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Richard Youngs, ed. *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: A Critical Global Assessment.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. 206 pp. $60.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8018-9732-0.

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By 2001, it appeared that Europeans had successfully developed into a new and novel force promoting democracy. The end of the Cold War, the Maastricht Treaty for expanding the European Union (EU), and the successful launch of the Euro all pointed to a new era in global politics, with the EU taking the fore in encouraging democracy either through outright expansion or the use of its "soft power" to encourage despotic governments to move in the direction of democracy. The question emerges, however, just how successful has the EU been in promoting democracy, not only in its own backyard but in other regions as well? In answering this question, the authors in this collection of essays reveal the EU's mixed success in bringing democracy to other nations and call into question whether the EU can be considered as having an unified foreign policy, much less a novel one that transcends traditional geo-strategic concerns.

The book's editor, Richard Youngs, the director of the FRIDE think tank in Madrid and the volume's organizer, has penned a thoughtful introduction. He notes that many scholars point to the EU as the most significant global force in democracy promotion, and that its existence challenges realist notions of national self-interest as the sole determinant in explaining international relations. He contends, however, that negative trends, including democratic reversals, the weakening financial support for democratic initiatives, and the slowdown in democratic enlargement bordering the EU seem to indicate stalled momentum. This volume then addresses a number of specific questions, especially whether the EU is indeed still the fount of democracy expansion, or whether other concerns dominate the foreign policies of the member states and the EU itself. Furthermore, is there still agreement as to the nature of democracy, especially across regions? Lastly, is there still transatlantic cooperation in this project? And, what about the Russians? The authors seek to provide "thicker" narratives of EU policies, motivations, and relative successes, to investigate case studies that go beyond regions, and to move beyond clichés in democracy literature. In all of this, the authors express serious doubts about the success of recent attempts at democratization, even within newly accepted EU member states. They note the rise of geo-strategic issues, the significance of indigenous institutions that undercut democracy in recipient nations, and variations of EU leverage as the primary factors weakening democracy promotion. Their findings show that the institutional relationship between the EU and the recipient nation is not determinant, rather political structures within the recipient nation and the impact of EU strategic concerns is "vital and multivariate" (p. 11). In the end, they find that "democracy is a multifaceted concept," with governance rules rather than democratic institutions being the chief export from the EU, whose own insistence on democratization is "held at bay" by overarching strategic concerns (p. 13).

The structure of the book moves from inside out, from a very helpful chapter on unfinished business within expansion of the EU, to chapters concerning adjoining regions, to those focused on regions outside of Europe: namely in Central Asia, the Persian Gulf, and in the Mediterranean. Strikingly, even nations which had extra pre-accession conditionality agreements, such as Romania, have backslid to antidemocratic and corrupt activities recently with Prime Minister Victor Ponta's suspension of the president, Traian Basescu.[1] Apparently EU leverage erodes sharply once accession is allowed. Furthermore, momentum has slowed in the introduction of democratic institutions such as independent courts in prospective EU applicants in the Balkans, such as Slovakia. A more hopeful chapter is Natalia Shapovalova's discussion of "a new partnership" with the Orange Revolution in the Ukraine and the Association Agreement with the EU. I will say more about this in the conclusion. Suffice it to say, the author notes the increasing pressure on the Ukraine from Russia and the top-down nature of democracy reform that again limits the EU's leverage to beget true democratic change through condi-

tionality. This feeds nicely into the chapter on the limitations on the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), primarily because of Russian membership. In particular, the OSCE is hindered by Vladimir Putin's suspicion about the OSCE's role in undermining Russian control in its traditional spheres of influence. Perhaps most interesting are the chapters concerning non-European nations: Morocco, Central Asia, Iraq, and Nigeria. In these chapters, the authors demonstrate–in case after case–how EU democracy promotion has been undermined by the EU's refusal to provide adequate resources; the divided interests of the EU, especially the growing importance of energy policies; and especially the lack of homegrown democratic traditions in the recipient countries. Of interest, however, were the impacts of process, as opposed to actual outcomes. In her chapter on Nigeria, Anna Khakee argues that the development of governance norms can later blossom into a mind-set more receptive to democracy. In this case, the demands for transparency in elections, as in the EU's condemnation of the 2007 Nigerian elections, did not cause these nations to change the electoral outcomes, but did hearten pro-democracy forces within the country as well as cast international scrutiny on the corrupt rulers.

Overall, the authors of this book succeeded in their goals to give a more nuanced, richly detailed, and informative discussion of democracy promotion in action. Happily missing from these well-written essays are the usual stretched metaphors that mar most writing on international relations. Instead, the authors present well-structured chapters with clear explanations of concepts, events, and institutions. They base their articles on up-to-date documentation as well as personal interviews and research in the countries under examination. One small complaint is the absence of a glossary of terms, or even a table of abbreviations. Overall, this book could serve as a welcome addition to the reading list in an advanced undergraduate class on European politics or democratic promotion.

I need to address the timing of this review, however. As the book was published in 2010, the authors had no way of knowing about the forthcoming Arab Spring, or the depth of the EU crisis and Greece, or that the Ukrainian president would be imprisoned and tortured by her successor. In many ways, these articles indicated the direction of democracy promotion when they highlighted the consistent tensions with superpowers Russia and the United States.This reviewer did not receive this book until June 2012. So, in all fairness, I would like to point to an article that Richard Youngs has posted on the FRIDE website.[2] Youngs notes that Europe's funding of democratic promotion in the new Arab states is dwarfed by the transition aid given to southern and eastern Europe since 1990; they are raising the amounts but only for existing programs, and many of the putative NGOs (non-governmental organizations) supported by EU democracy promotion funds are not independent of the regimes. For readers who would like to read an up-to-date treatment of the EU, democracy promotion, and the new post-Arab Spring Middle East, please note that many of the same authors have published a book of articles examining the events subsequent to the publication of the book under review.[3]

Notes

[1]. "Romania in Trouble: Levers of Power," *The Economist*, July 14, 2012, 47.

[2]. "Funding Arab Reform: The EU's Democracy Related Aid in Action," *Policy Brief for the German American Marshall Fund*, August 2012, http://www.fride.org/publication/1056/europe-in-the-reshaped-middle-east (accessed September 7, 2012).

[3]. Kristina Kausch and Richard Youngs, eds., *Europe in the Reshaped Middle East* (Madrid: FRIDE, 2012), available at http://www.fride.org/publication/1056/europe-in-the-reshaped-middle-east.

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