath regime in Iraq forced the then US government – supported by several willing democratic Western donors – to draw upon external democratization. Although the local context was disadvantageous for quick and easy democracy promotion successes, both in Afghanistan and in Iraq the international community and international organizations exercised the democracy promotion and protection (DPP) toolbox. This toolbox consists of the global benchmarks of good governance, democratic institution building – including democratic elections and constitutional drafting – human rights education, and economic liberalization (Paris 2002; Wesley 2008; Zeeuw/Kumar 2006). Political tensions, radical ethnic mobilization, or violent conflicts shall then be replaced by peace, esteem of human rights, and democracy.

However, from the beginning, the drafting of the democratic constitutions and the conduct of democratic elections in Afghanistan and Iraq revealed the challenges of promoting democracy in weak (Iraq) or even non-existing states (Afghanistan). The disappointment over the US occupation of Iraq, respectively the ongoing foreign domination by the new, but powerless government in Afghanistan, led many to take up arms. The failure of improving the living conditions and the lack of security caused Afghans and Iraqis to doubt the value of DPP and criticise the externally driven imposition of democratic institutions (Ponzio 2007: 267). Despite good intentions, Western DPP efforts did not produce the expected short-term results of stable institutions and local support, but rather destabilize these two post-conflict societies. This was neither in the interests of the local population nor the international community.
However, did these negative results effect any changes in the standard toolbox of Western democracy promotion? In other words: To what extent did the Western community change their democracy promotion policies towards Afghanistan and Iraq?

In the first section, the Western efforts for the promotion of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq are compared in order to demonstrate the means of the standard toolbox used in both countries. The next section provides a short oversight on the positive and negative results of democracy promotion in Afghanistan and Iraq. Then, possible changes in Western DPP policies facing the situation on the ground are explored and examined. Finally, although DPP openly challenged the security and stability interests of external democracy promoters, some insights as to what extent the Western community continued to invest in democratic regime building will be offered. This paper argues that urgently needed changes were implemented too late, inconsequently, and poorly coordinated. Done in this manner, external democratization can hardly fulfil the high expectations raised by external actors in post-war societies that use the standard democracy promotion toolbox. Therefore, the international community should downgrade of what can be achieved by externals in post-conflict societies.

**Democracy Promotion in Afghanistan and Iraq**

Most of the international involvement in peacebuilding and state reconstruction after a civil war includes efforts of liberalization and democratization. Following the logic of Roland Paris (2002), three transmission mechanisms can be identified. First, international peacebuilders influence the drafting process of peace agreements and encourage local actors to incorporate plans for political and economical liberalization and democratization. For example, this took place in El Salvador, Namibia, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Paris 2002: 644). Second, they provide external advice to war-torn societies during the implementation phase of the settlements. For instance, in Namibia the preparation of settlements of free and fair elections, the drafting of constitutions, and the development of free media was influenced by international peacebuilders (Kumar 2006; Williams 2004). Third, the international financial institutions impose “conditionalities” on all war-shattered states receiving international funds. The IMF and World Bank contribute financial aid only if recipient governments undertake substantial economic and political reforms. They also stop aid transfers if target countries refuse to liberalize their political and economic systems (Paris 2004: 644-645). In this sense, Cambodia, Rwanda, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala,
Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Mozambique were obliged to tackle market-oriented reforms (Carothers 1999; Feldman 2004). Neither the intervention in Afghanistan nor in Iraq evolved as multilateral “peace operation”. In fact, there were unilateral enhanced operations against the regimes believed to have supported the terrorists, who were supposed to be responsible for the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. Consequently, the US-led “coalition of the willing” was urged to invest both in peace- and state-building. Aside from the unilateral engagement, international agencies, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and further powerful nation states of the western hemisphere took advantage of the various previously mentioned instruments and strategies to promote democracy and a rule of law in Afghanistan and Iraq. Alongside the “coalition of the willing”, they supported the rebuilding of a liberal-democratic state. In Afghanistan, this set of instruments came into operation as a multilateral supervision of the transition. In Iraq, these instruments operated as a means of monitoring parallel to the US- and UK-led occupations.

Planning the Peace Process

The 2001 US military campaign against the Al-Qaeda terrorist network and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan opened a window of opportunity for a regime change (Paust 2002). In the course of the bombings, the Taliban government collapsed and the Security Council adopted in its resolution S/RES/1378 Lakhdar Brahimi’s plan for internationally supervised negotiations with the next legitimate and democratically selected Afghan executive and legislative (Afsah/Guhr 2005: 406-409). After a nine day conference (27 November – 5 December 2001) in Bonn, Germany, the four invited factions signed, the “Agreement on Provisional Arrangements on Afghanistan Pending the Re-Establishment of Permanent Government Institutions”, or shorter, the “Bonn Plan” and accepted the timeline for democratic institution building (S/RES/1383). Some commentators criticised the enormous time pressure and the massive external intrusion into the negotiations. They feared a deficit of legitimacy due to a lack of local consultation and representation in Bonn (Rubin 2004a: 6; Suhrke 2008: 636). A peace treaty between the warring factions in the Afghan civil war was not stipulated (Rubin 2004a: 6). The agreement did not even suggest any concrete institutional settings. The consensus merely agreed upon a time line, which should enable the Afghan people to participate in the drafting of institutions. External actors could, therefore, initially avoid an impression of complete external oktroi (Afsah/Guhr 2005: 385). That is also the
reason why the Bonn plan did not contain any reserved power for external agencies and assigned a mere supportive and consultative role to the UN. The so-called “light footprint” approach (S/2002/278, para. 98) disguised the range of humanitarian assistance and capacity-building programs embarked by UN agencies, the World Bank, and other international donors (Mardsen 2003). The slight international monitoring should have been coordinated by the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (Bonn Agreement 2001: Annex II; S/RES/1401); however, essential security guarantees of the OEF and ISAF troops and international financial still helped to usher in a successful transition process (see below). As a result, Afghanistan became dependent by its very existence on external military, technical, personal, and financial help (Nixon 2007; Suhrke 2008).

The US mission against Iraq was first a legitimate act of self-defence in the course of the “war on terror” (Bush 2002a) and for the corresponding search of weapons of mass destruction; later on, it was defined as a mission to build up a model democracy in the Middle East (Bush 2002b). By 8 May 2003, one week after the then US President George W. Bush had officially declared the end of major military operations in Iraq (Bush 2003), the permanent UN representatives of the UK and US sent a letter to the President of the UN Security Council declaring the creation of the Coalitional Provisional Authority (CPA) in order to administer the occupation (S/2003/538); and, by 22 May 2003, the CPA was officially recognized by the UN (S/RES/1483). The mission’s mandate assigned the CPA the objective “to restore conditions of security and stability, to create conditions in which the Iraqi people can freely determine their own political future, (including advancing efforts to restore and establish national and local institutions for representative governance) and facilitating economic recovery, sustainable reconstruction, and development” (S/RES/1483). The resolution equipped the CPA with executive, legislative, and judicial authority under the title of “acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations” (S/RES/1483). Following this mandate, the CPA set the course for democratization. The occupational authorities built up state institutions, prepared national elections, and supervised the process of crafting the constitution (Halchin 2005). The UN’s role in the first years was simply reduced to mediating between the interests of Iraq and the US (Diamond 2005: 53-58; Mills 2004). Later, when the US-presence came under a severe security crisis, the UN gained more ground and became an important mediator in the field.

Implementing Democracy via Constitutional Drafting and Elections
Following the Bonn plan for Afghanistan, the Emergency Loya Jirga confirmed Hamid Karzai in June 2002 as president (Saikal 2002). The Constitutional Loya Jirga met between 14 December 2003 and 4 January 2004 and drafted the new constitution for the “Islamic Republic of Afghanistan” (Rubin 2004b). Contrary to the Bonn plan, the presidential elections took first place on 9 October 2004, and after a slight delay the parliamentary elections took place on 18 September 2005 (Komano 2005). The insecure situation on the ground (S/2004/230: para. 6-8; S/2004/634: para. 17-27; S/2004/925: para. 12, 14) and organisational problems (S/2004/925: para. 6) made earlier elections impossible. Nevertheless, the international community urged the holding of elections, and at first appearances they were correct with these actions. Around 8.12 billion voters participated in the presidential elections, a turnout of 80%. Among them were about 40% female voters (JEMB 2004; S/2004/925: para. 7). The few international observers stated that the elections were peaceful (ICG 2004: 9-11). However, the newly elected president Karzai’s lack of effective power to govern, the deficient security, the poor improvements of socio-economic conditions, perceived election fraud, and corruption let the euphoria on democracy rapidly fade (Glassner 2005; Goodson 2004: 16; Piiparinen 2007: 151). Candidates for parliament and voters risked their lives during the campaigns (S/2005/525: para. 60-66). Accordingly, the voter turnout dropped down to 49.4%, that means 19.8% less voted compared to the presidential elections one year before (Wilder 2005: 33). With the gathering of the newly elected Afghan parliament on 19 September 2005 the Bonn process came to an end. Contrary to the Bonn plan, which allotted only two and a half years, this was all accomplished within four years after the negotiations in Bonn.

Compared to Afghanistan, the Iraqis had less input on the drafting of the interim constitution, and the drafting of the final constitution took place only under strict supervision of US envoys. In reaction to the security problems at the beginning of the occupation, Paul Bremer named 25 representatives, 13 Shiites, 5 Sunnis, 5 Kurds, 1 Turk and 1 Assyrian Christ, as Interim Governing Council (IGC) (Allawi 2007: 166)(CPA/2003/REG 6)\(^1\). The IGC named 25 interim ministers who constituted the first Iraqi cabinet, the Governing Council (GC). The GC contributed to the drafting of the Transitional Administrative Law (TAL), an interim constitution that remained valid until the drafting of the final constitution. The TAL also included a timetable for democratic institutionalization (Allawi 2007: 166)(TAL 2004: Art. 61). The council began the democratization process, but only upon the explicit request and

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expectations of the United States government. The main purpose of the CPA was to transfer sovereignty to an elected government based on a valid constitution (Allawi 2007: 193). Obviously, the CPA continued to pull the strings on democratization, regardless of Bremer’s decision to integrate local representatives in the occupation government. The CPA would keep all responsibilities in its hands until a new government was legitimately elected (Allawi 2007: 192) (S/RES/1511: para. 1). Bremer and his organization used their powers without hesitation. For example, the TAL was drafted almost without any public consultation (Papagianni 2007: 260). Furthermore, the TAL was over saturated with US ideas of nationhood, freedom, and democracy, rather than with Arabian traditions and values. As a reaction to the authoritarian style of occupation, violent incidents against the multinational troops and the Iraqi security forces rose until November 2004. As a result, the Iraqi government, now sovereign since June 2004, had to declare a state of emergency for 60 days (S/2004/959: para. 3). Consequently, the first free elections to the Transitional National Assembly (mejlis watani) on 30 January 2005 had to be protected by intense safety measures. With a voter turnout of 58.3% the Unified Iraq Coalition (or United Iraqi Alliance) won with 48.19%, 140 of the 275 parliamentary seats, the Kurdish parties 25.73% 75 seats, and the interim premier Ayad Allawi’s party received 13.83% of the votes and therefore won 40 seats (Katzman 2006: 6). The Sunni parties boycotted the election.

The main task of the newly elected parliament was to draft a new constitution. The absence of the Sunnis in parliament posed a big challenge to the new Iraqi government (S/2005/373: para. 7). After several weeks of intensive negotiations, mediated by the United Nations, a constitutional committee was created, including appointed Sunni representatives (S/2005/585: para. 6) (Allawi 2007: 405). After all these troubles, adhering to the TAL time plan meant that only six weeks for constitutional drafting remained. Facing the severe security crisis and the deep ethnic, religious, and political cleavages that fragmented the country, the goal of achieving a political consensus was almost impossible. Nevertheless, The US government empathetically insisted on compliance with the time frame (Dann/Al-Ali 2006: 440). When the first version of the constitution was officially announced, none of the main questions on integrity and the organisation of the state were clear among Shiites, Sunnis, or Kurds. The Arab state identity, mechanisms of human rights protection corresponding to international human rights treaties, the procedures of presidential and vice presidential elections, access to water resources and oil revenues, and the case of de-baathification were highly controversial. Only three weeks later, after external intrusion and mediation, an amendment clarified some of these questions (S/2005/766: para. 5). Further amendments were added on 12 October
2005, three days before the referendum. These amendments concerned federalism, Kurdish as the second official language in and around Kirkuk, citizenship, the cultural heritage, de-baathification, and the rules to constitutional review (S/2005/766: para. 6). The majority of Iraqis approved the constitution in the nation-wide referendum. Nevertheless, a consensus among all Iraqi factions was not accomplished. Many regarded the text as an external oktroi and criticised the time pressure and the various external intrusions during the constitutional debates. The ubiquity of US consultants, in particular the behaviour of the US ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalizad who constantly pushed towards unconditional democratization of the country, and the continuous minor role of the United Nations, displeased many Iraqis (Morrow 2005: 3-4). Furthermore, major problems, like the formation of regions in Iraq, the tapping of new oil fields, and the distribution of oil revenues were left open for regulation by law. That weakened the quality of the constitution and postponed the urgently needed consensus among elites (Dann/Al-Ali 2006: 434).

Three months later, on 15 December 2005, the first regular parliamentary elections took place. According to international observers these elections „generally met international standards“ (S/2006/137: para. 11). Once again, the electorate voted along ethnic and religious lines (Dawisha/Diamond 2006: 96). Lots of reports on election fraud, especially in Bagdad and in the Sunni dominated territories required intensive investigations. The official election results could only be announced two months later, on 10 February 2006 (S/2006/137: para. 5). Once again, the legitimacy of the elections was in doubt.

**Conditions of Financial Aid**

In order to foster democratization and development, the international community used in both cases its universal set of global developmental benchmarks. This included the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) encouraged by the United Nations and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers promoted by the World Bank. In the case of Afghanistan, the MDG were launched at the donor conference in London 2006 with the adoption of the „Afghanistan Compact“ (2006); the poverty reduction principles became the basis of the Afghan National Development Strategy (2005) (Nixon 2007: 11-13). These two strategies were anticipated to be implemented first and foremost under the sole auspices of the Afghan government. However, although officially demanded, local ownership could hardly be fulfilled. The consultation with local authorities and jirgas were merely for symbolic importance. The provinces, districts, and communities had no effective power to decide anything, since Kabul
made all final decisions on what developmental goals were chosen and the procedure of their implementation. Local knowledge was hardly integrated in the planning process (Nixon 2007: 12). Furthermore, the centralized system of state administration became an obstacle for the implementation of the poverty reduction strategies. Some commentators even spoke out about an “over-centralization in the system Karzai” (Rubin 2007: 2; Ruttig 2008: 22). Only in 2007 did the government allow for the creation of the Community Development Councils (CDC) on the district and community level in order to support the development goals (Nixon 2008a). Nevertheless, neither the Afghan government nor the international community had a comprehensive concept of governance for the important communal level at hand (Nixon 2008b: 55-57). Finally, the ANDS-process was a sign for the immense dependency on external help. On the one side, some critiques argue that Afghanistan receives too little aid compared to other post-conflict societies. For example, Bosnia-Herzegovina received in the first two years after the military intervention 303 US-Dollar/capita official development assistance (ODA), East Timor 437 US-Dollar/capita, Kosovo 509 US-Dollar/capita, and Iraq even 949 US-Dollar/capita of ODA. In comparison, Afghanistan received in the same time period only 93 US-Dollar/capita of ODA (Grimm 2009: 360). These figures should be interpreted carefully as far as the amount of money does not reveal anything about the efficiency of its spending. Yet this comparison also shows that Afghanistan lacked urgently needed money for administrative and infrastructural reconstruction and socio-economic development. On the other hand, some critics argue that Afghanistan has obtained too much aid. The Afghan government could hardly manage the national budget, and became completely dependent on external direct investment, international developmental aid, and project funding (Müller 2008; Nixon 2007; Suhrke 2008: 643). Consequently, external actors could have controlled about 90% of the national budget by the end of 2005 (World Bank 2005a: 6-8). This would have resulted in the reduction of the government’s sovereignty and legitimacy. Successes would be attributed towards external actors, but not the national government (Nixon 2007: 5; Suhrke 2008: 644). Finally, the Afghan government had no influence upon the drafting of the global benchmarks. Nevertheless, the international community closely monitored and awarded the Afghan government as they arrived at each imposed benchmark.

The international donors also met to discuss Iraq during several conferences in order to coordinate the international help, (e.g. 2003 in Madrid, 2004 in Sharm el-Sheikh, and 2005 in Cairo. While the security situation deteriorated and the British government decided to withdraw some troops, the United Nations gained a more important role in state-building.
Invited by the Iraqi government, the UN developed with the World Bank a five-year-plan for the promotion of reconciliation in society (pillar I), institutional and socio-economic reconstruction (pillar II), and national security (pillar III). The „International Compact with Iraq“ (2007), named and organized analogously to the Afghan compact, entered into force during an international donor conference in Sharm al-Sheikh, Egypt, on 3 May 2007. The UN Security Council resolution 1770 empowered UNAMI to implement the „International Compact“, to coordinate international financial help through the „International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq“ (IRFFI), and to enhance regional cooperation (S/RES/1770: para. 2). Nevertheless, the US had to bear the military burden of the Multinational Forces and the main financial burden of reconstruction.

**Effects of Democracy Promotion in Afghanistan and Iraq**

*Institution Building Effects*

The international community’s success in implementing central democratic institutions could be measured against the progress of the consolidation of an “embedded democracy”, an analytical democracy concept that is borrowed from Wolfgang Merkel (2004). The concept of embedded democracy follows the idea that stable constitutional democracies are internally embedded in five partial regimes of democracy. The specific interdependency and independency of these partial regimes secure the normative and functional existence of a democracy (Merkel 2004: 36). An embedded, liberal democracy consists of five partial regimes (A) democratic elections as mechanism for the selection of political leaders, (B) political and (C) civil rights, (D) the horizontal and vertical accountability, and (E) the effective power to govern (Merkel 2004). Regarding democratic election (A), in both cases the electorate had, at least at the national level, the chance to select their representatives in parliament. Iraq had this opportunity twice and Afghanistan once. These elections were officially declared as free and fair under the given circumstances, nevertheless election fraud was reported. In both countries the election campaigns were overshadowed by violent attacks, and politicians risked their lives declaring their candidacy. Not all candidates were accepted on the lists. During Election Day, women in both countries were intimidated before and during the voting, some voters were frightened by the international troops who patrolled near the election offices, and in Afghanistan some could even vote twice (EUEOM 2005: 3-4; 2 http://www.iraqcompact.org/en/press.asp (24. Juli 2008).
Due to the reported fraud, the official announcement was delayed, and the elections subsequently lost some democratic legitimacy.

De jure, fundamental political rights (B) were included in the constitutions, for example the freedom of expression, the freedom of press, the freedom of assembly and of public demonstration, and the freedom of association. However, the Iraqi constitution reserves the right to possibly limit these rights when “public morality” could be endangered. In Afghanistan, upon the influence of the USA supervisor and the final decision of Karzai, political parties were not accepted as a form to aggregate political preferences. Voters could only choose among individual candidates, without knowing what they would stand for, since many skipped their campaign due to the insecure situations (ICG 2005a: 5-6; Nixon/Ponzio 2007: 30; Suhrke 2008: 640). The formation of free media as an alternative source of information was still underway during the election campaigns.

A catalogue of fundamental civil rights (C) was also included in both constitutions (Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan: Chapter II; Constitution of the Republic of Iraq: Section II). As far as both constituent assemblies were concerned, they opted for a central role of Islam; however, it remains to be seen how individual universal human rights and the Islamic interpretations of rights will be combined. Both constitutions guarantee the independency of the judiciary, but de facto corruption and a lack of local juridical capacity restrain the capability of judges and prosecutors to act as a control authority against the executive and legislative powers. The strengthening of the rule of law only recently became a priority of the international community, although it explicitly urged local actors to incorporate a system of checks and balances in the constitutions.

Regarding the deficits in the judiciary, in particular concerning the supreme courts, the horizontal accountability (D) is limited. Both parliaments have to professionalize in order to fulfill their tasks effectively. Facing the ongoing presence of international actors on the ground, the (E) effective power to govern is the most deficient partial regime. The US lead “war on terror” including the cooperation with local warlords thwarted the multilateral efforts of state-building (Kühn 2008). Neither the Afghan nor the Iraqi central government were placed in a position to effectively govern through the administrative levels down to the provinces and local districts and to implement political decisions. In Iraq, the Kurdish and Shiite tendencies of state separation even worsened the situation. The international community has not yet found any model to reduce that risk of secession.
This overview of the five partial regimes of embedded democracy demonstrates that the international community succeeded in respectively encouraging support for the installation of central democratic institutions like constitutions, basic rights, elections, separation of powers and a codified law. Concerning quality and efficacy, the international community had to lower its sights. Eight years of supervision in Afghanistan and five years of occupation and later monitoring in Iraq were not sufficient to consolidate democracy. There are two explanations: first, the external support did not only come as a benefit, but also as a challenge for local liberalization efforts and therefore produced unforeseen consequences. Second, external strategies were not as extensively adapted as necessary.

**Unforeseen Consequences**

Officially, the institutionalization of democracy in Afghanistan was complemented by the elections to the national parliament and the province councils; however, the international community could not withdraw their troops as foreseen. In particular, security, rule of law, and the socio-economic development were far from the level expected to have been achieved by the end of the official institutionalization process. Concerning security, the US army officials did not achieve their ambitious goals of training 70,000 soldiers by 2007. At the end of the year, not even half of this rate was trained (ICG 2006: 15; Paasch 2006: 3; Rubin 2007: 5). Nor did the German led police training achieve its targets (ICG 2007: 7-8; Jones 2008: 3). The high illiteracy rate, low pay of soldiers and policemen, and the risk to be attacked by insurgents aggravated the recruiting and training of corruption free security units (Paasch 2006: 3; Rubin 2007: 5). Therefore, in 2003 the USA began to invest more in education of policemen and the EU took over the responsibility for the police training from Germany in 2007. However, the problems of insecurity and overburdening the local security forces remained (ICG 2007: 8). Subsequently, the number of security incidents involving anti-Government elements increased from fewer than 300 per month at the end of March 2006 to close to 500 per month (S/2006/727: para 2). The situation then deteriorated in 2007 and 2008. In 2006 an average of 425 security incidents occurred every month. In 2007 that rate increased to 566 a month—most notably the dramatic increase of suicide bombings (UNAMA 2007: 47; S/2008/159: para. 17). The lack of administrative capacity contributed to the worsening of the situation, since the Ministry of Interior did not show the necessary willingness to reform. Many former warlords and militia leaders got jobs in the ministry directly after the fall of the Taliban regime (Rubin 2007: 5). Supported by old loyalties and
armed militias they could continue their policies of patronage and corruption (Goodhand 2008: 413). In view of a lack of professionalized judiciary and a parliament that was quite moderate in law-making, the rule of law reform, lead by Italy, did not fulfil the restructuring expectations (Paasch 2006: 2-3; Rubin/Hamidzada 2007: 16). Concerning the economy, the socio-economic development was completely dependent on the problematic poppy seed economy. In 2007 Afghanistan produced 8.2000 tons of opium, (93% of the world’s opium market), 34% more than in 2006 (UNODC 2007: iv). The rise of the poppy seed production financed criminal networks, illegal armed groups and fundamentalists (S/2006/145: para. 20). However, for many Afghan families the poppy seed production was—and remains—the sole source of income. Consequently, many feared the international community’s constant demand for the destruction of poppy seed fields. Therefore, both the Karzai government and the international community lost credibility seeing as they could not offer any lucrative alternative to the opium market (Goodhand 2008: 417; Köhler/Zürcher 2007: 69-71).

The situation continued to worsen in Afghanistan, meanwhile the situation in Iraq equally did not improve. Even more troublesome than the Afghan insurgents was the fact that the majority of Iraqis did not even begin to accept foreign domination. Many Iraqis saw themselves as victims of the former Baath party regime. They did not expect to come under foreign domination and consequently did not accept the occupiers. L. Paul Bremer, the head of CPA in Bagdad, demonstrated his inability to fulfil his promises of stabilizing the situation and improve living conditions, when he dissolved the army as a national symbol of unity (Jawad 2005). As a result, his unit forfeited over hundreds of thousands of Iraqis’ income when he decided not to allow local elections. In the wake of the unrest, many dissatisfied Iraqis took up arms (Baram 2005; Caan et al. 2005): „Frustrated with the insurgent attacks and unprepared to deal with the complexities in Iraq, there was „a default to meet violence with violence on the part of U.S. forces,‘ [Brig. Gen. John] Kelly observed, which led to civilian casualties and hardened the attitudes of many Iraqis against the Americans.” (Gordon/Trainor 2006: 310). The US- and UK-troops finally were seen as invaders and not as the friendly liberators. After the official end of the major combats the number of wounded or killed soldiers quickly exceeded by far the number of those wounded or killed during the major combats. The independent organization „Iraq Coalition Casualty Count“ counted for the major combats during the period 20 March 2003 to 1 May 2003 348 soldiers wounded and 173 killed. In comparison, for the occupational period 2 May 2003 to 28 June 2004 a staggering 803 soldiers were killed. Until mid 2008 the numbers were summed up to 30,324
soldiers wounded and 4,427 killed. Aside from the attacks against foreign troops, the overall level of violence escalated to a sectarian civil war during 2006 (Cordesman 2006; Ottaway 2006). Assaults against Shiite religious sanctuaries like the Ali al-Hadi- and Al-Hasan al-Askari-Shrine in Samarra in February 2006 or the Buratha-Mosque in Bagdad in April 2006 and vice versa assaults against Sunni mosques demonstrate just a few of the many attacks that were carried out (S/2006/137: para. 19; S/2006/360: para. 42; S/2006/945: para. 66). It seemed that the forced entry of the new constitution did not moderate, but rather even aggravated the inner and inter sectarian conflicts (ICG 2005b: 5). The UNAMI Human Rights Report of 2007 drew a negative imbalance upon the standard of human rights protection and the living conditions in Iraq (UNAMI 2007). Five years after the official end of occupation, Iraq was far away from being a stable, peaceful consolidated democracy.

In both countries, failures in the first years of intervention and a massive lack of state capacity in all areas of administration led the international community to slip into a long-term engagement far beyond what was originally conceived, and there was no clear prospect of consolidating democracy on a sustainable basis.

Dilemmas and Challenges of External Democratization in Post War Societies

A central reason for the difficulties endured in both Afghanistan and Iraq is, that the international community did not entirely deal with the dilemmas, which accompanied the benevolent intervention and externally led democratization. These dilemmas can be differentiated analytically as (1) the “dilemma of benevolent intervention”, (2) the “dilemma of unsimultaneous simultaneity”, and the (3) “dilemma of radicalizing democratization”. The (1) “dilemma of benevolent intervention” deals with the following fact, that due to external intervention in the political transition external actors severely intrude in internal state affairs. They are supposed to leave internal actors responsible for as much of the transition process as possible, however, in intruding external actors introduce their guidelines for the reorganisation of the political system. While external actors advocate self-determination they simultaneously abrogate self-determination. In doing so, each intervention bears a moment of paternalism, and specific conflicts of objectives occur. External actors opt for democratic decision-making and elite selection in order to achieve a sustainable peace. They opt for a rapid stabilization that should be as cost-saving as possible and in return expect to influence the developments of the target country. Peace consolidation by democratization is not

necessarily the preferred strategy of local actors (Debiel et al. 2005: 5). They frequently expect quick financial aid and long term technical support for economic development, but no intrusion in sensitive internal state affairs or an oktroi of political institutions. These conflicts of objectives become apparent when defining an ideal strategy sequence. At this point, one should avoid the (2) the “dilemma of unsimultaneous simultaneity”. In 1991 German political scientist Claus Offe first explained the “dilemma of simultaneity” (Offe 1991; revised Offe 1994). In order to analyse the revolutionary changes in Eastern Europe he distinguished three processes necessary to be transformed simultaneously: first, the problem of territory, that means defining state boarders and of citizenship; second, democratization, which means the implementation of democratic institutions; and third, the clarification of economy and property as well as the solution of acute challenges of governance and supply (Offe 1994: 65). The necessity to deal with these three reform processes at the same time produces not only “a gigantic burden of decision-making, but also mutual obstruction effects” (Offe 1994: 65). In post-war societies the problem of simultaneity is even worse as far as the transition of not only three, but of five partial areas has to be coordinated: first, the building of security and stateliness; second, the transformation of a war into a peace economy; third, the building of the rule of law; fourth, democratization; and fifth the building of a political community out of a more often ethnically, religiously, or socio-economically fragmented society (Grimm 2008). The transition proceeds in each area in three steps: stabilization, institutionalization and consolidation (Merkel 1999: 119-122)(see table 1).

![Table 1: Areas and Phases of Transition](image)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Stabilization</th>
<th>Institutionalization</th>
<th>Consolidation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Control of armed groups, disarmament, demobilization</td>
<td>Training of national army and police, transfer of military and police sovereignty</td>
<td>Consolidating a demilitarised polity, internal and external security</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rule of Law</td>
<td>Control of judiciary, application of transitional law</td>
<td>Training of judiciary, building of courts, prosecution of war criminals, war crime tribunal, transfer of judicial power</td>
<td>Consolidating civil and political rights, impartial judiciary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economic Prosperity</td>
<td>Humanitarian aid, control of industrial facilities</td>
<td>Reconstruction of infrastructure (transport, education, health care), property law, reintegration of combatants, tax reform, currency reform, developmental projects</td>
<td>Consolidating economic prosperity, social justice, faire distribution of prosperity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democracy</td>
<td>Interim administration, selection of functional and territorial representatives for constituent assembly</td>
<td>Reconstruction of administration, constitution drafting, negotiating power sharing institutions, founding elections, transfer of executive and legislative power</td>
<td>Consolidating political institutions, permanent democratic decision-making, regular free and fair elections, peaceful change of government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political Society</td>
<td>Protection of civilians, control of media</td>
<td>Reintegration of refugees, reconstruction of plural media, voters’ trainings, transitional justice, trust building, reconciliation</td>
<td>Consolidating a participative citizenry</td>
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Source: Grimm (2010: 113).
In order to fulfil their functions completely all partial areas depend on each other. However, in a post-war society these partial areas have not yet achieved a level of development that allows them to support the other partial areas. Additionally, malfunctions in one area can cause unfavourable developments in another area, or even block the whole reform process. The dilemma results in the fact that all partial areas transform incongruently, rather than a parallel or even premature transformation, which is urgently needed.

If internal and external actors cannot agree upon an adequate reform sequence they support inadvertently the (3) dilemma of radicalizing democratization. The externally favoured democratization shall pacify violent conflict in reorganising the access to power and in codifying decision-making rules. It shall furthermore guarantee all individuals substantial political and civil rights that improves individual freedom. The most important institution is therefore the democratic elections as a means to select decision makers on a representative base and to moderate political conflict. In a post-war society, hardliners can use the electoral competition to strengthen fear and hatred by highlighting reform mistakes and problems that affect the general public. This then results in the mobilization of the voters, which in turn can polarize the political competition and aggravate societal cleavages instead of building peace. Opponents of democracy even gain democratic legitimacy when they win elections (vgl. Gromes 2007: 368-374).

**The Dilemmas in Afghanistan and Iraq**

In order to contribute effectively to the political transition external actors should be aware of these dilemmas and they should have a counter strategy. In Afghanistan and Iraq however, both were only marginally existent. In both cases external actors slipped directly in the dilemma of benevolent intervention with their efforts to induce democratic institutions after military intervention. In Afghanistan, external actors tried to avoid the dilemma in supervising the negotiations for a institutionalization timetable. According to Lakhdar Brahimi’s “light footprint” approach the main responsibility of transition should be directly in the Afghans hands. The UN Secretary General Special Representative hoped for more “local ownership” in the process. However, the approach proved soon to be unsuitable (Suhrke 2008). The situation on the ground did not relieve external actors from their responsibility to support the transition and to avoid a power vacuum. The US strategy to prioritize the “war on terror” instead of a sustainable state-building only worsened the situation. The severe situation of insecurity demanded more military, political and financial engagement of the international
community than originally assumed (Kühn 2008; Nixon 2007; Ruttig 2008). Automatically external actors gained central capabilities of control; for example, the responsibility of training security forces or managing the national budget. (Grimm 2009: 242-245).

In Iraq, external democratization was from the beginning seen as inappropriate (Diamond 2005; Feldman 2004). The benevolent intervention in favour of a “model Muslim democracy” (Bush 2002b) was flawed with a illegitimate military and political intervention (Wolfrum 2005). The authoritarian style of chief CPA Bremer and the reluctant incorporation of local actors in transition government let a majority of Iraqis perceive the external intrusion as a neo-colonial okroi of democracy (Allawi 2007: 166; Grimm 2009: 271-275). The well-intentioned idea of democratization was in both cases followed by a more or less authoritarian implementation not tolerated by local actors.

Therefore, the dilemma of “unsimultaneous simultaneity” had its full impact on both countries. In both countries institutionalization procedures in all partial regime started before stabilization in the areas of security, political community, and socio-economic well-being were achieved. In Afghanistan, directly after the Bonn Agreement the stepwise institutionalization of democracy was enhanced although security was never achieved (Grimm 2009: 245-250; Rubin/Hamidzada 2007). In Iraq, too, the US troops became more involved in the “war on terror”. The inability of the CPA and multinational forces to secure civilians’ lives against insurgent attacks and the torture scandal of Abu Ghraib discovered by US journalist Seymour M. Hersh in April 2004 completely undermined the credibility of the external democracy promoters (Balestrieri 2004; Hersh 2004a, 2004b; Taguba 2004). Finally, the CPA was urged to transfer sovereignty earlier than planed back to the Iraqi Interim Government (S/2004/710: para. 3). In both cases, stabilization efforts were protracted over the long process of completing pacts, building institutions, and consolidating democratic institutions. In spite of this effort, both Iraq and Afghanistan lacked stability in the areas of security, socio-economic prosperity, and political community. Instead, violence escalated into civil war in Afghanistan after the fifth year of intervention; in Iraq the second year (PRIO 2007). This placed high pressure on the young democratic institutions, which risked losing their credibility and legitimacy. It seemed that both countries were aiming for a downward spiral losing political legitimacy, destabilization, and socio-economic stagnation. This negative cycle is a problem resulting from the radicalization of democratization. The external actors’ strategy to contain the hardliners’ power and to support moderates by holding elections on a regular basis, and thereby to use elections as an exit strategy, was unsuccessful (see Manning 2004). On the contrary, democracy euphoria passed away between the founding
and subsequent elections. The Afghans and the Iraqis made the young democratic institutions responsible for the inability of external and internal actors to achieve security, for the lack of socio-economic improvements, and for widespread corruption. Democracy was associated with chaos and anarchy (Köhler/Zürcher 2007). The loss of legitimacy gave radicals the chance to mobilize supporters against the government and the external actors by balancing the government’s achievements in a foreshortened way (Baram 2005). Election success gave fundamentalists and nationalists the chance to block reforms in the parliaments (Katzman 2006; Wilder 2005).

**Insufficient Solutions**

The first answer of the international community to the dilemmas was to raise the number of troops in both countries. In Afghanistan the levels of military personal was increased in 2007 and in Iraq in 2005 (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Strength of Military Mission in Afghanistan and Iraq**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>MNF-I</td>
<td>2003-?</td>
<td>156.654</td>
<td>174.714</td>
<td>183.000</td>
<td>152.200</td>
<td>170.961</td>
<td>170.961</td>
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“The surge” of troops in Iraq of 2007, when levels were raised up to 170,000, again calmed the situation until mid 2008 (Enterline/Greig 2007; ICG 2008: 1; Rogg 2008: S/2007/608: para. 50; S/2008/19: para. 68). Nevertheless, many parts of Iraq besides Kurdistan could not be estimated as safe (S/2008/266: para. 58). Black market activities and corruption dominated daily life (Looney 2008). The second main answer of the international community was to raise donor money constantly in both cases since the beginning of the military intervention (see table 3).
Table 3: Official Developmental Aid to Afghanistan and Iraq (Mio. US-Dollar)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>2001-?</td>
<td>104,10</td>
<td>87,51</td>
<td>322,86</td>
<td>985,92</td>
<td>1199,67</td>
<td>1701,06</td>
<td>2168,21</td>
<td>2404,57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>2003-?</td>
<td>78,98</td>
<td>84,08</td>
<td>100,80</td>
<td>85,05</td>
<td>2094,98</td>
<td>4393,82</td>
<td>21824,70</td>
<td>8487,83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, a lack of administrative personal and administrative capacity caused a delay in investing the donor money in local projects (Nixon 2007; Nixon/Ponzio 2007; Tarnoff 2008: 12). To summarize, neither the response of “military” nor “money” ultimately pacified the political situation in the countries. None of the central questions in Afghanistan (dealing with the Taliban insurgents, administering the state on all vertical levels, containing the poppy seed industry) and in Iraq (the existence of a Kurdish state, the access to oil revenues, the quality of the administration of the state), could be solved until the end of 2008. The international community was unsuccessful in completely defeating the insurgents. Without a doubt stabilization in the partial area of security is a major prerequisite for peace and development, but without a capable state government, an effective power to govern, and a credible socio-economic development the insurgents will hardly accept any alternative to war.

Conclusion

Supposedly, without external assistance a country in crisis would struggle even harder to find its way towards stable, functioning, and representative democratic political institutions. Only in a few cases could the conflict parties alone manage the transition from civil war to peace and democracy (Ramsbotham et al. 2005: 168). Empirically, most of the war prone countries are about to democratize their systems after (civil) war under external monitoring, restricted by development aid (Brown 2005), positive and negative political “conditionalities” (Ethier 2003), or in some cases incited by the prospect of future membership in an attractive economic or political organization (Mansfield/Pevehouse 2006). Regarding the severe consequences of violent conflict, humanitarian atrocities, and civil war, most national elites are overextended with managing the post-war period. They are not able to negotiate a basic political consensus for the stabilization of the country, their relationships amongst each other lack confidence, and powerful veto players spoil the peace process. The war can be over, but the root causes of conflict may persist. To meet these challenges, monitoring, supervision, or
transitional administration by external actors often seem to be the only plausible solutions (Chesterman 2004; Grimm 2009; Pugh 2000).

However, time, resource and lack of confidence restrictions are crucial obstacles on the way to democracy. Nonetheless, the behaviour of external intervening parties is influential in itself. This is especially true if their behaviour is evidently not guided by altruistic motives. Target societies are sensitive to the fact that even “benevolent” motives can function just as a façade covering other national interests like security, trade, economic prosperity, and the regaining of political influence. Depending on how important and how obvious the intrinsic motivation is, the intervener runs the risk of losing its credibility in the eyes of both the international public and the targeted society (Diamond 2005; Feldman 2004).

Using “democracy” just as a label to frame other hard power interests undermines even well-meant support and advice. Therefore, as the article has shown, because of external “help”, Afghanistan and Iraq have thus far not successfully sustained full-fledged democratic institutions. However, the young Afghan and Iraqi democracies suffer from severe defects, e.g. administrative malfunctions, corruption, election fraud and instability. Day by day the consolidation of their fully functioning democratic institutions is moving farther beyond reach. Although recognizing these developments, the international community has not yet found a recipe to promote stability and democracy at the same time. For now, it continues to promote “democratic” institution building, “democratic” elections and “democratic” decision-making, mean while “democracy” as a concept of legitimate rule by the people becomes flawed. Urgently needed strategies that could countervail the appearance of the “dilemma of benevolent intervention”, the “dilemma of unsimultaneous simultaneity”, and the “dilemma of radicalizing democratization” were not developed by the international community. Standard answers like “more troops” or “more money” do not solely solve the challenges. Thus, external democratization can hardly fulfil the high expectations raised by external actors in post-war societies using the standard democracy promotion toolbox. Therefore, the international community should downgrade of what can be achieved by externals in post-conflict societies, it should foremost contribute honestly to the improvement of socio-economic conditions, and it should refrain from intruding in the domestic political affairs of the target country.
References

Documents


Secondary literature


