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*Externe Faktoren im Demokratisierungsprozeß. Eine vergleichende Untersuchung afrikanischer Länder* [The Role of External Factors in the Democratization Process. A comparative study of African countries]

The study aims at analyzing the external side of transition processes not from the democratizers' perspective but as the independent variable for explaining (different) trajectories and outcomes of the transition processes. The theoretical framework draws more from existing transition approaches (Pridham, Schmitter, Whitehead) than from IR literature that has generally looked more on policies than on politics as dependent variable. However, transition theory is mainly conceiving of the international system as a structural or systemic variable that is influencing actors' preference structure.

The empirical evidence of transition processes in Africa (which is obviously not the preferred terrain of Linz et al) reveals a different picture: No account of current democratization experiments is possible without recognizing the role of powerful external actors (see also Joseph). The four cases dealt with in the book (Benin, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Uganda) were thus selected not only for the differences in trajectories and outcomes but also for the very different role ascribed to external actors in the respective processes. The methodology was not based on quantitative data (as Bratton/van de Walle did) but on in-depth interviews on the ground.

Three aspects of the transition were analyzed separately for every case: the opening and the actual transition process; a third section deals with the model of democracy/institutional options implemented with the transition. The external factors were conceptualized as a mix of systemic and actor-oriented variables. It was first assumed that changes in the international (regional) system have a direct impact on the perceptions and strategies of national actors. In a second step the role of external actors in building linkages between international and national system and in forming powerful alliances was scrutinized for each of the four processes.

As the main objective of the study was not to explore in detail one single case, country specialists should not expect sensational revelations. I think, however, that the analyses of Benin and Uganda change partly the way we have evaluated the role of external factors in these processes until now. In Benin an informal but very institutionalized and planned political conditionality procedure took place initiated by the reformers in the government since September 1989 and involving main donors and the World Bank resident representative. Foreign ambassadors were instrumental in forging the Houngbedji-Kérékou alliance in 1996 as they were in convincing Soglo to surrender. In Uganda notwithstanding the general held view of donors' disinterest in movement politics the political process would have been very different without donors' pressure and the change in the regional and international context. Museveni would never have the Constituent Assembly be elected and therefore forced to betray his original resistance council system in order to arrive at some coalition-building with Buganda federalists. And the strange hybrid of political system endorsed in the Ugandan constitution was a compromise to placate the Western donors and to hold up the illusion that the question was somehow not definitively settled.

At a general level it is clear that external actors were much more powerful in causing liberalization than in influencing the process when it took off. Donors were generally not able to enforce fair election standards on their own, nor to link their financial commitments to clear performance standards, nor to avoid oppositional electoral boycotts. The international system was most powerful, however, in setting the agenda of democratization movements that had followed totally different objectives until 1989. It prevented different democratization trajectories and outcomes not so much because donors intentionally hindered transition regimes to do so (see Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire) but because African ruling élites and opposition

movements did agree on the universalist model to follow (notwithstanding their contrary rhetoric).