

The European Union and Democracy Promotion  
in Africa: The Case of Ghana

**Dr Gordon Crawford**

---

POLIS Working Paper No. 10  
February 2004



**The European Union and Democracy Promotion in Africa:  
The Case of Ghana  
Gordon Crawford**

School of Politics and International Studies, University of Leeds,

**Paper prepared for the European Community Studies  
Association of South Africa's conference on '*The relationship  
between Africa and the European Union*', University of the  
Western Cape, 22-23 January 2004.**

[Draft, please don't cite without author's permission].

**Introduction**

This paper aims to contrast the rhetoric of European Union (EU) democracy promotion in Africa with the reality of its efforts in the selected case-study of Ghana. It is divided into three main parts, in addition to this brief introduction and a conclusion. The first part outlines the rhetorical vigour of EU democracy promotion policies in Africa. The second part looks at the reality of democracy promotion in practice through an investigation into EU democracy assistance in Ghana, inclusive of the European Community and Member States, i.e. activities supported by European Commission funds and through Member States' aid programmes. The third part asks why such a high profile policy has been implemented so weakly, with three explanations suggested and applied to the Ghana case. Finally overall conclusions are drawn.

Ghana has been chosen as an appropriate case-study because it offers comparatively good prospects, and a relatively high level of demand, for external democracy assistance. In sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana is one of the few countries where the momentum of the

democratic transition in the early 1990s appears to have been maintained. Indeed, of the approximately thirty countries in Africa that were involved in attempted democratic transitions in the early 1990s, Carothers (2002: 9) cites Ghana as the only African country that has made significant democratic progress and remains positively engaged in democratisation.<sup>1</sup> Political stability and relatively little ethnic conflict have provided a comparatively favourable context for internal pro-democratisation actors. This has led to a degree of democratic consolidation (Gyimah-Boadi 2001), indicated in particular by the unprecedented, peaceful transfer of power between political parties at the December 2000 elections. Ghana is also a low-income country with a per capita income of \$270 per annum (World Bank data) and a highly restricted public expenditure budget after two decades of structural adjustment. Yet democracy is expensive, not simply in terms of the cost of elections but also with regard to the formation and strengthening of the range of requisite democratic institutions and the encouragement of widespread public participation. A workshop on judicial reform noted that “the lack of resources was a common theme running through all discussions” (Center for Democratic Development – Ghana / Friedrich Naumann Stiftung 2000: 40), and such a statement could equally be applied to all key institutions of democratic governance and other issues of democratic reform (see, for instance, Crawford 2003: 2-25). Therefore the Ghana case provides a particularly good test for EU democracy promotion efforts, and those of international actors generally. Given the favourable context, and demand for, democracy assistance, if the reality of democracy promotion does not live up to the policy rhetoric in Ghana, then it is unlikely to do so elsewhere in Africa.

### **1. EU Democracy promotion policy: high on rhetoric<sup>2</sup>**

The promotion of democracy and human rights has become an increasingly central feature of EU external relations policy over the past 15 years, including in Africa. It is a prominent characteristic both of the EU’s development co-operation policy and of its foreign policy more generally. Democracy promotion’s rise up the policy agenda can be

---

<sup>1</sup> Globally, Carothers (2002: 9) estimates that fewer than twenty of the almost one hundred ‘transition’ countries of recent years remain involved in a “positive dynamic of democratization”, with Ghana the sole African country cited.

traced back to two key documents, a Council of Ministers' Resolution on development co-operation and the Maastricht Treaty's fundamental principles. First, the Council's landmark Resolution of November 1991 on 'Human Rights, Democracy and Development' made the promotion of human rights and democracy both an objective and condition of development co-operation. The Resolution was an expression of the new orthodoxy that arose in the early 1990s that democratisation was not only desirable in itself but also a necessary requisite for sustained socio-economic development. Significantly, and uniquely at the time, this Resolution applied to both Community aid programmes, administered by the European Commission, and those of the Member States. Secondly, the Treaty on European Union (TEU), commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force in November 1993, had far-reaching implications. It established the protection and promotion of human rights as a defining principle of the EU, hence informing *all* its activities. As regards the external policies of the EU, efforts to "develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" (Art. 11) were stated as objectives of the (then new) Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Additionally, Article 177 of the TEU provided a legal basis for Community development co-operation by defining its goals and objectives, which included the promotion of democracy and human rights as a priority aim. Subsequently, the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law have been regarded as 'essential elements' of EU external policy (European Commission 2003: 3).

Since the TEU, there have been multiple references to these fundamental elements at various institutional levels: by the European Council, the Council of Ministers, and the European Commission (Crawford 2002: 911-913). Policy has evolved and been operationalised, including in relation to Africa, on a number of different fronts, four of which are distinguished here. First, the promotion of human rights and democracy has been incorporated into the network of the EU's regional agreements, purportedly as a shared value and objective, for example, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and the

---

<sup>2</sup> This section examines only the democracy promotion policies of EU-wide institutions. In addition, Member States generally have their own equivalent policies, but are not included here.

Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, including Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa respectively. Additionally, a human rights and democracy clause has been inserted into agreements with individual countries, standardised since May 1995, with the possibility of its use as a conditionality mechanism (Crawford 1998). Second, in Africa and elsewhere, increased importance has been attached to the notion of ‘political dialogue’ in external relations, especially with regard to addressing human rights and democracy issues (Council 2003: 31). Indeed, EU agreements with other regions and countries are now commonly seen as having ‘three pillars’, with political dialogue a relatively new addition to the traditional elements of trade and development co-operation. Third, attempts have been made within the EU to ensure the internal coherence and consistency of policy between different EU actors. Fourth, funds for positive support for democratisation have been made available from a range of different sources. These four aspects are examined below with regard to EU-Africa policy.

### ***1.1 Regional Agreements***

First, for Sub-Saharan Africa, the most significant agreement has been the Lomé Convention, succeeded by the Cotonou Agreement in June 2000. This agreement between the EU and the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) states includes all 48 countries of sub-Saharan Africa as signatories.<sup>3</sup> Originally an aid and trade agreement, the political dimension of the Lomé Convention, and now Cotonou Agreement, has become increasingly prominent over the past 15 years. Interestingly, a political element was first introduced in Lomé IV in 1989, preceding the general policy statements, making ‘respect for human rights’ a fundamental clause of the agreement (Article 5). Subsequently, in accordance with the TEU, this political dimension was extended and strengthened in the mid-term review of Lomé IV in 1995. Respect for democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance were added to human rights, with all but good governance becoming ‘essential elements’ of the Convention, backed up by a non-execution or suspension clause (Article 366a) in the event of a serious violation (Crawford 1996: 506-7). Similarly, the Cotonou Agreement affirms ‘respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law’ as essential elements of the Agreement

(Article 9), while ‘good governance’ becomes a ‘fundamental and positive element’ (Salama and Dearden 2001: 7).<sup>4</sup>

### ***1.2 Political Dialogue***

The political dimension has been emphasised as a separate ‘pillar’ within the Cotonou Agreement. It has been enhanced in particular by the introduction of regular political dialogue between the EU and the ACP, described as a “key element in the new partnership” (David 2000: 14). The intention is stated to undertake dialogue at regional, sub-regional and national levels [Article 8(6)], including “a regular assessment of the developments concerning the respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance” [Article 8(6)], presumably focusing on individual country level. Dialogue will involve regional and sub-regional organisations as well as representatives of civil society [Article 8(7)], the general inclusion of whom is a further innovation of the Cotonou Agreement.

High-level EU-Africa dialogue has also been established at the continental level following the first EU-Africa Summit in Cairo in April 2000.<sup>5</sup> This meeting of heads of state has led to a framework of inter-continental dialogue at various levels, including Summit meetings every three or four years, Ministerial meetings in-between, and regular senior level contacts between officials from the Commissions of both the European Union and the African Union.<sup>6</sup> Following the Cairo Summit, eight priority themes of

---

<sup>3</sup> Four North African countries – Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt – belong to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership concluded in Barcelona in 1995. Within the African continent, only Libya has not entered into a formal agreement with the EU.

<sup>4</sup> Discussions concerning the inclusion of good governance in the Cotonou Agreement was one of the most controversial aspects of the negotiations between the ACP states and the EU. The ACP resisted the introduction of good governance as an ‘essential element’, subject to a non-execution or suspension clause. The compromise of good governance as a ‘fundamental and positive element’ entails linguistic contortions, with good governance becoming a theme for regular dialogue and an area for positive support. The main difference is that good governance is not subject to a non-execution clause, with the exception of “serious cases of corruption” where significant funds provided by the Community are involved (Art. 97).

<sup>5</sup> Two Ministerial Conferences have since been held, in Brussels in October 2001 and Ouagadougou in November 2002, but the second EU-Africa Summit, due to take place in Lisbon in April 2003, was postponed at the request of the EU.

<sup>6</sup> With the establishment of the African Union (AU), replacing the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in July 2002, it appears that EU-Africa dialogue will increasingly take place on an EU-AU basis.

dialogue were declared in October 2001, of which ‘human rights, democracy and good governance’ is the first listed (European Commission 2003: 6).

The increased importance being attached to the notion of political dialogue is further indicated by the EU’s adoption of ‘Guidelines on Human Rights Dialogues’ on 13 December 2001, in which it pledges to raise the issue of human rights, democracy and the rule of law in *all* meetings with third countries (Council 2003: 31).

### ***1.3 Coherence and Consistency***

With regard to internal coherence, a ‘common position’ was adopted by the Council on 25 May 1998 concerning ‘human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in Africa’ (Council 1998). A common position is one of the main legal instruments of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), defining the position of the EU on a particular issue. Its significance is that all Member States must subsequently ensure that their national policies conform to the declared position, and the intention is that the various EU actors should speak with one voice and act in a consistent manner. The stated aim of the common position of May 1998 was to enhance the coherence of EU activities and policy responses to political trends in individual Africa countries. The common position also reaffirms that support for democratic political change in Africa is a priority objective of the EU, presumably highlighting this policy to the internal constituency of Member States and Commission officials. It recognises that “democratisation is a process which can be assisted by appropriate support from the international community” (Article 1) and commits the Union “to encourage and support the on-going democratisation process in Africa” (Article 2), working with both government and civil society (Article 3). The intent to maintain aid conditionality on democracy and human rights grounds is also indicated by evidence of a carrot and stick approach: increased support shall be considered “for African countries in which positive changes have taken place”, contrasted with various levels of punitive measures where changes are negative in democracy and human rights terms (Article 3).

This theme of coherence and consistency between EU actors is re-emphasised in a Commission document of May 2001 entitled 'The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries' (European Commission 2001). In identifying areas for greater effectiveness, it highlights the importance of:

Promoting *coherent and consistent policies* both within European Community activities, and between those and other EU actions, especially the CFSP, as well as Member State activities (ibid.: 5, emphasis in original).

#### **1.4 Funding Sources**

If EU support for democratisation is to become a reality rather than merely a set of platitudes that are routinely offered in official documents, then significant financial assistance is required. In theory, such funds are available from both Community and Member State sources, examined in turn. For sub-Saharan African countries, the most substantial Community resource is the European Development Fund (EDF), the financial instrument of the Cotonou Agreement. A country strategy and national indicative programme is negotiated by the government of each ACP state with the European Commission, determining the selected focal sectors for assistance, and potentially including democracy and governance issues. For North Africa countries, democracy and human rights projects could be financed in theory from the mainstream MEDA funds, the financial instrument of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, but in practice are almost exclusively funded from the special MEDA Democracy Programme (Youngs 2002: 55-6). Additionally, other Commission-managed budget lines are available to all regions. Most important is the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), created by an initiative of the European Parliament in 1994, which brought together a number of budget headings (Crawford 2000). Currently, the EIDHR has a budget of approximately 100 million euros per annum and is distributed mainly to NGOs and international organisations (Council 2003: 44). Applications are invited from all third countries and available funds are complementary to the main regional instruments of development co-operation, (for example, the EDF for the ACP states or MEDA funds for North African countries). Additionally, the Development Directorate General within the Commission manages other general budget lines such as that for NGOs, which could

include human rights and democracy-related projects.<sup>7</sup> As regards the EU Member States, each has its own bilateral aid programme, of course. Most Member States have made their own foreign and development policy declarations in support of democracy, human rights and good governance, but if not, they remain committed to support democratisation efforts through their EU obligations, for example, the ‘common position’ of May 1998 on democratisation issues in Africa (Council 1998).

The statements from a further two documents suggest that the democracy and human rights support from Community sources would be sizeable. First, a joint statement by the Council and the Commission on ‘The European Community’s Development Policy’ in November 2000 incorporated the promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance as an integral part of development co-operation, signalling an intent to *concentrate* resources on this sector. It was subsequently declared that this policy statement represented a “new framework for the European Commission’s activities in support of human rights and democratisation” (European Commission 2001: 5). This latter document also stated the intent to place “a *higher priority* on human rights and democratisation in relations with third countries and tak[e] a more pro-active approach, using opportunities offered by *political dialogue, trade and external assistance*” (ibid.: 5, emphasis in original).

Moreover, in this document, the Commission explicitly states that it “wants to be judged on its performance in meeting the EU’s policy goals” in the area of human rights and democracy (ibid.: 3). The next part of this paper aims to provide such a judgement through a case-study of Ghana, but through an assessment that covers not only Commission democracy promotion activities but all EU actors, including Member States.

## **2. EU Democracy Assistance in Ghana**

This part examines the assistance provided to Ghana in the areas of democracy, human rights and good governance as part of the development co-operation programmes of the

---

<sup>7</sup> Budget lines for non-state actors include ‘Co-financing operations with EU NGOs’ (B7-6000) and ‘Support for decentralised co-operation in developing countries’ (B7-6002).

European Community and Member States. A brief introduction to the Ghanaian political context precedes this.

### ***2.1 Ghana: Political Overview***

Following the return to constitutional democracy in 1992, Ghana's democratic transition has been relatively successful. While democratisation has stalled or reversed in many sub-Saharan African countries that participated in the 'democracy wave' of the early 1990s, it is generally recognised that democratic processes in Ghana have qualitatively improved (for example, elections) and that a democratic culture is stronger, albeit after the inauspicious start of disputed elections in 1992. Indeed, the unprecedented peaceful alternation of power at the presidential and parliamentary elections of December 2000 undoubtedly represented a very significant moment in Ghana's political history, claimed as "mark[ing] a real step toward democratic consolidation" (Gyimah-Boadi 2001: 104). Yet it is also uncontroversial to suggest that much remains to be done in difficult circumstances, given the harsh economic and social conditions faced by newly democratic institutions in a low-income country. Thus there is both a favourable political context and a clear role for democracy assistance. Overall, along with South Africa, Ghana probably represents the most positive circumstances for the implementation of EU democracy promotion policy in Africa. Therefore what has been done?

### ***2.2 EU Democracy assistance in Ghana***

[Please note that this section is tentative and requires a fieldwork visit to consolidate the information presented here.]

Over 20 multilateral and bilateral development agencies are involved in the provision of official development assistance (ODA) to Ghana, totalling approx. \$650 per annum (CIDA 1999: 19). The principle multilateral donors are the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the European Community (i.e. European Commission aid), UNDP and UNICEF.<sup>8</sup> Of the major bilateral donors, five are EU Member States (Denmark,

---

<sup>8</sup> An important difference in the ODA provided by the World Bank and African Development Bank, compared with that of the European Community and UN agencies, is that the multilateral development banks provide loans rather than grants. Also, Hearn (2000) indicates that European Community ODA was

France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK), while three are non-EU (Canada, Japan, and the United States).<sup>9</sup> One area of co-ordinated donor assistance has entailed support to the 1996 and 2000 elections. Facilitated by UNDP in 1996, EU contributions included those from Danida and DfID, with total support (from all donors) of \$12.6 million, representing 54% of the total cost of the elections (Map Consult 2002:15-6). In 2000, this proportion increased to an estimated 64% of the total cost of the electoral process (ibid.: 16).

This section looks at the democracy assistance programmes of the EU donors, commencing with the European Community and then the bilateral agencies in alphabetical order.

### *2.2.1 European Community*

European Community aid refers to those programmes administered and managed by the European Commission. In Ghana, this includes the development assistance provided through the European Development Fund (EDF), the financial instrument of the Cotonou Agreement, as well as the potential funds from other specific Commission budget lines, such as those for human rights and democracy (EIDHR) and for NGO co-financing.

Following the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, the European Commission has adopted a new five-year country strategy (2002-07), in agreement with the Ghanaian government, with allocated funds totalling 311 million euros.<sup>10</sup> Although the strategy is said to “reflect the general principles of the Cotonou Agreement” (Republic of Ghana - European Community 2002: 1), there is little emphasis on democracy and human rights issues. The focal sectors of assistance are three-fold: rural development, road transport and macroeconomic support. The only reference to political aid comes in a single sentence under the heading of ‘Other programmes’: “An indicative amount of 21m. euros has been

---

appreciably greater than that from UNDP in the period 1991-95, \$54 million as compared to \$4 million in 1995, for instance.

<sup>9</sup> Spain and Italy are the other two EU Member States that have a presence in Ghana, but are relatively minor donors.

<sup>10</sup> Such funds come from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF (2000-2005) that coincides with the first five-year period of the Cotonou Agreement.

reserved for interventions in the areas of good governance, HIV/AIDS, the environment as well as for contingencies” (ibid.: 27, emphasis added). This suggests that, although relatively small contingency funds could be made available, no specific democracy promotion projects have been included in the current five-year strategy until 2007.<sup>11</sup>

Is there evidence of more substantial support from previous programmes? Electoral support has been provided in the past, with a contribution made to fund the December 2000 elections. The latest annual report on Ghana – EU Co-operation (for 2002), published October 2003, includes ongoing activities supported under previous EDF programmes, with ‘governance and institution-building’ included as a non-focal area (Republic of Ghana - European Community 2003: 15). Two areas of support are outlined: public financial management and ‘decentralised governance’. Under public financial management, a project to support the Ghana Audit Service has been ongoing since 2000 (ibid.), though such financial audit activities could equally be classified as macro-economic support.<sup>12</sup> Under ‘decentralised governance’, two components are highlighted. One is ‘Human Resource Development’ for District Assemblies, entailing training programmes for over 1000 district officials and up to 8,800 District Assembly members and so-called ‘opinion leaders’ in Ghana’s 110 districts (ibid.: 16). This could be the same support for District Assemblies that is an element of the microprojects programme, described as “making an important contribution to more decentralised decision-making, to increased accountability of District Assemblies and to local ownership of development projects” (personal correspondence from European Commission official, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2004). This would appear to focus less on building the capacity of District Assemblies themselves and more on strengthening the capacity of local non-state actors to make demands on local government. The second component in the annual report is entitled ‘decentralised co-operation’ and is said to aim at capacity building of NGOs, with projects oriented towards “skill development at grass-roots level (including carpentry, sewing, baking, animal husbandry and agroforestry)” (ibid.). Such activities would appear to have little to do with political decentralisation or to

---

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that support to the December 2004 elections will be provided, funded from these contingency funds for non-focal sectors (European Commission official, personal correspondence).

<sup>12</sup> This project is worth 4.8m. euros from 2000-04 (European Commission 2003b: 6).

democratisation more generally, and their categorisation as ‘decentralised governance’ could be an attempt to boost what is clearly a very thin area of EC support in Ghana.<sup>13</sup>

With regard to Commission budget lines, it appears that there have been no projects supported in Ghana in the democracy and human rights area. Ghana is not a focus country for EIDHR and therefore has not recently received any funds.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, there are no ongoing projects in Ghana related to human rights support funded from the NGO budgets.<sup>15</sup>

In sum, despite all the rhetoric about democracy and human rights in EU treaties, resolutions and numerous policy documents, the European Community’s own development co-operation in Ghana has minimal focus on democratisation issues. Rather it appears more like a traditional development aid programme, with little emphasis on the political dimension, despite this having been identified as key to Ghana’s sustained development.

### *2.2.2 Denmark*

Through its aid agency, Danida, the Danish government is a key bilateral donor in Ghana. Human rights and democracy support has been an increasingly significant component of Danish assistance since the early 1990s, with an evaluation report classifying 60 projects with expenditure of DKK 225 million in this area in the period 1990-1999 (Danida 2000: 37). This study provides a three-fold classification of Danish support as follows:

- Projects supporting democratic institutions and processes, e.g. elections, including at District level; National Electoral Commission; CHRAJ; decentralisation in general.
- Projects strengthening civil society and promoting human rights. A large number of projects in this area include support to NGOs and CBOs, as well as the promotion and protection of women’s and children’s rights. Also included in this category, more

---

<sup>13</sup> The term ‘decentralised co-operation’ has been used historically by the European Commission to refer to its activities in support of NGOs and community-based organisations, with no connection to decentralisation of government.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission official, personal correspondence.

contentiously, are projects in water and sanitation and in the health sector, regarded as promoting basic social rights.

- Support to research institutes and think tanks, such as the Institute for Economic Affairs and the Ghana Center for Democratic Development.

(ibid.: 45-6).

A further classification by the study suggests that 61% of projects and 76% of funds have supported ‘popular participation and empowerment’, as contrasted with much smaller proportions for elections, democratic institutions and the media (ibid.: 37). The category of ‘popular participation and empowerment’ includes support for the decentralisation process and for local community development. While decentralisation has been a key focus of Danish governance support, links between community development projects and a political agenda become more tenuous.<sup>16</sup>

A new strategy for Governance Support (2003-07), as this field has been re-named, focuses on five areas:

- Public policy management through multi-donor budget support (MDBS);
- Decentralisation, emphasising financial management and participatory planning
- The National Governance Framework, especially the strengthening of the democratic institutions established under the Constitution, notably Parliament and independent Commissions such as CHRAJ.
- Conflict resolution, focused on the three northern regions. This includes an innovative project, entitled ‘Traditional Leadership Initiative’, which explores the relationship between traditional and modern political structures, seeking better utilisation of the knowledge and experience of traditional leaders, including their role in conflict resolution and prevention.
- Civil society, sub-divided into support for think tanks (research institutes) and advocacy organisations.

---

<sup>15</sup> EuropeAid Co-operation Office official, personal correspondence. The nearest to such support is one peace building project in the Accra region.

<sup>16</sup> For example, a project on health and community development would seem more appropriately included as part of Danish health sector support not human rights and democracy.

(Royal Danish Embassy, Accra, 2002: 57-8).

In all, the Danish government appears to have prioritised human rights and democracy support, now called governance support, as a significant component of its development co-operation programme. A range of different areas have been targeted for assistance, though decentralisation is a notable focus.

### *2.2.3 France*

[No replies to correspondence, but website of the French Development Agency, Accra, gives no indication of any projects in the democracy and governance field].

### *2.2.4 Germany*

Support to democratisation in Ghana from German government funds comes from two main sources: the bilateral technical co-operation programme implemented by GTZ, German Technical Co-operation, and the activities of the German political foundations. These are examined in turn.

GTZ is a key implementer of the German government's development aid programme, administered overall by BMZ, the ministry for overseas development. GTZ's programme of technical co-operation in Ghana focuses on three main areas, one of which is stated as 'Democracy, Civil Society and Public Administration' (Website: GTZ Partner Countries - Ghana, dated January 2003).<sup>17</sup> Yet examination of the projects listed in this area, described as 'decentralisation / public administration', reveals unusual classification and a tenuous link with democracy issues. The four listed projects are:

- Management of road maintenance in Ghana
- Promotion of District Towns (PRODICAP)
- Basic education (ASTEP)
- Volta and Eastern Region Water Supply Assistance Project (E/VORAP)

(Website: GTZ Partner Countries – Ghana).

---

<sup>17</sup> The other two focal areas are: 'agriculture and food security' and 'economic reform and development of a market economy'.

Two of these projects fit into the categories of other, non-focal areas of co-operation, listed as ‘road construction and maintenance’ and ‘rural water supply’ (with the Volta-Eastern region project specifically mentioned), while the Promotion of District Towns turns out to be a primary education project. Such anomalies are difficult to understand, and cannot be explained as a ‘cross-sectoral’ approach whereby democracy promotion efforts, broadly understood, are integrated with other development activities, often at a local level. While these projects may indicate a preference by GTZ to work at the decentralised level, they cannot be described as promoting political decentralisation.

One previous activity has more obvious relevance to a democracy promotion agenda, albeit one that is somewhat indirect and localised. Entitled ‘Promotion of women in systems of legal pluralism’ and itself an example of cross-sectoral integration, this programme aims to enhance access to justice for women through a local-level orientation (Map Consult 2002: 44-5). It focuses on practical issues of particular relevance for poor women, such as land management and land policy, marriage and inheritance rights, and the upbringing and maintenance responsibilities for children. In seeking to support specific legal reforms, the programme works at both the local community level and the policy level, involving local government institutions, traditional authorities and other ‘social stakeholders’ (ibid.: 45).

A new strategy document for the priority area of ‘Democracy, Civil Society and Public Administration’ was drafted in November 2003 (GTZ 2003: 12-13). This proposes a future emphasis in three main areas, with some similarities to Danida’s new strategy in this area:

- support for the Government of Ghana’s poverty reduction strategy through multi-donor budget support (MDBS) [unclear whether this is specifically to the good governance objectives within the GPRS or to macroeconomic stability and ‘core state reforms’]
- strengthening of the rule of law, focusing on: serious economic crime; improving access to legal systems; integration of traditional and modern legal institutions; future

measures in the area of economic law and “economic reform and building a market economy” also mentioned (ibid.: 12).

- decentralisation, notably capacity building at the district and sub-district levels; promoting women’s participation and representation. An overall poverty orientation to decentralisation is also specified.

Thus, the proposed new strategy indicates an intention to build on previous experience in the areas of decentralisation and legal reform, though this seems to be limited to one technical co-operation project and the pilot legal pluralism project respectively (ibid.: 10).

The German political foundations have a long history of democracy promotion, given that this is their specific mandate. Funded by the federal government, the foundations are each closely aligned with a political party, and until recently the German government channelled all its democracy assistance through the foundations (Robinson 1996: 8, cited in Hearn 2000: 22). Three of the larger foundations are active in Ghana: the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), aligned to the Social Democratic Party; the Konrad Adenauer Stifting (KAS), related to the Christian Democratic Union; and the Friedrich Naumann Stifting (FNS), allied to the smaller Free Democratic Party (Liberal Party). Although operating with more modest financial resources, the German foundations are said to have “successfully impacted on the development of good governance in Ghana” (Map Consult 2002: 47). They are all similarly involved in the funding of conferences and workshops and of research and publications, though the Ghanaian partner organisations tend to differ, reflecting the ideological orientation of each foundation. The three foundations are examined in turn.

The Friedrich Ebert Stiftung has worked in Ghana since 1969 and currently sees its role as “to facilitate the democratisation process and promote pluralism” (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ghana, website, last updated 18 March 2003). Its social democratic tradition has entailed an emphasis on support for the labour movement and it is “the main foreign donor working with trade unions” (Hearn 2000: 23). Nevertheless, its current activities span a relatively broad spectrum of democracy promotion activities, with support for a

range of organisations in both political and civil society, including the constitutionally established commissions, but generally excluding central government ministries and agencies, as follows:

- Strengthening Parliament and the Electoral Commission;
- Supporting local government and decentralisation, particularly through strengthening the advocacy work of the National Association of Local Authorities (NALAG);
- Strengthening selected civil society and advocacy groups, especially youth groups, women's organisations and professional associations. FES has a long association with some of Ghana's most prominent Accra-based civil society organisations, for example, the Trades Union Congress (TUC), the National Union of Ghanaian Students (NUGS), and the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA-Ghana);
- Furthering press freedoms and media rights, through support for the Ghana Journalists Association and the National Media Commission, for instance; (Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ghana, website).

For FES, a key word is 'pluralism'. The Foundation appears to promote a form of democracy that entails the active participation and representation of a plurality of social interests in policy formulation and implementation, consistent with its social democratic perspective.

In contrast, a narrower type of democracy is promoted by the Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, more ideologically-driven in its advocacy of liberal philosophy, encompassing both a free market economy and a liberal democratic polity. It is also more partisan in its support for the current governing party, the New Patriotic Party (NPP), led by President Kufuor. FNS depicts the NPP and itself as "close and longstanding partners" and describes the "joy brought by the electoral success of liberal forces in Ghana" (Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Ghana, website). The Foundation even claims some credit for such electoral success, "*made possible* through a countrywide education campaign for electoral monitors by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation", thereby safeguarding free and

fair elections (ibid., emphasis added). Ongoing partisan support for the NPP is quite explicit, stating an intent to help strength the NPP through “the formation of a new group of political leaders on the local level”, given that many former activists are now in the government and in Parliament (ibid.). Support for other organisations appears to be restricted to those that share a liberal disposition, for example the “long-standing relationship with the New Patriotic Youth (NPP-Y)”, seen as future NPP politicians (ibid.). On the economic front, support is provided to organisations that promote an increased role for the private sector, for example, the Association of Ghana Industries (AGI). The Foundation’s neo-liberal philosophy, and its intent to mould organisations to share the same ideological stance, is evident by its concern that AGI “still contains elements that are hostile to the free market and would like to see more state intervention in the economy”, and hence the need for FNF to continue its “educational efforts... to promote a market economy” (ibid.). The ideological sin of one group within AGI was to propose a campaign to ‘buy local’ (ibid.), presumably falling foul of the free trade dogma embedded in neo-liberalism. Such partisan support for one political party, based on a particular ideological orientation, not only gives international democracy promotion a bad name, but effectively undermines both democratic processes and the notion of sovereignty in national policy formulation.

The Konrad Adenauer Stifting has a long history in Ghana, active there since 1966. Its version of democracy also involves promoting the private sector as an economic actor, though with more emphasis on small and medium size enterprises, including its sponsorship of the Association of Small Size Industries (ASSI). This work also entails assisting organisations with a more developmental focus, such as credit unions and women’s self-help initiatives (Hearn 2000: 23). Another significant component of KAS’s programme has been the rule of law and legal rights activities, including working with the constitutionally established commissions. Its activities are influenced by a third version of a democratic capitalist society, that of a social market economy.

#### *2.2.5 The Netherlands*

Two major changes in Dutch development co-operation have been introduced in recent years. The first is to concentrate development assistance on nineteen focus countries, of which Ghana is one. The other is the shift from a project-based approach to a sector-wide approach (SWAp), with a number of different sectors identified. ‘Good governance’, however, is not a sector in itself, but perceived as the way a government acts and functions for the benefit of society. Rather, ‘good governance’ is one of the three requisite criteria that focus countries have to meet, along with ‘poverty’ and ‘socio-economic policy’. Given that a sector-wide approach often entails direct budget support to a recipient government, presumably the Dutch government wishes to concentrate assistance in countries where relative ‘good governance’ is perceived as already existing, and thus where its aid resources will be used effectively. But a paradoxical consequence is that good governance is not then addressed as a key sector in the focus countries. Certainly there is no good governance component in the Dutch programme in Ghana, with health and environment as the chosen sectors, along with general budget support (i.e. macro-economic support channelled through the World Bank). In contrast, in a non-target country, for example Yemen, the promotion of good governance can be a main activity, with projects focusing on a range of democracy and governance areas: “democratisation and decentralisation, gender, human rights, strengthening of the rule of law and media sector, institutions strengthening, public finance management and civil service reform” (Dutch Embassy in Yemen 2003). All these listed activities would seem pertinent to the Ghanaian context, yet, paradoxically, by making good governance a pre-requisite for more substantial assistance, support for its strengthening is thereby excluded. This would seem in contradiction to EU policy, especially the ‘common position’ adopted by the Council on 25 May 1998 (discussed above).

### *2.2.6 The United Kingdom*

Governance is an important issue for the Department for International Development (DfID), the UK government’s aid agency. Yet, in Ghana, governance activities are limited in scope, almost entirely focused on public sector reform. The UK has a relatively long history in this area in Ghana, allied closely to the World Bank, who generally act as the lead agency. Such public sector reform measures predated the democratic transition,

linked to economic rather than political liberalisation. The UK initially funded a civil service reform project in 1987, part of the World Bank-led structural adjustment programme (named Economic Recovery Programme in Ghana), which focused on institutional downsizing. Following the return to constitutional rule, the UK has supported three major public sector reform programmes. First, starting in 1995, as part of the Ghanaian government's National Institutional Renewal Programme (NIRP), the UK funded a Civil Service Performance Improvement Programme, with a \$5 million budget (Map Consult 2002: 40). Second, launched in 1999, the Public Sector Management Reform Project (PSMRP), supported by the World Bank and DfID, entailed a very large project, with overall funding to the tune of \$150 million over 11 years (ibid.: 41-2). Finally, the UK has given its financial and technical backing to a Public Financial Management Reform Project (PUFMARP) established by the Government of Ghana, and co-ordinated by the World Bank (ibid.). DfID's contribution to PUFMARP has included attempts to introduce a new payroll system for the Government (IPPD), and to enhance government budgetary planning processes through a 'Medium Term Expenditure Framework' (MTEF) (Emerging Market Economics Ltd 2002: 22-3).

Other UK projects are similarly in the area of public sector reform, with a particular focus on financial management, for example, the 'Value for Money' project, concerned with government procurement contracts, and the 'Ghana Reintroduction of Revenue Project', providing support to the Government of Ghana's second attempt to introduce VAT. Generally these projects seem rather removed from issues of democratisation and popular participation. It is interesting to note, however, that the Ghanaian government's first attempt to introduce VAT, also supported by DfID in its former guise as the Overseas Development Administration, was defeated by widespread protests and demonstrations, regarded by some as a victory for democracy [reference needed]. In such circumstances, the UK government would seem to be on the wrong side of the fence, querying its democracy promotion claims.

Some broadening of governance support seems apparent from the new Country Assistance Plan (2003-06), with new areas of support including the justice sector and

“democratic and oversight institutions and civil society to enhance accountability and rights protection” (DfID 2002: 19). The proposed justice sector development programme (JSDP) seeks to develop a justice sector strategy that addresses the issues that affect the poor in conjunction with relevant Government of Ghana agencies (Map Consult 2002: 44), while the other emerging area appears to seek to strengthen those public bodies and civil society organisations that perform a watchdog role and hold government to account.

### **3. Explaining the reality-rhetoric gap: three propositions**

From the empirical evidence above, it is clear that EU democracy promotion in Ghana has not lived up to expectations created by its general policy rhetoric. Levels of democracy assistance remain low and there is relatively little emphasis on this area by many EU actors. Clearly there are variations between different actors. Amongst Member States, Denmark stands out as showing a more serious commitment to policy implementation in this area. For other Member States, democracy promotion does not feature as a focal area within their aid programmes (for example, the Netherlands, France??), while the UK’s preoccupation with public sector reform has a more tenuous link with democratisation issues.<sup>18</sup> Unusually, the Netherlands uses the criterion of good governance as a requirement for selecting Ghana as a focal country, but then appears to disregard democracy and governance as a key area for ongoing support and assistance. Germany appears to be giving increasing emphasis to governance issues within its programme of technical co-operation through GTZ, while its main channel of democracy support historically, the German political foundations (*Stiftungen*) operate with more modest resources and, in some instances, with an unacceptably partisan agenda. Despite the continued emphasis on human rights, democracy and good governance within the Cotonou Agreement, the EC’s aid programme with Ghana has little focus on these issues. Additionally, support in this area from other Commission budget lines is completely lacking.

---

<sup>18</sup> It can be argued that such measures relate more to state effectiveness, irrelevant of the political regime, democratic or otherwise.

As a proportion of overall ODA, democracy and governance assistance remains relatively small. Although up-to-date figures are not available, it is highly unlikely that such support amounts to more than 5% of overall ODA. One source from the late 1990s, covering all the major donors in Ghana, indicates that only \$23.3 million went to the generic ‘governance’ sector out of a total of \$724.8 million disbursed to ten sectors in a thirty month period (December 1995 to May 1998) (CIDA 1999: 27).<sup>19</sup> Governance assistance is thus ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of ten sectors, with only the ‘environment’ receiving less.

Why does the reality not live up to the rhetoric? Three possible explanations are advanced here, one bureaucratic, one political, and one economic.

### ***3.1 Bureaucratic Inertia?***

The first explanation points to a gap between the policy statements on political issues made by politicians and the implementation of development co-operation programmes by aid agency officials, despite over ten years of policy in this area. Politicians thrive on making, and signing up to, declarations that promote general principles that no-one can object to, such as respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law, and, of course, *good* governance, but often are less obliged to demonstrate how such fine sounding ideals can be achieved in practice. In contrast, aid agency officials, whether in the European Commission or bilateral international development agencies, may remain more focused on implementing more traditional aid programmes that are oriented towards socio-economic development and poverty alleviation. The recent emphasis on poverty reduction as the overarching objective of many development agencies may have reinforced such tendencies and led to an unacknowledged demotion of overtly political concerns. Hence there remains more emphasis on the building of roads and latrines in Ghana than on democracy building. This is not to imply deliberate obstruction of a new policy agenda handed down to aid agency officials working on the ground, but to suggest that the introduction of political aid as a mainstream element requires a conscious effort to reorientate ongoing development aid programmes by high level officials and their

---

<sup>19</sup> Additionally, of the \$23.3 million, a \$9.2 million Japanese programme is categorised dubiously as governance assistance, described as “promotion of the economy” (CIDA 1999: 27).

political masters.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, discussions above did indicate some attempts to do just that, notably the Joint Council and the Commission Statement on ‘The European Community’s Development Policy’ in November 2000, and the Commission’s communication of May 2001 entitled ‘The European Union’s Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries’. But two or three years later there remains little indication of the mainstreaming of political aid in the EU’s development co-operation with Ghana, neither in the new country strategy and indicative programme that stems from the Cotonou Agreement, nor in the Member States’ bilateral programmes, with the possible exception of that of Denmark. The fact that this has not happened suggests that more deep-seated processes may be at work, as considered in the next two explanations.

### ***3.2 Hidden agendas I: the politics of democracy promotion***

The second explanation suggests that the prospects for serious, committed democracy support from the EU to Africa were never high, despite the series of policy statements from the early 1990s onwards. This argument, articulated by Gorm Rye Olsen, has two related aspects. One is that EU interest in sub-Saharan Africa has waned in the post-Cold War period, while its interests in the ‘near abroad’ of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean countries of the Middle East and North Africa has increased. This is reflected in declining aid levels for sub-Saharan Africa, especially in comparison with the above regions (Crawford 1996: 504; Olsen 2003: Table 1). Residual interests in sub-Saharan Africa focus on political stability and security issues, especially conflict management, not on democracy promotion (Olsen 2003: 10-12). Such concerns are expressed in particular through the EU’s CFSP, with a number of ‘common positions’ issued and ‘joint actions’ taken since the mid-1990s concerning war situations in Africa (ibid.).<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> The necessity of mainstreaming political aid, and not relying on small dedicated budget lines, is indicated by the Ghana example. While the specific budget lines offered by the European Commission may be useful in particular contexts, for example where serious human rights violations occur and mainstream democracy assistance is not possible, their virtual absence in the Ghana study demonstrates their inadequacy to sustain ongoing democratisation processes at country, regional and local levels.

<sup>21</sup> For example, the EU deployed troops outside of Europe for the first time in the Congo in June 2003 (Olsen 2003: 11).

The second aspect of this argument, somewhat paradoxically, is that the EU's democracy promotion policies in Africa actually serve its own self-interests in two ways: the EU's objective of establishing itself as a significant international actor, and its aim of enhancing European integration (Olsen 2002: 145). As regards the EU's external image, it is claimed that public statements and resolutions concerning democracy and human rights in Africa serve to enhance the EU's international moral profile and hence contribute to its status in international affairs (ibid.). With regard to internal affairs, it is suggested that common declarations on democracy promotion serve to boost the self-perception of a united EU acting in a co-ordinated manner, thereby "deepening the integration process in Europe" (ibid.).<sup>22</sup>

The implication of Olsen's argument is that we should not expect the EU's democracy promotion policy to be implemented in a consistent and rigorous way because that policy is actually oriented to fulfilling other less evident and self-interested objectives, the EU's 'national', interest as Olsen describes it (2003: 4).

### ***3.3 Hidden agendas II: the political economy of democracy promotion***

The third explanation again questions the motives and intent of EU democracy promotion, but points to the perceived interrelationship between economic and political liberalisation. This argument suggests that multilateral and bilateral development agencies, as the arms of Western governments extending into developing countries, are less interested in democracy and good governance in Africa as an end in itself, but more as a means to ongoing economic liberalisation and the continued dominance of neo-liberalism (Abrahamsen 2001, Barya 1993). It is claimed that Western governments are promoting a limited form of democracy that is not only compatible with economic liberalisation, but constitutes the political dimension of the neo-liberal development model. The continued hegemony of neo-liberalism in its hold over development policy is

---

<sup>22</sup> A third reason given for the gap between rhetoric and reality is that security issues, including 'soft' security issues like immigration, always take priority over democracy promotion (Olsen 2002: 142). This argument may apply to the EU's ostensible democracy promotion in North Africa, but not to Ghana, and therefore has not been examined here.

generally acknowledged, including within such initiatives as NEPAD (Owusu 2003). Over the past two decades most attention has been placed on the economic aspects of neo-liberalism, notably structural adjustment programmes. But critics remind us that neo-liberalism is both an economic and political theory. Ronaldo Munck (1994: 35, in Sklair), notes that, “The neo-liberal conception of freedom virtually equates political democracy and the ‘free’ market”, while Adrian Leftwich (1994: 368) comments that “neo-liberalism is not only an economic theory but a political one as well”. The accuracy of such statements is confirmed by looking at the work of Milton Friedmann, the guru of contemporary neo-liberalism, who wrote in *Capitalism and Freedom* that:

“Historical evidence speaks with a single voice on the relation between political freedom and a free market. I know of no example in time or place of a society that has been marked by a large measure of political freedom, and that has not also used something comparable to a free market to organize the bulk of economic activity” (Friedmann 1962: 9).

Similarly, in declaring the ‘end of history’, Francis Fukuyama (1992: 125) stated that “there is an unquestionable relationship between economic development and liberal democracy, which one can observe simply by looking around the world”.

Thus the development model advocated by such (neo-)liberal theorists and, it is claimed, by Western governments emphasises “democratic politics and a slim, efficient and accountable public bureaucracy [as] not simply desirable but *necessary* for a thriving free market economy, and vice versa” (Leftwich 1994: 368-69). Thus, this form of democracy is less interested in strengthening popular control over public decision-making and removing an elite monopoly (Beetham et al. 2002: 13), but is more oriented to challenging the power of the state, with democratic politics perceived as a means to:

- a) limit state power and its sphere of decision-making, including its ability to intervene in the economy and regulate capital; and
- b) bring residual state power under formal democratic control, through elections for instance, as a safeguard against any tendencies towards the arbitrary exercise of that power.

The democratic state is conceived as having a very limited role, in which the economic sphere, comprising the market, private property and macroeconomic policy, is “insulated

from control by the *demos*” (Pierson 1993: 179).<sup>23</sup> It is a conception of liberal democracy where the tension and struggle between its liberal and democratic components, to limit or extend the spheres of democratic control (Beetham 1993: 56-8), has been emphatically won by the former.

### ***3.4 Learning from Ghana?***

Which, if any, of these three explanatory propositions is supported by evidence from the Ghana case-study? They are addressed in turn.

First, from the level of analysis undertaken here, based on an examination of documentation, it is difficult to gauge the extent to which bureaucratic resistance or inertia is responsible for the weak implementation of a high profile policy. Similarly, it is hard to assess the endeavours made by high-level officials to bring policy implementation in line with changing priorities. Nevertheless, the fact that policy implementation does remain so limited in a prime country for democracy support like Ghana does indicate a degree of administrative malaise in the continued inability of government (and supranational) bureaucracies to transform high profile policy into practise.

Second, the evidence here relates to the volume of democracy assistance. If Western governments were seriously committed to assisting relatively poor countries in their attempts to democratise, then, as an ideal candidate, Ghana should receive substantial support. Yet the low levels of actual EU democracy assistance to Ghana suggest that the rhetoric cannot be taken at face value, and therefore that the policy proclamations do fulfil ulterior purposes. Further, if Ghana does not receive significant democracy assistance, then it is difficult to conceive of other countries that do. This tends to support Olsen’s thesis that the EU has a declining interest in Africa overall, with the exception of conflict management aimed at reducing the burden of humanitarian crises and attendant consequences such as increased migration and asylum applicants, that is, where its own interests could be adversely affected.

---

<sup>23</sup> Under this conception, the basic tenets of ‘sound’ economic policy, as laid down by the international financial institutions, remain unquestionable, with implementation by ‘technocrats’, for example, in an independent central bank.

This is reinforced by the ongoing multiple references to ‘respect for human rights and democratic principles’ that continue to be made at various institutional levels of the EU (outlined in part 1 here), including in the Ghana country strategy (Republic of Ghana - European Community 2002). It is highly possible that these are intended to have a symbolic impact rather than stimulating actual democracy support. However, whether they do serve the EU’s self-interests in the ways suggested by Olsen remains an open question.

Third, to what extent are EU actors promoting a limited form of democracy, one that is oriented at challenging state power rather than extending popular control over decision-making? An answer here requires us to examine the nature of the EU’s democracy assistance. Although EU actors provide support to a range of democracy and governance themes, albeit at low levels of assistance, two priorities are discernible, decentralisation and public sector reform. What do these tell us about the form of democracy being promoted?

Two of the Member States have a particular focus on decentralisation, Denmark and more recently Germany, through its technical assistance programme, while the European Commission’s microprojects programme is said to involve District Assemblies. Danida’s emphasis on public financial management and participatory planning within their decentralisation programme is recalled, with the latter involving the encouragement of civil society inputs at local level. The European Commission’s micro projects appear to have a similar focus on increasing the accountability of District Assemblies through strengthening community-based actors. At face value, the contributions of EU actors to the strengthening of decentralisation reforms would appear to have positive implications for democratisation in Ghana, particularly given the enhanced opportunities for political participation at local levels. Yet a paradox emerges. First, there is a fascination with public financial management at local government level, as well as at national level (discussed below). Although the capacity of DAs to deal efficiently with its limited financial resources is clearly very important, this only has *democratic* implications where

authority over budgets and financial decision-making is ceded to elected politicians, which is somewhat compromised in the case of Ghana.<sup>24</sup> Second, the emphasis on promoting the downward accountability of district authorities to local civil society, through the increased engagement of community organisations, has undeniable democratic implications. However, there is a ‘missing link’ – the relative neglect of strengthening the democratic components of the District Assembly system itself, in order to enhance the fulfilment of its multiple ‘deliberative, legislative and executive’ tasks in a democratic manner. As a relatively new institution, the 110 District Assemblies are confronted with a number of constraints, financial, human, and political, which impact negatively on their capacity and legitimacy.<sup>25</sup> Through encouraging the expression of local demands, donor agencies could be responsible for exerting additional pressures on already weak institutions, which themselves need prior strengthening. The championing of decentralisation by Western governments, and within that the emphasis on the role of non-state actors, is consistent with the anti-statism of neo-liberalism. Although decentralisation can potentially have positive outcomes in democratic terms, it also involves a significant challenge to the power of central government. This ‘state-suspicious’ approach to decentralisation would seem to be reinforced by a perceived emphasis, not on building the deliberative, legislative and executive capacity of a new institution, but on encouraging pressure from below on local *government*.

Another Member State, the United Kingdom, concentrates its governance assistance on public sector reform, in conjunction with the World Bank. Valuable as public sector reform activities may be, the *democratic* component of such programmes is questionable, in two respects. First, many measures aim to strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of the executive, irrespective of the type of government, democratic or otherwise. It can be contended that public sector reforms in Ghana have done little to enhance democratic

---

<sup>24</sup> Two-thirds of DA members are elected on an individual, non-party basis, while one-third are appointed by central government, along with a government-appointed chief executive for each district (Pinkney 1997: 79).

<sup>25</sup> An Afrobarometer survey in 1999 indicated a legitimacy gap as regards local government, discovering that citizens were more likely to consult traditional chiefs, faith-based leaders and other notables than go to local government representatives or public officials (cited in USAID nd: 3), while 56% of respondents were satisfied with the performance of local government representatives compared with 65% with traditional chiefs (Bratton et al. 2001: 243).

oversight mechanisms such as strengthening checks and balances and holding the executive to account. Second, public sector reforms often seem more aligned to structural adjustment programmes and to economic liberalisation than to strengthening democratisation processes. Measures aim at slimming down the state, for example civil service downsizing, and re-conceptualising it in the form that is deemed appropriate for a free market economy, limited to providing an enabling environment for private sector actors. Attempts at enhancing state effectiveness are often confined to those relatively minimal tasks.<sup>26</sup> Further, it can be argued that the particular interest of international agencies in improved public financial management is partly to ensure that expenditure of their own grants and loans can be adequately accounted for, that is a concern by international agencies for upward accountability to themselves not downward accountability to Ghanaian society, as democratic processes would entail.

In sum, through examining both the volume and the nature of EU democracy assistance, there is evidence to support the latter two propositions that democracy promotion policies fulfil more covert agendas. These relate, first, to the EU's own political interests, and, second, to its intent to challenge state power in the developing world and thus sustain the hegemony of neo-liberalism and the market-led development model that this entails.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The European Commission (2001: 3) has stated that “it wants to be judged on its performance in meeting the EU's policy goals”. Through a case-study of Ghana, this paper has sought a favourable test for the democracy promotion efforts of EU actors, one where a relatively positive political environment for democratisation is encountered. The high profile of democracy promotion policies within EU institutional frameworks was noted, but the reality of democracy promotion in practice was rather different. Relatively low levels of assistance were discovered, coupled with an emphasis on decentralisation and public sector reform, and a relative neglect of the key national-level democratic

---

26 Such tasks are outlined in the World Bank's World Development Report for 1997 and include: establishing the rule of law needed to govern a market economy (e.g. business contracts, property rights); effective management of macroeconomic policy (to maintain economic stability); and the provision of physical and social infrastructure (e.g. roads, health, education). Though the state's role in the latter is limited by the introduction of the private sector into health and education provision.

institutions. The judgement on the EU in meeting its policy goals can only be one of weak implementation and poor performance.

Analysis was taken further by an attempted explanation of the rhetoric-reality gap. Of the three propositions considered, it would appear that there is some evidence to support the latter two. These suggest the following. First, that the EU's democracy promotion rhetoric itself fulfils other self-interested objectives, irrelevant of what it achieves in practice. Second, that the particular form of liberal democracy promoted is one that emphasises the liberal over the democratic component. Rather than seeking the extension of popular control over decision-making, it can be seen as part of wider efforts by Western governments to re-constitute the state and state-society relations in Africa in a manner consistent with the continued promotion of neo-liberal hegemony.

## References

- Abrahamsen, R. (2000), *Disciplining Democracy: Development Discourse and Good Governance in Africa* (Zed, London).
- Barya, J.-J.B. (1993), 'The New Conditionality of Aid: An Independent View from Africa' in *IDS Bulletin* vol.24 no.1, pp.16-23.
- Beetham, D. (1993), 'Liberal Democracy and the Limits of Democratisation' in D.Held *Prospects for Democracy*, pp.55-73 (Polity Press, Cambridge)
- Beetham, D., Bracking S., Kearton I., & Weir, S. (2002), *International IDEA Handbook on Democracy Assessment* (Kluwer Law International, The Hague)
- Bratton, M., Lewis P. & Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2001), 'Constituencies for Reform in Ghana' in *The Journal of Modern African Studies* vol.39 no.2, pp.231-59
- Canadian International Development Agency (1999), *Ghana: Programming Framework 1999/00 to 2004/05*, (CIDA, Hull, Quebec).
- Carothers, T. (2002), 'The end of the transition paradigm' in *The Journal of Democracy* vol.13 no.1.
- Center for Democratic Development – Ghana / Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (2000), *The Judiciary and Democratic Governance in Ghana's Fourth Republic* (Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, Accra)
- Council of the European Union and the European Commission (2000), 'The European Community's Development Policy - Statement by the Council and the Commission' (available at [on main PC])
- Council of the European Union (2003), *EU Annual Human Rights Report for 2003*, 10 October 2003, Council of the European Union, Brussels .
- Council of the European Union (1998), Common Position of 25 May 1998 concerning human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in Africa (98/350/CFSP) (Official Journal of the European Communities, L 158/1, 2.6.98)
- Crawford, G. (1996), 'Whither Lomé? The Mid-Term Review and the Decline of Partnership', in *Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol.34 No.3, pp.503-518.
- Crawford, G. (1998), 'Human Rights and Democracy in EU Development Co-operation: Towards Fair and Equal Treatment', in M.R.Lister (ed.) *European Development Policy*, pp. 131-78, Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Crawford, G. (2000), 'European Union Development Co-operation and the Promotion of Democracy', in P.Burnell (ed.) *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization*, pp. 90-127, London: Frank Cass.
- Crawford, G. (2003), *Democratisation in Ghana: assessing the impact of political aid (1997-2003)*, paper delivered at the ECPR conference, Marburg, Germany, 18-21 September 2003 (mimeo).
- Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs / Danida (2000), *Evaluation of Danish Support to Promotion of Human Rights and Democratisation 1990-1998: Vol.6 Ghana* (Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Copenhagen).
- David, D. (2000), 'Forty years of Europe-ACP relationship' in *The Courier*, Special Issue, September 2000, European Commission, Brussels
- Emerging Market Economics Ltd (2002), *Ghana Country Strategy Paper 1998-2001: End of Cycle Review – "Recognising Reality"*, Final Report, dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2002, (mimeo, UK Department for International Development, Accra).
- European Commission (2001), *The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratisation in Third Countries*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM(2001) ??final, Brussels, 5.2001
- European Commission (2003a), *The EU-Africa dialogue*, Communication from the Commission to the Council, COM(2003) 316 final, Brussels, 23.6.2003
- European Commission 2003b, 'EU relations with Ghana', available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/country>, updated 17 November 2003, accessed 29.12.2003
- Friedmann, M. (1962), *Capitalism and Freedom*
- Fukuyama, F. (1992), *The End of History and the Last Man*
- German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), 'Ghana: Priority Area strategy paper– Democracy, civil society and public administration', Draft form only, November 2003, mimeo.
- Gyimah-Boadi, E. (2001), 'A peaceful turnover in Ghana' in *Journal of Democracy* vol.12 no.2, pp.103-17

- Hearn, J. (2000), *Foreign Political Aid, Democratisation, and Civil Society in Ghana in the 1990s*, CDD-Ghana Research Paper No.5, (CDD-Ghana, Accra)
- Leftwich, A. (1994), 'Governance, the State and the Politics of Development' in *Development and Change* vol.25, pp.363-86
- Map Consult Ltd. (2002), *Good governance in Ghana: Lessons Learnt from Donor Support to Governance in Ghana 1992 –2002* (Royal Danish Embassy, Accra).
- Munck, R. (1994), 'Democracy and Development: Deconstruction and Debates' in L. Sklair (ed.) *Capitalism and Development*
- Olsen, G.R. (2002), 'The European Union: An Ad Hoc Policy with a Low Priority' in P.J.Schraeder (ed.) *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*
- Olsen, G.R. (2003), 'The Africa policy of the European Union: Challenges to traditional policy options, opportunities for new choices', paper delivered at the ECPR conference, Marburg, Germany, 18-21 September 2003 (mimeo).
- Owusu, F. (2003), 'Pragmatism and the Gradual Shift from dependency to neo-liberalism: the World Bank, African Leaders and Development Policy in Africa' in *World Development* vol.31 no.10, pp.1655-72.
- Pierson (1993), ?? in D.Held, *Prospects for Democracy*
- Pinkney, R. (1997), *Democracy and Dictatorship in Ghana and Tanzania* (Macmillan, Basingstoke)
- Republic of Ghana - European Community (2002), *Country Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme for the period 2003 – 2007*, (European Commission, Accra)
- Republic of Ghana - European Community (2003), *Joint Annual Report 2002 Ghana – EU Cooperation* October 2003, (European Commission, Accra)
- Royal Danish Embassy, Accra (2002), *Consultative Workshop on Governance in Ghana, Akosombo, July 18-19, 2002*, (Royal Danish Embassy, Accra)
- Salama C.M. & Dearden S.J.H. (2001), *The Cotonou Agreement*, DSA [European Development Policy Study Group](#) Discussion Paper No. 20, February 2001. Available at: <http://www.edpsg.org/dp20.htm>.
- UK Department for International Development, Ghana (2002), *Country Assistance Plan*, (Draft, November 2002) (mimeo, DfID Ghana, Accra)
- Youngs, R. (2002), 'The European Union and Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean: a new or disingenuous strategy?' in R. Gillespie and R. Youngs (eds.), *The European Union and Democracy Promotion: The Case of North Africa*, Frank Cass, London.

#### **Websites:**

- Dutch Embassy, Yemen, available at <http://www.holland.com.ye/governance.htm>, consulted on 18 December 2003.
- Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Ghana, available at: <http://ghana.fes-international.de/index.html>, consulted on 18 December 2003.
- Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Ghana, available at: [http://fnf.org.za/Foundation/4 Country offices/Ghana/ghananeu.htm](http://fnf.org.za/Foundation/4%20Country%20offices/Ghana/ghananeu.htm), consulted on 18 December 2003.
- GTZ, Ghana, available at: <http://www.gtz.de/laender/ebene3.asp?ProjectId=55&spr=2&Thema=8>, consulted on 18 December 2003.