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Intergovernmental organisations and the protection of democracy: a multifaceted power in world politics

*Organizações internacionais e a proteção
da democracia: um poder multifacetado
na política internacional*

*Las organizaciones internacionales y la
protección de la democracia: un poder
multifacetado en la política internacional*

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Abstract

The international protection of democracy is a matter of power. Although recent studies systematized the multidimensional perspective of power in democracy protection policies, they focused on national states. This article focused on another actor, the Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs), assuming them as actors capable of projecting power in world politics. First, we use the typology of power in Barnett and Duvall, stated as multifaceted and productive of different policies and results. Second, the article applied the typology, observing how compulsory, institutional, structural and productive powers appear in IGOs action. The result was a complex, multilevel and interdisciplinary analysis of power phenomenon.

Keywords: Power, Intergovernmental Organizations, Democracy promotion.

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Resumo

A proteção da internacional da democracia é uma questão de poder. Embora estudos recentes sistematizaram a perspectiva multidimensional do poder nas políticas de proteção democrática, o foco estava nos Estados nacionais. Este artigo enfocou as Organizações Intergovernamentais (OIGs), assumindo-as como atores capazes de projetar poder na política mundial. Primeiro, usamos a tipologia do poder em Barnett e Duvall, declarada como multifacetada e produtora de diferentes políticas e resultados. Segundo, o artigo aplicou essa tipologia observando como os poderes compulsórios, institucionais, estruturais e produtivos aparecem na ação das OIGs. O resultado foi uma análise complexa, multinível e interdisciplinar do fenômeno político.

Palavras-chave: Poder, Organizações Intergovernamentais, Proteção democrática.

Resumen

La protección de la democracia internacional es una cuestión de poder. Estudios recientes han sistematizado la perspectiva multidimensional del poder en las políticas de protección democrática con enfoque en los estados nacionales. Este artículo analiza las Organizaciones Intergubernamentales (OIG), las entiendo como actores con poder proyectivo en la política mundial. Primero, utilizamos los tipos de poder de Barnett y Duvall, declarados multifacéticos y que producen distintas políticas y resultados. Segundo, analizamos los poderes obligatorios, institucionales, estructurales y productivos en la acción de las OIG. El resultado fue un análisis complejo, multinivel e interdisciplinario del fenómeno político.

Palabra clave: Poder, Organizaciones intergubernamentales, Protección democrática.

Introduction

In 2016, the Polish Law and Justice Party (PiS) began to carry out a series of violations against the European *Acquis Communautaire* values. These violations included the manipulation of constitutional order and substantive actions to hinder the court systems' power of decision-making. In response, the European Union (EU) reacted to this situation by mobilizing Article 7 in an attempt to change the behavior of the authoritarian domestic elite (Halmai 2018). Similarly, in Latin America, the Organization of American States (OAS) used Resolution 1080 against Alberto Fujimori in Peru (1991) and José Serrano Elias in Guatemala





(1993), both self-coup attempts, and applied the Inter-American Democratic Charter (IADC) against Honduras' military division in 2009, also a coup d'état attempt (Heine and Weiffen 2015, Shaw 2004, Arceneaux and Pion-Berlin 2007, McCoy 2012). In all of these contexts, Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) sought to prevent their State members' democracies from backsliding.

Indeed, all of the above examples admit the following statement: "The promotion of international democracy is concerned with power, in many aspects" (Wolff 2015, 219). Seeking democratic compliance worldwide, international actors wield power to accomplish their goals. However, to achieve these goals, this political action requires an asymmetric relation of power concerning their state targets (Wolff 2015). Surprisingly for Wolff, a limited number of scholars paid attention to power issues within policies geared toward the promotion of democracy, even if a significant part of the foreign affairs discussion was in fact dedicated to this matter. Wolff's article, entitled "*Power in Democracy Promotion*", insisted on a "systematic consideration of power in the academic study of democracy promotion" (Wolff 2015, 220) using the typology of power developed by Barnett and Duvall (2005).

Nevertheless, Wolff (2015) focused his analysis on nation-states. From his perspective, nation-states present a prevalence over other actors. In his words, "International Organizations and nonstate agencies are considered only to be instruments of governmental democracy promotion, not as actors in their own right" (Wolff 2015, 221). Indeed, most studies about the promotion of international democracy have favored activities conducted by individual entities (mainly nation-states) and spillover effects associated with contagion structures during democratization processes, regardless of actions from other relevant actors (Pevehouse 2005).

This article, therefore, proposes a dialog with Wolff's (2015) proposition. First, the same power typology of Barnett and Duvall (2005), divided into compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive types, is mobilized. Second and even more crucial, this study seeks to apprehend the multifaceted power of multilateral promoters in matters of democracy promotion not discussed by Wolff. Precisely, this work presents a theoretical and conceptual mobilization regarding the power of IGOs in their participation in policies geared toward the promotion of democracy.





This article begins by changing the use of “promotion of democracy” to “protection of democracy”, claiming that these concepts are not interchangeable. This occurs due to the application of Hawkins’ concept of democracy protection, considered to be the “activities that offer tangible or intangible rewards or penalties to the state as a whole for aggregate behavior with respect to democratic standards” (Hawkins 2008, 375). This concept is particularly useful for the multidimensional debate in this article. First, this concept allows the use of material and immaterial forms of power, whether through rewards or penalty mechanisms. Second, it contemplates the transformations in the actor’s behavior toward a democratic standard constructed at the multilateral level. Finally, it allows for reflection on the normative construction of a protected democratic concept.

Thus, this article is divided as follows. The first section presents the “actorness” of IGOs. In this regard, our study discusses the literature regarding how IGOs can independently formulate policies according to the Principal-Agent model and, mainly, what analytical concerns relate to the construction of democracy promotion policies. The second section briefly discusses Barnett and Duvall’s (2005) power typology, divided into compulsory, institutional, structural, and productive types and features.

Finally, the core of the article demonstrates how these typologies appear within IGOs’ idiosyncratic powers. As regards compulsory power, this article focuses on: (1) how IGOs use their mechanisms to change behavior, (2) how IGOs reach convergence to apply those mechanisms of power, and (3) what is at stake when they do that. As regards productive power, this article focuses on: (1) the social purpose of IGOs in democracy protection, (2) IGOs as protectors of set norms (diffusers); (3) the values and concepts of democracy protection. As regards structural power, the discussion treats the role of IGOs’ links and governance policies in the export of structural prerequisites that prescribe the actor’s behavior and institutional actions to be implemented. Finally, as regards institutional power, the discussion treats the IGOs’ use of transnational (TNAs) or transgovernmental (TGAs) actors to promote democracy.

The findings in this conceptual-theoretical discussion demonstrated that the multifaceted observation of power in the IGOs’ participation in democracy promotion policies is complex, multilevel, and interdisciplinary.





IGOs in rational and social approaches

IGOs are different from nation-states in their own characteristics (Hawkins et al. 2006). Thus, the analytical endeavor must assume that this different characteristic for IGOs in comparison to nation-states has direct impacts upon the comprehension of power in these organizations. This differentiation is directly concerned with the connection between Principal-Agents in their forms of delegation and bureaucratic culture in decision-making procedures.

In general, IGOs have three main features: as formal institutions, as the arena of decision-making, and as actors in world politics (Archer 2001). First, IGOs are formally “explicit arrangements, negotiated among international actors that prescribe, denounce, or authorize behavior” (Koremenos, Lipson and Snidal 2001, 762). Second, IGOs are organizational structures for decision-making processes among nation-states. According to Abbott and Snidal (1998), states act through IGOs because they provide depoliticized or specialized forums. In many theoretical approaches to international relations (especially within regime theory), this formal organizational structure commonly provides an optimal arena for negotiations aimed at shaping cooperation, coordination, and compliance among nation-states (Keohane 2002; Archer 2001). Third, IGOs possess operational and managerial facets that characterize the ‘actorness²’ of the organization. This results in the IGOs’ capacity to develop an actor-oriented or strategic action towards international policies (Hawkins et al., 2006 Brattberg and Rhinard, 2013).

Academically, the analysis of IGOs’ capacities divides into two main strands. The first approach assumes a rational approach, mainly associated with the Principal-Agent (PA) models (Hawkins et al. 2006). This approach focuses on delegation factors between different actors for specific tasks. In the context of IGOs, Principals are the Member-States, Agents are the international bureaucracies, and formalized treaties and pacts are the typical instruments of delegation (Hawkins et al. 2006).

For Bauer and Ege (2016), the PA model relates to situations of control by Principals and discretion for Agents, summarized in studies of competences/statutory powers, influences in decision-making, production of sanction policies,

2 According to Brattberg and Rhinard (2013), in the literature, “actorness” associates with the recognition, authority, legitimacy, autonomy, opportunity, presence, capability, and consistency of actions of the IGO in world politics.





and operational resources in international bureaucracies. In this sense, PA identifies the primary explanations for delegation. This delegation is a result of a principal-agent agreement in the form of a contract (Delreux and Adriaensen 2017).

Indeed, the contract allows for the crucial concept of autonomy. Autonomy is considered to be “the range of independent action that is available to an agent and can be used to benefit or undermine the principal, while slack is actual behavior that is undesired” (Hawkins et al. 2006, 8). For Bauer and Ege (2016), autonomy regards the IGOs’ capacity to produce an autonomy of one’s will³ and an autonomy to act⁴. Thus, IGOs can exert their influence in future decision-making processes when achieving higher levels of delegation,⁵ in turn diminishing the level of control of nation-states (Hawkins et al. 2006), or when IGOs exercise power based on their specialization (Bauer and Ege 2016).

However, the autonomy of the IOs is not a synonym of complete independence (Hazelzet 1998). International bureaucracies still respond to nation-states (Principals), inserted in a context of control (Hawkins et al. 2006). This control occurs through monitoring mechanisms, constraints associated with the content of delegation, and the political selection of agents designed to assimilate their preferences in consonance with the Principal’s perspective. More importantly, the relationship between principal and agent is grounded on mutual benefits, which means fewer costs to the Principal in order to achieve a specific outcome and higher autonomy for the international bureaucracy to act. Analytically speaking, this requires the observation of how nation-states’ decision-making, dialogs, and negotiations directly influence the autonomy decision construction of IGOs and how a bureaucracy reacts to a state’s decision-making (Haftel and Thompson 2006).

The second strand of the agency analysis of IGOs applies a sociological perspective, which focuses on the characteristics of bureaucratic actors and their social ambience (Bauer and Ege 2016). Indeed, following a Weberian bureaucratic theory, the sociological approach opens up the “international institutions’ box”

3 "Autonomy of will" concerns the capacity of international bureaucracy to establish preferences apart from the preferences of the member states. (Bauer and Ege 2016).

4 "Autonomy of action" concerns two types of resources: institutional resources, such as statutory powers, and enhancement of administrative resources, to set the agenda. These also persuade states to delegate more authority and reduce their level of control (Bauer and Ege 2016; Hawkins et al. 2006).

5 "Delegation is a conditional grant of authority from a Principal to an Agent, which empowers international bureaucracy. This grant is limited in time or scope and must be revocable by the Principal. (Hawkins et al. 2006).





searching for conditions for bureaucratic influence and channels of power in particular directions. Assuming IGOs are autonomous, the use of sociological approaches shed light on the constitutive and constructive form to project actors, interests, and social purposes in intra-organizational structures. From Barnett and Finnemore's (1999) perspective, IGOs respond to normative and cultural forces that shape how the institution constructs its missions, procedures, and concepts. In this sense, ignoring the "social" aspects of organizations requires a sensible look into cultural, normative, and identity issues in this endeavor (Hall and Taylor 2003). As this article demonstrates, the different power typologies mobilize various aspects of this engendering of institutional gears and social forces, thus resulting in a complex array of power relations and outputs.

The typologies of power

According to Barnett and Duvall (2005), power "is the production, in and through social relations, of effects that shape the capacities of actors to determine their circumstances and fate (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 8)". For them, the conceptual construction of power has two analytical dimensions: the "*kinds* of social relations through which power works, and the *specificity* of social relations through which effects on actors' capacities are produced (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 9). The kinds of power relate to "an attribute of particular actors and their interactions or a social process of constituting what actors are as social beings, that is, their social identities and capacities (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 9). In relational matters, an actor-centered perspective relates to "power over" others, a common perspective found in realist approaches. Otherwise, constitutive power relates to "power to", associated with the capacity to produce meaning and structures of the domain, typically approached by reflexivist perspectives (Barnett and Duvall 2005).

The specificity of power concerns the "degree to which the social relations through which power works are direct and socially specific or indirect and socially diffuse (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 9). This concept is directly related to the fact that "specific relations concern the direct causal/constitutive connection between actors that are in physical, historical, or social-positional proximity" (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 11). Indirect power is mediated by indirect mechanisms (role of institutions, whether formal or informal) or produced discourses that shape the actor's subjectivity (Barnett and Duvall 2005).





Table 1 summarizes the type of power and their general characteristics by kind and type.

Table 1 — Types of power and its main characteristics

Type of power	General characteristics
Compulsory power	Actor-centered and direct: refers to “relations of the interaction of direct control by one actor over another” (Wolff 2015, 221).
Institutional power	Actor-centered and diffuse: which refers to “the control actors exercise indirectly over others through diffuse relations of interaction” (Wolff 2015, 222).
Structural power	Constitutive and direct: “the constitution of subjects capacities indirect structural relation to one another” (Wolff 2015, 222).
Productive power	Constitutive and diffuse: “the socially diffuse production of subjectivity in systems of meaning and signification” (Wolff 2015, 222).

Source: Compiled from Wolff’s (2015) table and typology content.

The next section will present each type of power exercised by IGOs in democracy protection policies, calling attention to their features, including the remarkable analytical aspects of each and how they operate in democracy protection policies.

Power in place: IGOs and different types of power

Coercive

According to Barnett and Duvall (2005), compulsory power is the direct capacity of actors to shape the circumstances or actions of others, intentionally or unintentionally. Often, this is the primary type of discussion in international relations — typically associated with great power politics, whose studies discuss how material resources are used to impose interests in diametric opposition to one another (Wolff 2015). Specifically regarding the coercive power of IGOs, the literature calls attention to three key aspects: (1) The use of IGO mechanisms





to change behavior, (2) the convergence between Principal-Agent to apply those mechanisms of power, and (3) what is at stake when IGOs use coercive mechanisms.

Predominantly, compulsory power relates to the leverage model of democracy promotion. In this model, IGOs encourage countries to behave according to a wide range of multilaterally defined institutions. Differently from other types, leverage is a top-down approach that focuses on leaders (political elites), and central agencies based on the politics of conditionality (Freyburg et al. 2015). As a bargaining process, IGOs seek to maximize their utility when the exchange of information, threats, promises, and the imposition of sanctions and rewards toward a specific behavior deviate from the target. Consequently, this type of bargaining process reflects some asymmetry among the actors involved in the process (Lavenex and Schimmelfenning 2011).

Hence, the first issue on coercive power relates to IGOs' different types of institutional mechanisms that interfere in different moments of democratization. Pevehouse (2002, 2005) dedicated a significant part of his work to analyzing the role of IGOs in the democratization process. In his work, IGOs offer three causal mechanisms that link their actions to democratization. First, IGOs can apply pressure (diplomatic and economic) to compel internal forces toward democratic behavior. Second, joining IGOs (membership) can ensure the international legitimacy of the elite in transitional contexts. Third, IGOs can produce an arena of socialization in which elites can be persuaded to become less averse to liberalization and democratization systems, indicating a tendency of learning democratic practices at the domestic level.

The second aspect relates to the Principal-Agent relationship within an IGO — how IGOs produce convergences when applying coercive mechanisms. This means that, for IGOs to act, some cooperation/coordination among member states (IGOs as an arena) and international bureaucracies (IGO as an actor) is necessary, whether by member-state preferences or through bureaucracy actions by delegation (Hawkins et al. 2006). According to Hawkins (2008), the sanctioning of practices is not easy to achieve, since member states are resistant to intervention and all political costs due to uncertain results. As demonstrated in Table 2, different sorts of analytical features come from the type of PA relation, for example: a) the range of mechanisms allowed, b) the role of bureaucracy, c) the time for action, d) the contents of democratic issues (democratic backsliding/coup d'état), and e) different types of democracy protection policies and delegation.



**Table 2 — The analytical issues for coercive mechanisms**

Issues	Features
What is the range of mechanisms allowed to use?	In this matter, the democratic protection policy demonstrates what is at the hands of international bureaucracy to do (Hawkins et al. 2006). It involves either material or immaterial tools for compliance (Hawkins 2008).
What is the role of bureaucracy?	In this matter, the delegation process sets the institutional maneuvers for bureaucratic agents. Some bureaucracies possess specialized tools, actions, and performances in democracy protection policies. This includes the role of the Secretary-General (SG), and specialized offices in different themes and at different levels (Chesterman 2007; Hawkins et al. 2006).
What is the time for action?	In this matter, the delegation process demonstrates when IGOs would act in cases of democracy protection. For instance, in transitions to democracy: after or before the transitional pact. In democratic backsliding: after (curative) or before (preventive) the coup d'état (Pevehouse 2005). The variance of possibilities allows different strategies by international bureaucracies in terms of action.
What is the content of the democratic issue?	Although productive powers also discuss this type of normative aspect, in coercive elements, it relates to the legal actions toward democratic issues inside the target state (Hawkins et al. 2006). This settles a legalistic position about when coercion and what types of mechanisms would be allowed.
What is the target of coercion?	IGOs have two types of targets: third countries that do not belong to the organization or member-states. For both types there are different costs and rewards of action. The process of delegation enlightens how to act in both cases, how to sustain different types of asymmetries, and how to deal in bargaining processes (Vachudova 2005; Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeier 2004).

Source: Author's compilation

The third issue relates to what is at stake in leverage policies concerning coercion practices. In this sense, coercive power contemplates what mechanisms are at the hands of IGOs and how effective they can be. Indeed, effective coercive policies depend on the relative bargaining power between IGOs and the target





state. Thus, power asymmetry can tell more about how the targets can be a subject of conditionality (Buscaneanu 2016). For Buscaneanu (2016), its efficiency is mainly contingent on “domestic veto points, cost of adaptation, and the size and credibility of rewards or sanctions normative agents can use” (Buscaneanu 2016, 30). In terms of causality, the more significant the size and credibility of conditionality, the higher the chance that this coercive policy will affect the cost-benefit curve of the target country.

This credibility also differs regarding the target country. For example, if the target country is a member-state, the targeting relates to compliance issues between this national state and the organization (Haas 1998). Otherwise, if the target is the third country, it is treated as a matter of foreign policy (Smith 2002). For each type of target country, belonging or not to the IGOs, some mechanisms can be used, with a different range, different P-A coordination, and consequently, a different outcome (Schimmelfenning 2007). According to Poppe, Leiniger, and Wolff (2019) and Grimm (2019), the mechanism choice also relates to the “opening box” of bargaining negotiation between IGOs and target countries. This opening box relates to how the content and parameters of negotiation agenda, as well as what conditions of this negotiation, might result in a gradual adaptation of the promoter’s plan within the context of recipient countries. The protection of democracy is rarely the only theme on the agenda, but it is overlapped with the economic development agenda, assuming an issue-linkage form of bargaining (Poppe, Leiniger and Wolff 2019).

Productive

According to Barnett and Duvall (2005), productive power refers to “the constitution of all social subjects with various social powers through systems of knowledge and discursive practices of broad and general social scope (Barnett and Duvall 2005, 20). In this sense, as a constructivist analytical approach, productive power produces systems of meaning resulting from discourse construction that produces, fixes, and transforms the processes and systems of knowledge. In these discourses, the relation of power can be found in the practices of the quotidian, the social fields of actions, and, mainly, the production of social identities and capacities according to the socially constructed meaning (Barnett and Duvall 2005; Guzzini 2000). Consequently, productive power is a matter of subjectivity, as it concerns the social sharing of identity among actors in a





co-constituted relationship that produces subjects, meanings, terms of actions, and all boundaries of social life (Guzzini 2000).

In matters of democracy protection policies, the perspective appears as a normative construction, since it is a social reason provided by collectively shared values and norms (Schimmelfenning 2003). In this sense, the analysis regards the production of power in the normative prescriptions and a social/political *modus operandi* in terms of decision-making and behavior for a constructed concept of democracy (Schimmelfenning 2003). Hence, three main aspects stand out regarding productive power in IGOs: (1) What is the social purpose of an IGO in democracy protection? (2) What is the phenomenon of an IGO as protectors of set norms (diffusers)? (3) What are the values and concepts protected in these policies?

IGOs are producers of power because they generate norms and social meanings. Thus, IGOs are norm promoters. They “spread norms through establishing regimes, forming international agendas, constructing discourse, enforcing rules, and mediating between states” (Park 2005, 113), and make use of institutional prerogatives as gatekeepers to select transnational actors in the global governance structure (Tallberg 2010). According to Agné (2014), for instance, when IGOs choose a particular concept of democracy, they formulate a given meaning of democracy, that which differentiates from another perspective of democracy (even those which contradict the selected idea), and, normatively, they determine what particular kind of domestic institutional procedure should be protected. Consequently, the selection of concepts is a matter of power.

As norm promoters, a crucial subject of study connects to the meaning of the multilaterally constructed democratic concept. As Agné (2014) problematised, democratic ideals come with several debates inside of IGOs, whether by conflicts or convergences, regarding what concept of democracy should be protected on an institutional basis. For Whitehead (2015), this political agenda follows a particular discourse, an ambitious and intended universal claim, mobilizing both institutional and ideational reinforcement. In his argument, the conceptualization of democracy involved a strong ideology,⁶ which influenced the public policy agenda for years, but now faces resistance from “democracy prevention” or “anti-democracy promotion”. According to Wetzels, Orbie and Bossuyt (2015), the

6 A strong ideology has four features: “(1) tight fusion of fact and value; (2) selective reinterpretation of the past; (3) marginalization and suppression of alternative viewpoints; and (4) airbrushing inconsistencies to hold together multiple constituencies” (Whitehead 2015, 14).





substance of this ideology generally followed a “Western model”¹⁴ of democracy or promoting polyarchy (Whitehead 2015), and, paradoxically, some skepticism about the sustainability of this model is always debatable.

Recent literature sharply opposes the argument of the EU’s coherent concept of democracy. According to Kurki (2015), the organizational complexity of the EU does not lead to a “consistent and coherent” approach on democratic matters, although, discursively, the EU extols these democratic qualities. Instead, the EU’s form of democracy promotion works with a broad but vague definition of democracy, mobilizing values, such as — liberty, equality, solidarity — but without a systematic model of democracy promotion.

First, the complexity of the EU denies the possibility of a singular and definitive idea of democracy. The historical pluralism in the EU, with different experiences and institutions, guides the process of conceptual vagueness (Kurki 2015). Second, in her findings, the EU promotes democracy in terms of a “depoliticized” manner, a “technocratic, rules-export, governance focus” (Young and Pischchikova in Wetzel 2015, 3) or strategies that display “a technocratic orientation and are instrumental to deepening market-based reform in aid receiving countries” (Hout in Wetzel 2015, 3). Third, the common ground of democracy in the EU follows a more liberal model, but not a pure liberal model, as it is also connected to economic conditions in favor of successful democratization (Kurki 2015).

The result is the promotion of a fuzzy liberal democracy within the EU context. This fuzziness is not accidental or coincidental; instead, it favors a political-economic model to export democracy. First, it serves to create an economic restructuring of states; in other words, a robust normative approach of what to do with political institutions in conjunction with economic policies. Second, a broad and fuzzy agenda allows contradictions in agenda-setting policies. It is particularly interesting for international bureaucracies for two reasons: a more significant maneuver margin for action and a discourse of “depoliticizing” democratic argument by technocratic discourse.⁷ In this sense, this unique, fuzzy liberalism works well when normative ideals are apparently put in second place when faced with pragmatic interested-oriented cooperation, and when it puts closure upon an ideological dispute taken up by target states confronting an unclear ideological position regarding the concept of democracy (Kurki 2015).

7 From Kurki’s (2011) perspective, technocratic discourses are “conceptual frameworks that seek to ‘depoliticize,’ ‘harmonize,’ ‘rationalize’ and ‘objectify’ the democracy promotion policy agenda and knowledge-making and management within it” (Kurki 2011, 212).





Thus, some consequences appear when contemplating the construction of the concept of democracy. First, although the normative basis on the discourse does exist, there is a tendency to avoid value-based rhetoric, giving space to interest-based and instrumental arguments. The discourse of rationality and coherence of policy-making overlaps the provision of normative justifications in the process of formulating a democracy promotion policy. Second, coherent reasoning can be given to the process in association with an incoherent concept of democracy, which gives rise to a technocratic discourse. The result is the presence of normative and political issues that are in fact denied by the procedure. Third, the rational coherent discourse assumes any contesting and debating of democracy's meaning as hazardous (Kurki 2015). It means that when discussions regarding "which democracy" or "whose democracy" appear, they are instantly treated as dangerous or skeptically implemented. Fourth, productive power favors some actors over others, especially when some biases in the discourse occur; some liberal organization, types of NGOs, technical personnel and offices, and some member states as leaders are preferred over others (Kurki 2015).

Finally, the political dynamic does not favor new discussions regarding the concept of democracy, considering that the focus on the concept of democracy is a minimalist version at best. As demonstrated, ideals of "democracy" are crucial to democracy protection policies. In Kurki's view, the definition of liberal democracy does not capture all aspects of the political process, and alternative models — such as social democracy, participatory democracy, deliberative democracy, and radical democracy — must be discussed in parallel with the embedded democracy assumption. Thus, "there are important reasons — theoretical, normative, political, and practical — to take the essential contestability of the idea of democracy in democracy promotion, for both scholars and practitioners, seriously" (Kurki 2010, 376).

Structural

According to Barnett and Duvall (2005), structural power consists of the co-constitutive structure, which defines what social actors are. It denotes that structural power exists because of an internal relation between a structural position A in relationship with a structural position B. Thus, the consequences of the co-constitutive connection between A and B shapes the actors not only by





the structural inequalities in capacity allocation, but also because of the different meanings in a subjective interaction between those actors.

Specifically, for democracy protection policies implemented by IGOs, structural power appears in linkages and governance policies (Freyburg et al. 2015). In both cases, those policies export structural prerequisites and forms of behavior production with a concept of democracy: a prescription of actor's behavior and institutional aspects to be implemented in a target country. More traditionally, one of the first structural powers by IGOs was the linkage model of democracy promotion. The linkage model associates democratization through some structural prerequisites (Lipset 1959), whether by socioeconomic development or transnational exchange (Freyburg et al. 2015). Thus, this perspective of democracy promotion produces some substantive consequences in IGO actions.

First, linkage policies prepare the political scenario for a democratic culture in a society. This democratic culture comes from several strategies of action: economic aid (credits, assistances, and investments), intergovernmental negotiation (bilateral and multilateral), promotion of societal interaction, actions of international technocracy, communication and networks (Western media penetration, internet connection, for example), adoption of development policies, educational policies, strengthening of civil society associations, and the organization of the public sphere (Freyburg et al. 2015; Sasse 2013).

Second, instead of focusing on specific preferences of governmental or nongovernmental actors, linkage policies aim to transform long-term calculations by changing socioeconomic structures, associating high levels of economic development with the quality of democratization. Third, the focus remains on bottom-up factors of democratization and not top-down, as seen in political conditionality by means of leverage. Indeed, linkage strategies assume that changing socioeconomic structures also change the dispersion of power in society. Following an indirect strategy, linkage promotion seeks a profound economic transformation, a long-term horizon of change, but with substantive analytical implications due to the difficult access of empirical verification (Lavenex 2013).

Linkage strategies assume some necessary conditionality for successful policies. First, some autonomy by the civil society in the third country enhances transnational openness. In Freyburg et al. (2015), "Linkage efforts will not reach civil society if a country is isolated from the outside world. Moreover, civil society has no freedom to maneuver" (Freyburg et al., 2015, 17). Thus, less accessibility on the part of the third country means less effectiveness in linkage





strategies. For Sasse (2013), successful linkage policies require the expertise of some domestic actors in order to select, pragmatically, some of these policies. Generally, third countries with different degrees of ‘stateness’⁸ can produce different outcomes, since they have different levels of domestic political competition. In the author’s argument, international linkages can strengthen and weaken this domestic competition, encouraging or suppressing regime openings because of the role of these actors in an asymmetric structure.

The democratic governance model follows some similarities and differences from the traditional strategy of linkage. Much like linkage strategies, the governance model strengthens domestic forces in society but focuses on sectoral cooperation arrangements in public administration (Lavenex, 2013). The structural power in the governance model resides in the capacity to (1) introduce reforms on public administration through policy transfer to change the practices in the conduction of public policy. This means that, differently from linkage policies, the governance model focuses on legal administrative grounds; (2) cooperation relates to legislation transference, or, beyond policy transformation, governance model transfers polity structures associated with democracy standards; (3) much like linkage policies, the effectiveness assumes some openness and autonomy of domestic administration, that is, “a certain degree of decentralization of administrative structures, empowerment of administrative officials, and openness toward contacts and cooperation with the administrations of international organizations and other countries” (Lavenex, 2013,143-144).

Institutional power

According to Barnett and Duvall (2005), institutional power is the capacity of the actor’s control of others in indirect ways. This is indirect because actor A uses formal and informal institutions to guide, constrain, and propose conditions and actions of others. Another crucial aspect of institutional power is that, spatially, this type affects others’ behavior only through institutional arrangements, and temporally, “institutions established at one point in time can have ongoing and unintended effects at a later point” (Barnett and Duvall 2005,16).

It is interesting to note that the IGOs’ institutional power reflects the use of organizations by other organizations. In this particular context, IGOs use

8 According to Sasse (2013), ‘stateness’ is defined as “tensions arising from the incongruence between the state and the nation (ops cit, 2013, 554).





transnational actors (TNAs) or transgovernmental actors (TGAs) to promote democratic policies. First, IGOs have the power to select, encourage, and limit some aspects of institutional and informational access and budgetary issues. Second, by its constitutions, transnational/transgovernmental organizations have independence in action, which leads to cooperative delegations (Tallberg 2010). Thus, the institutional power of IGOs in democracy protection involves, first, the authority in selecting TNAs/TGAs; second, power in IGO-TNA/TGA interaction; third, the use of TNA/TGAs in democracy protection (Tallberg 2010).

TNAs are “both non-profit actors, such as NGOs, advocacy networks, social movements, party associations, philanthropic foundations, and labor unions (sometimes referred to as civil society actors), and profit-oriented actors, such as multinational corporations and business associations” (Tallberg and Jonsson 2010, 4). In a context of an accusation of “democratic deficit” against IGOs, TNAs have taken on the role as a supplement for the improvement of democratic decision-making procedures and a new means through which to achieve adequate problem-solving capacity in policy formation (Tallberg and Jonsson 2010). On that account, TNAs have witnessed gradual participation in new modes of governance, especially in those involving public and private actors (Tallberg and Jonsson 2010). Over time, TNAs have taken part in a different moment of the policy cycle, mobilized between representation for collaboration and access to those policies, considered to be “policy experts, service providers, and compliance watchdogs” (Tallberg and Jonsson 2010, 45).

According to Tallberg (2010), some reasons allow the access of TNAs within IGOs. The first is the functional efficiency of TNAs. The selection of TNAs occurs because of their technical capacity to achieve precise results in matters that IGOs are unable to resolve. This process of delegation can vary according to the needs of international organizations. The second reason is democratic legitimacy. As discussed before, IGOs were heavily pressured at the beginning of the 1990s due to several accusations regarding democratic deficits in their decision-making procedures. In this sense, TNAs do not only act in favor of democracy promotion as a system of government, but also as improvers of democratic legitimacy within the IGOs, since global civil society can access procedures, decisions, and consultations (Tallberg 2010). Finally, the greatest importance of institutional power: IGOs and states can exploit TNAs to gain leverage inside IGOs, as both an actor and an arena, respectively. Differently from IGOs, States use TNAs to gain additional advantage within IGOs, supporting actors according to their political positions (Tallberg 2010).





IGOs, on the other hand, can use TNAs in two ways. First, IGOs aims to improve their policies' efficiency, thus maneuvering different actors according to their like-minded practices. IGOs control the presence of TNAs in a policy cycle, focusing on programmatic activities in the field, as service providers or enforcement mechanisms of IGOs in some issue-areas, but not in decision-making stages (or agenda-setting phases) (Tallberg 2010). According to Tallberg (2010), these interactions between stages would achieve an optimal result from both actors, as IGOs would propose an issue in the agenda-setting stage and TNAs could participate through independent maneuvers and the implementation of these issues.

Second, IGOs can control access to these TNAs in the organization. IGOs can discriminate TNAs *ex-ante*, according to their mechanisms of selection. It is a powerful institutional mechanism, because TNAs, to obtain access, must adapt to perspectives and procedures of the contractor IGOs (Tallberg 2010). According to Mahoney and Beckstrand (2011), in the case of the EU, the Commission has funded pro-EU TNAs in matters of democracy, cultural exchange, educational projects, and integrative policies. grounding the argument that the institutional power appeared in the selection and funding of TNAs. This level of asymmetry interferes directly in which process of the policy cycle TNAs will work and what type of TNAs will be allowed: who and when. According to Tallberg (2010), the dynamics of power would result in three concerns: “support for like-minded actors, opposition to antagonistic actors, and reinforcement of existing power structures” (Tallberg 2010, 57).

According to Johnson (2016), because of the differences in displays of power, the interaction between IGOs and transnational actors can achieve four possibilities: cooperation, co-optation, competition, and conflict. In the authors' point of view, two causes lead the IGO-TNA interaction to these different paths: (1) a shared array of values concerning cross-national layering and (2) distinct resource bases. In the absence of one or two of these factors, co-optation, competition, or conflict occur.

The IGO-TNA interaction contributes to other power relations. First, although asymmetric, NGOs are not always adversaries, but rather tamed partners. In this relation, ideational and material factors appear in a supply and demand relationship. On one hand, the ideational factor is a dialog between what fits in an IGO's international bureaucracy intentions and what TNAs offer to it. On the other hand, a material factor relates to physical factors. TNAs search for





resources, which the IGOs have. It is through this combination of supply and demand that a relationship of interdependence arise, but in an asymmetric form. The asymmetry mainly appears in an IGO's power as a gatekeeper agenda-setter in policy-making circles, and TNAs as service providers in policy implementation (Johsson 2016).

TGAs are “sub-units of governments”. A transgovernmental (TG) cooperation relates “to a cross-border peer-to-peer partnership between public institutions in specific policy sectors in pursuit of policy coordination, coalition building, and other functional goals” (Panchuk, Bossuyt and Orbie 2017, 1). The use of TGAs by IGOs is generally associated with the governance model of democracy promotion. In fact, they use TGAs to change public administration rules and frameworks towards “good governance” policies (Panchuk, Bossuyt and Orbie 2017).

The type of institutional power in cases of TGAs relates to the “sectoral conditionality”, in which the IGOs can possess greater bargaining power over some countries, including some democratic governance norms and policies in their particular governmental sectors (Panchuk, Bossuyt and Orbie 2017). In this sense, the IGO's control relates to the selection and capacity provision of TG cooperation works as a democratic governance promoter. Another aspect is the sector politicization, or the susceptibility of the sector of conflict of interest or corruption, which has some influence on the quality of democracy promotion. In this sense, TG cooperation relates to the IGO's sectoral conditionality in the particular policy sector (Panchuk, Bossuyt and Orbie 2017). Differently of NGOs, TG cooperation gives more importance to domestic factors in matters of organizational capacity, the politicization of internal bureaucracy, and the leverages of the IGOs in the incentives to produce democratic norms. Empirically, as demonstrated by Panchuk Panchuk, Bossuyt, and Orbie (2017), the use of TGAs varies according to “political liberalization, sector politicization, sector technical complexity, and EU sectoral conditionality” (Panchuk, Bossuyt and Orbie 2017, 5).

Therefore, as a means to summarize this information, Table 3 presents the dimensions mobilized in this article: a) the types of power; b) the application to the state-centric promotion; c) the IGOs discussed in this article; d) the models of democracy promotion associated with their types.





Table 3 — Typologies of power in a comparative perspective: State-centric vs IGOs

Type of power	Application to state-centric promotion	Intergovernmental Organizations	Model of democracy promotion
Compulsory power	“Concerns the capacity of democracy promoters to directly shape the behavior of (actors in) recipient countries” (Wolff 2015, 222)	Concerns the capacity of the direct use of institutional mechanisms (both rewards or punishments) in different moments of democratization. These institutional mechanisms serve as political conditionality based on compliance responses and in an asymmetric relation between IGOs and target countries.	Leverage
Institutional power	“Concerns the capacity to indirectly influence recipient behavior through a democracy promoter’s impact on international institutions and nongovernmental organizations” (Wolff 2015, 222)	Concerns the indirect use of TNA/TGAs organizations to protect democracies.	Governance
Structural power	“Concerns the capacity to directly shape the structure of relations between democracy promoter and recipient, as well as the structural conditions in recipient countries through interaction with (actors in) recipient countries” (Wolff 2015, 222)	Concerns the capacity to project structures of governance (technocratic organizations) and long-term policy changes (economic and political) to enhance democratization scenarios.	Linkage/ Governance
Productive power	“Concerns the capacity to indirectly shape the structure of bilateral relations and the structural conditions in recipient countries through effects on general systems of knowledge and discursive practices” (Wolff, 2015, 222).	Concerns the constitutive capacity of bureaucracies to a) construct a normative concept, meaning, and identity of democracy b) project this concept as promoter/ protector of set norms	Governance and Linkage

Source: Authors’ compilation in dialog with Wolff (2015) and Freyburg et al. (2015).





Conclusion

As discussed in this article, the international promotion of democracy is a matter of power. In this regard, the current literature paid little attention to the multifaceted feature of this power, especially as regards the role of the nation-state (Wolff 2015). Specifically, this article called attention to the literature gap concerning the role of IGOs in this multifaceted power found in the promotion of democracy. Some crucial insights have also arisen for further analysis. First, the analytical decision for the role of IGOs called for understanding the differences between these organizations and nation-states.

Indeed, as demonstrated, this differentiation is not trivial. First, the use of power in democracy protection requires the understanding of international bureaucracies. As sources of IGOs' actorness, international bureaucracies seem to be the core of instrumental, substantive, and normative action of IGOs in world politics. Second, in association with the role of bureaucracies (actors), the analysis of the interaction with the arena of negotiation (nation-states) can be loose. In other words, although the international bureaucracies can trace some independence, nation-states still have a place in the democracy protection policies in IGOs. Third, the understanding of power by IGOs in democracy protection need to answer three essential questions: a) What is the substance (normative) of the concept of democracy protection?; b) What type of institutions are protected, expanded, promoted?; c) What institutional mechanisms and organizations are used for this end? Indeed, the theoretical-conceptual debate of IGOs in democracy protection open a range of analysis, not only to understand the types of power in place, but also how they interact toward democracy expansion. This opens an interdisciplinary approach and an empirical mobilization that is not trivial, but rather requires attentive eyes of those who delve into it.

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