

## The Contested Meaning of the International Norm of Democracy

Michael Clarke, Ph.D. Student, European Studies and Modern Languages, University of Bath, United Kingdom. ©2008

### Abstract

International Norms such as democracy and human rights are contested concepts. This contestation is the result of 'normative baggage' (Wiener, 2007) associated with the cultural context from which individuals originate. This paper examines the norm of democracy within three case studies, the United Kingdom, Iran and Egypt. From these case studies it is argued that democracy has a number of different connotations and remains a fundamentally contested concept. This has a number of implications when it comes to spreading democracy within the Middle East as it raises the question, 'whose version of democracy'?

### Introduction

Within this paper I will be examining the hypothesis that in the post Cold War environment we can observe an increasing constitutionalisation of democracy as a fundamental norm in global politics. Given that norms are always in principle contested, and the transfer of normative meaning between transnational and domestic political arenas involves conflicting interpretation of normative meanings, the diffusion of democracy is compared with reference to three domestic political areas: UK, Iran and Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

The three states chosen for the case study have not been selected on an arbitrary basis but rather due to unique characteristics explicit in each of them. The UK is generally regarded as a stable and long established liberal representative democracy. As such it will provide a foundation upon which to compare and contrast Iran and Egypt. Iran has internalised a limited number of the norms of democracy yet it has been contextualised by some western states as part of the 'axis of evil'.<sup>2</sup> Its form or contested interpretation of democracy is not accepted by many international organisations and states which has resulted in a lack of credibility and legitimacy.<sup>3</sup> Similarly Egypt has constitutionalised aspects of the normative notion of democracy. Yet it still has aspects that fit better with the context of a totalitarian regime than a democracy.<sup>4</sup> Egypt, however, unlike Iran, receives large quantities of both military and financial aid from the United States of America (USA) and the European Union (EU). Although both Iran and Egypt are Muslim nations, this paper is not an explicit elaboration on the possibility that religion prevents the internalisation of democratic norms. Although this will be touched upon it is beyond the scope of this paper to adequately explore this interesting possibility. Democracy has traditionally been thought of as western; however, with the desire to spread democracy into non westernised states we cannot focus upon a westernised definition. Instead to understand the meaning of democracy we must examine it with reference to the cultural traditions of a state. This suggests perhaps, that the meaning of democracy is contextually and culturally dependent. Examining the case of Egypt and Iran we can examine what democracy means within a non-western culture with a tradition of authoritarian governments.

It is important to note that many of the terms used within this paper have contested meanings. It is therefore important to elaborate on the connotation of these terms as they are to be used within this paper before I undertake further analysis. The first term is 'constitutionalisation'; within this paper I will use the definitions provided by Craig and Cass respectively, in which constitutionalisation can be seen as a "movement towards attainment of [constitutional] features" (Cass, 2001: 1) and that it is a "generation of a set of constitutional-type norms and structures" (Craig, 2001: 127). With these definitions in mind this paper will define constitutionalisation as the movement towards the attainment of constitutional-type norms and structures. With 'norms' as an integral part of this definition I feel it is

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<sup>1</sup> This paper builds upon a group presentation given at Queens University Belfast, December 8<sup>th</sup> 2005; I would like to thank my three other colleagues in the group, Tomas Addel, Allison Groves and Gavin McGuckin.

<sup>2</sup> The axis of evil includes Iran, Syria and North Korea and the former regime in Iraq.

<sup>3</sup> For example see the issue of Iran building nuclear power stations which are seen by the United States as a cover for the development of nuclear weapons. See also the statement made by John R. Bolton the then Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security in remarks made at the *Hudson institute* on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2004, where he states that 'We cannot let Iran, a leading sponsor of international terrorism, acquire nuclear weapons', US Department of State, (<http://www.state.gov/t/us/rm/35281.htm>; accessed 17 December 2007)

<sup>4</sup> For example the banning in 1954 to present of the largest opposition party in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood.

also important to elaborate on this term. Norms will be defined as “a standard embodying a judgement about what should be the case” (McLean and McMillan, 2003: 373).

This paper will be split into four sections. The first will elaborate on the definitions associated with liberal representative democracy. The second section will focus on how democracy has become internationalised, internalised and constitutionalised within international organisations resulting in it evolving into an international normative feature. This will be achieved by examining the normative principles of the intergovernmental/supranational organisation of the EU and various other international intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations (UN). The third section will undertake a case study analysis and as such will be split in to three subsections, the UK, Iran and Egypt. The objective of this section is to examine how the international normative principle of democracy has been constitutionalised within each state and how this norm has a contested meaning. The final section will sum up how norms become contested when they are internalised down from the international to the sub national system.

### **Determining the normative meaning of Democracy**

International norms such as democracy and human rights can be agreed upon in principle when they become the founding principles of an international organisation or the constitutional basis of a nation state. Yet the agreement in principle that democracy is important and is the basis of the identity of the actor does not equate to the meaning of the democratic norm. The meaning of the norm is the result of practice, as such it is continually (re)constructed and in differing contexts and cultural locations this meaning can change. It is then possible to say that the meaning of democracy is contested with no universal definition that is applicable.

The literature on democratic theory primarily focuses upon key components such as universal suffrage, free speech, legal equality and constitutional checks. Attempts are often made to measure these variables and quantify the level of democracy. There is tension between this approach and the alternative conceptualisation which examines “political equality in actual practice”. Lars Rudebeck argues that “political scientists push mostly in the former direction, while ordinary citizens all over the world, in thinking and talking about democracy, seem most often to favour the latter” (Rudebeck, 2002: 1). Democratic theorists such as Hyland argue that “there is a deeply problematic paradox of the unquestionable value and unique legitimacy of democracy. Everyone purports to be in favour of democracy, but there is little agreement over what democracy is” (Hyland, 1995: 36). This perspective is also supported by Robert Dahl who makes the point that “a term that means anything means nothing. And so it has become with ‘democracy’; which nowadays is not so much a term of restricted and specific meaning as a vague endorsement of a popular idea” (Dahl, 1989: 2). These statements raise the question of what democracy is. Yet it is argued here that the meaning of democracy will always be context and culturally dependent, the attempt to produce a definition will always fail because its meaning is constantly (re)constructed via practice.

This paper does not attempt to create a definition of democracy; rather, the focus will be upon blending the analysis of democratic theorists who focus on variables with the actual practice of democracy. To do this it is argued that there must be broad based variables of democracy such as freedom of speech and representation, however, we must also examine ‘political equality in practice’. This may mean that the model of democracy that works in one nation state will differ from that of another. This is because of the importance of cultural validity (Wiener, 2008), which means that the norms of democracy as they are internalised must conform to the cultural traditions of the society.

There are four principle characteristics that are fundamental to the understanding of a modern democracy; the first of these is universal suffrage and participation in politics. This implies that the demos or citizens of the state are entitled to universal enfranchisement, that is they can freely decide upon who to elect as their representatives within the legislature. However, there are limitations on universal suffrage, commonly this means only those over eighteen years of age that have not been judged mentally unfit and are citizens of the state are entitled to vote. Universal suffrage also implies universal value of a vote. Each citizen is equal and votes are not weighted in favour of any one class, creed or religion of citizen.<sup>5</sup>

The second element is that all are equal in before the law. The law is impartial and does not treat individuals differently on the basis of religious or political affinity. Thirdly the government is subject to constitutional checks by the judicial system. The judiciary is also independent of the government; however, these constitutional checks do not imply a right to create legislation as these right remains

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<sup>5</sup> See Criticism made by John Stuart Mill, whereby an unskilled labourer should get one vote, a skilled labourer two votes and a superintendent of labour with knowledge of general culture should have three votes.

with the representatives of the citizens in the legislature. The final point is that the people enjoy great freedoms, such as free speech, a free press and the right to pursue and make free choices as long as these choices do not infringe on the liberty of other citizens.

The terminological difficulties in defining democracy immediately become apparent. For example the idea of 'great freedoms' must be tempered with the idea produced by J. S. Mill "That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others" (Mill, 1991: 14). So if in our own course of individualised action we infringe on the freedom of others or cause harm to them then society has the right to impinge upon our liberty. Yet there is no definition of how or when harm is caused. So with the idea of 'great freedoms' as with other characteristics of liberal representative democracy we should be aware that any definition becomes blurred as it is further examined. Ultimately the meaning of democracy itself is not fixed and removed from debate.

These four variables are central to democracies that have become the prevalent form of government throughout the western world. With the end of the Cold War the triumph of the liberal ideology led Francis Fukuyama to claim an 'end of history' (Fukuyama, 1992), in that the struggle between Marxist-Leninism and liberalism was the last ideological clash, the future would be the continued expansion of the liberal form of government. This is relevant to the study undertaken here as it is a continuation of this diffusion of liberalism and its characterised form of government - liberal representative democracy - that is under study. A summation is that "Liberal democracy is government by free and responsible men popularly elected whose duty and privilege it is to rule the nation by majority vote after full and free discussion. ... Democracy is government by dictation of the mass" (Micklem, 1957: 72). Further to this a recent statement by President George W. Bush emphasised the point that "[D]emocracies have certain things in common; they have a rule of law, and protection of minorities, a free press, and a viable political opposition" (Bush, 2005).

### **International Organisations**

International organisations play a major role in disseminating normative principles throughout the world. This can be seen within the European Union (EU), the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the United Nations (UN). These organisations have claims of legitimacy which induce states to internalise fundamental norms such as democracy and human rights (Hurd, 2007). Within these organisations member states such as the United Kingdom (UK) 'upload' these norms which are then constitutionalised to become the foundational governing principles. In turn these foundational norms are diffused or 'downloaded' by outside states. This can be due to conditions attached to membership of these bodies, such as the EU, or due to states wishing to associate themselves with the values of these organisations. This is the process of internalisation in which states identify themselves with norms such as democracy, and in so doing their identity, preferences and interests change. However, in the process of internalisation the meaning of the norm must conform to the culture of the society, that is to say it must be culturally valid.

This section will examine the EU and the G8<sup>6</sup> with a focus on how each organisation has made democracy essential to its activities. In so doing they induce non democratic states to internalise democratic principles, however, due to contested norms and cultural validity the meaning of democracy differs depending upon context.

#### *The democratic normative principles of the EU*

The EU has developed over the last fifty years into a diffuser of its normative principles which can be stated as "founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States" (Treaty on European Union, 2002: Title 1, Article 6). This process of creating a normative power role for Europe has led Manners to state that "Europe's attainment is normative ... It is perhaps paradox to note that the continent which once ruled the world through the physical impositions of imperialism is now coming to set world standards in normative terms." (Manners, 2002: 238) The process whereby the EU can transmit and disseminate its normative principles is highlighted by European Council (EC) regulation 975/1999, which states that the purpose of the regulations is to "contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and to that of respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Council Regulation, 975/1999, 29th April 1999). This is to be achieved by laying down procedures for implementing community activity that would further the stated goals. In essence this is a form of conditionality whereby 'community actions' with third party

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<sup>6</sup> The G8 consists of the seven leading economies plus Russia.

members would be conditional upon the promotion and acceptance by the third party state of the goals stated above. Conditionality is primarily positive within the EU; it uses carrots but lacks the sticks. The most important form of conditionality is in the form of accession agreements. Non-member states wishing to join the EU must fulfil a number of obligations; primary amongst these is the internalisation of democracy. The pull factor of EU membership and identification as being 'European' has made this a successful policy. This can be seen for example within the context of Central and East European (CEE) states. This form of conditionality is now being undertaken within the context of the Balkan states. Another form of conditionality is seen within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). The "European Neighbourhood" includes a diverse number of states such as Georgia, Syria and Egypt, between 2000-2003 The EU has invested 3716.1 million euros in ENP states. This continued investment in part depends upon members fulfilling set objectives such as increasing democratic freedoms.

#### *The Democratic Normative principles of intergovernmental organisations*

The normative principles highlighted above in the case of the EU can also be seen within various intergovernmental organisations. For example the 2005 G8 summit in Gleneagles stated that "The G8 leaders agreed to back this plan<sup>7</sup> with substantial extra resources for countries which have strong national development plans and are committed to good governance, democracy and transparency" (Gleneagles Summit, 2005). In principle the G8 was stating that extra resources would be available to those states which constitutionalised the norms and structures of democracy. A further example of this top down diffusion of the democratic norm can be seen in the development conference at Monterrey in 2002 where the statement was made that "we commit ourselves to promoting national and global economic systems based on the principles of justice, equity, democracy, participation, transparency accountability and inclusion" (Monterrey Consensus, 2002). The EU then is not the only international organisation that uses conditionality to spread democracy and other fundamental norms such as human rights.

Internalisation of international norms such as democracy into the domestic setting implies that the identity of the state alters in some way. In essence it becomes a democracy and identifies itself as such. The meaning of a norm is not universal and is culturally and context dependent, the practice of the norm is the definition of its meaning. As such a state may identify itself as a democracy; however, in practice its interpretation of democratic norms may diverge from international democratic principles. The following section examines democracy in practice and within context by examining the UK, Egypt and Iran.

### **The Contested meaning of democracy: Case study analysis of the UK, Iran and Egypt**

#### *The United Kingdom*

Within this paper the UK is used as a basis from which to analyse both Iran and Egypt. As such the claim is made that it embodies and has fully constitutionalised the principles and norms associated with a liberal representative democracy.

Within the UK universal suffrage is applicable to all citizens over the age of eighteen.<sup>8</sup> No individual is excluded from enfranchisement based on religion, race or political affiliation. Yet voter turnout dropped to the lowest since universal suffrage was introduced in the UK to 59.4 per cent in the 2001 general election, resulting in Harriet Harman claiming that "Britain has 'democracy deserts' where many people neither register to vote nor turn out to the polling stations" (Harman, 2005). This highlights a general trend across western nations of a declining participation in party politics (see for example EU elections turn out trends, where the average turnout has reduced from 63% in 1979 to 45.6% in 2004) (European Elections web pages, 2004).

The judiciary is growing in independence; this can be seen in the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, which iterates that "the Act enshrines in law a duty on government ministers to uphold the independence of the judiciary" (Constitutional Reform Act, 2005). This independence is essential to the idea of equality in before the law, as it prevents those in privileged positions such as government ministers from influencing judicial decision making. The constitutionalisation of the European

<sup>7</sup> The plan involves increased resources for African peacekeeping forces, increased investment in health and education, and help in stimulating African Trade.

<sup>8</sup> The right to vote had been denied to prisoners for the period of their incarceration. This has been overturned by the European court of Human rights, *Hirst V United Kingdom*. 6<sup>th</sup> October 2005, <http://cmiskp.echr.coe.int/tkp197/viewhbk.asp?action=open&table=1132746FF1FE2A468ACCBBCD1763D4D8149&key=17507&sessionId=5060808&skin=hudoc-en&attachment=true>. [accessed 19 December 2007]

Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) as the Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998 further empowers the judicial system to a role as constitutional oversight of government legislation.<sup>9</sup> The 'great freedoms' associated with democracy such as free press and freedom of speech are enshrined within common law in the UK. This is due to the UK having no written constitution; however a constitutional-type entity can be seen to exist in the form of statutes of common law and practice providing a constitutional basis on which to protect the individual rights and liberties of the citizenry.

Recent threats to freedom of speech have been seen in anti-terrorism laws. These include the Terrorism Acts 2000 and 2006, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 and the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. These new laws give police the power to hold foreign suspects for extended periods of time and increased 'stop-and-search' powers. It also includes an ambiguous law against incitement of terrorism which makes it a crime to make statements that incite terrorism. However, in doing so it undermines freedom of speech and is open to abuse, as the question remains as to what constitutes incitement.

The UK is generally accepted to be a liberal representative democracy. It does, however, have certain limitations on liberty as highlighted above. These are not a serious threat to its democratic basis as various reports testify to its high level of democracy and freedom of the citizenry<sup>10</sup>. It is certainly the case that the UK has had a great influence on the internationalisation of the democratic norm, as a member of the EU, the UN Security Council, the Commonwealth and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). However, as a state that is attempting to spread democracy by military force within Iraq, its ability to spread democracy depends in large part on how democratic it is perceived to be from the outside. Anti-terrorism laws that undermine democratic principles such as free speech may undermine its ability to spread democracy abroad because it will lose legitimacy. This perception of legitimacy is essential in diffusing norms generally and being regarded as a norm setter in practice.

#### *Iran*

The preamble of the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran states that "our nation, in the process of its revolutionary evolution, cleansed itself from the satanic filth and rust, wiped off the blend of alien thought, and returned to genuine ideology of Islam" (Constitution of Iran, 1979). The ideology of Islam is thus central to the form and function of the Iranian state so much so that the first five articles of the constitution are dedicated to Islamic principles.

The structure of government within Iran is such that the legislature (*Majlis*) is elected by the will of the people (Constitution of Iran, Articles 62, 64) and is able to pass laws on nearly all matters (Article 71), but are prohibited from enacting laws contrary to the principles and rules of Islam or their Constitution, signifying that the religious and constitutional elements are of equal weight in the structure of the Iranian government.

The role of the Ayatollah, or supreme leader, is diverse and encompassing of all state apparatus; for example, he assumes supreme command of the armed forces, supreme judicial authority of the country, and he is chief of the joint staff and head of the radio and television network in Iran (Article 110). Yet the Ayatollah is not elected via universal suffrage but by a council of religious leaders denying direct democracy for the election of the highest office in the land. For all the supposed protection within the constitution for individuals within Iran, it remains a fact that if the leader were to violate the Constitution using Islamic issues as a justification, there would be no one empowered to oppose him.

There is contestation over the meaning of democracy in Iran; Hardy writes that "Iran has all the trappings of democracy. There is a constitution, there are political factions with their own following and their own newspapers and there are local and parliamentary elections, and women can both vote and stand for elections. But Iran's political system is like no other" (Hardy, 2000). This uniqueness is a product of conservative positions within Iran such as the Ayatollah and the Islamic principles stated in

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<sup>9</sup> Example of this can be seen in the House of Lords finding the indefinite detention in Belmarsh of suspected terrorists as infringement of their human rights. House of Lords *A and others v. Secretary of State for the Home Department* and *X and another v. Secretary of State for the Home Department*, 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005, available [Online] <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/ld200506/ldjudgmt/jd051208/aand-1.htm> (accessed 19th December 2007)

<sup>10</sup> See World Audit Report on democracy rankings, the UK is ranked sixth, <http://www.worldaudit.org/democracy.htm> [accessed 16 December 2007]

the constitution confronting more progressive elements such as the ex-president Mohammad Khatami.<sup>11</sup>

Attempts have been made by international organisations such as the EU to further progress and diffuse the normative principles of democracy within the Iranian government. As such the Rt. Hon. Chris Patton argues that 'It is crucial to try to develop a long-term and constructive relationship between the EU and Iran. Why?...we see in Iran, the first stirrings of democracy' (Patton, 2004). To further this aim the EU is the largest trading partner with Iran, and supports it in undertaking drug control and refugee assistance. EU council resolutions have continued to show support for closer cooperation and trade relations (GAERC, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2002).

### *Egypt*

The citizenry of Egypt have enjoyed universal suffrage since 1956 and the Egyptian constitution guarantees their 'right to vote, nominate and express their opinions in referenda according to the provisions of the law... [and that their] participation in public life is a national duty' (Egyptian Constitution, Article 62). Progress towards the full constitutionalisation of the norm of democracy continues to be made; for example, in 2005 the first multiparty presidential election was undertaken. The president is the highest office in the land having sweeping powers such as appointing the prime minister and members of the cabinet (Article 141) and creating general policy and overseeing its implementation (Article 138). The people's assembly, which is vested under the constitution with having broad supervisory capabilities over the president and other organs of the government (Part 5, Section 2), 'is widely viewed as a puppet institution with no independent legislative or supervisory capacities' (Jan, 1999). What appears to emerge on closer examination of the principles and practices of the Egyptian government is a 'wide gap between the ideal forms of constitution and law, (which are largely democratic in principle), and the reality of political practice, which is authoritarian at best' (Jan, 1999).

There is evidence to suggest that democratic norms are contested in Egypt. Firstly Egypt has been ruled under emergency law 162 almost continuously since 1967 (Human Rights Watch, 2005), being feverishly renewed after the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981 and the 'war on terrorism' since 2001. This law "restricts the right to peaceful assembly, giving the authorities wide powers to place restrictions on individuals' rights to free movement" (Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, 2005). These restrictions on movement and free assembly deprive the citizens of the 'great freedoms' that are an essential normative principle of democracy. A second major example of contested democracy is that the Muslim brotherhood, an Islamic political movement, has been banned in Egypt since 1954. The Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights (EOHR, 2007) claims that 'The right to form parties...is directly connected with the debate on democracy in Egypt and the hegemony of the ruling party...Many put the responsibility on the state for freezing political and social life because of the legal and security obstacles imposed on practising this right' (EOHR current web pages). The Muslim brotherhood does pose a threat to Egypt, as it wishes to impose stricter Islamic rule on the nation. However, in the context of democratic principles it is for the will of the people, not the dictation of the elite, to decide the future route Egypt takes.

The slow process of democratisation within Egypt is spearheaded by efforts of the USA and EU. Egypt is the USA's second largest recipient of aid (according to USAID Egypt, 2007), and the EU has established the Euro-Mediterranean partnership which is 'a common area of peace and stability based on fundamental principles of democracy' (European Commission, Barcelona Declaration, 1995). Both efforts are designed to ensure stability and the diffusion of the normative principles of both the EU and USA within Egypt.

### **Conclusion**

Within this paper I have examined an interpretation of democracy based on four key principles. These are universal suffrage and participation in politics, equality before the law, judicial constitutional checks and great freedoms for the population. Although 'democracy' has no single definition, these four characteristics are all found within practical liberal representative democracies. I have also examined the contextualisation of democracy as an international norm, highlighting the process of conditionality within the EU and incentives offered by organisations such as the G8.

There are three central elements that can be concluded from the analysis undertaken within this paper. The first is that democracy has been developed into an international norm as can be seen by

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<sup>11</sup> For an overview of the achievements of president Khatami, see Takeyh, Ray, *Hold the Boos for Khatami*, 17<sup>th</sup> June 2005, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/8188/hold\\_the\\_boos\\_for\\_khatami.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/8188/hold_the_boos_for_khatami.html), (accessed 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007)

its referencing within treaties such as the treaty on European Union and statements made by the G8. Secondly, international organisations are actively promoting the diffusion and constitutionalisation of democratic norms within states across the world. Evidence for this can be seen by arrangements for trade negotiations and regulations for conditionality as seen within the EU. Thirdly as the process of constitutionalising the international norm of democracy into the domestic sphere is undertaken, contestation over its meaning occurs. This is highlighted within this paper by the analysis of Iran and Egypt, where it is noted that differences between traditional cultural and religious beliefs possibly clash with more progressive values. The result is a form of quasi-democracy, the reasons for the so far semi-internalisation of democratic principles may lie with states seeking international legitimacy and financial assistance or it may lie with a general trend from the populace for more control of their government.

One threat to the future expansion of democratic principles throughout the world will be a collapse in the perceived legitimacy of both international organisations and norm exporting states such as the UK. If the laws passed within the UK in response to terrorist attacks create the perception of a defeat for democratic principles the result maybe a retreat in the spread of democracy.

Critical self examination is also required by International Relations theorists; for example is the evidence produced within this paper the result of the states chosen for analysis? Or is the model chosen, i.e. liberal representative democracy, just a single representation of a much broader democratic theory? These are all aspects that this paper does not have the capacity to further investigate. However, these critical questions of this paper do suggest the necessity of further work on this subject to enhance our understanding of the constitutionalisation of international norms and democracy.

The internalisation of norms such as democracy alters the identity of the internalising actor, whilst at the same time the meaning of the norm that is internalised must conform to the culture of the society. In so doing the norm must be culturally valid, the result is that norms remain contested and depend upon culture, context and practice to define their meaning. In attempting to spread democracy states such as the UK and international organisations such as the EU must take into account these differences. A model of democracy that conforms to western perceptions will not be universally accepted and internalised.

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