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Transcript

SHOULD THE EU SUPPORT NON-WESTERN DEMOCRACY?

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JAN TECHAU: All right, I guess we can get started. A few people still might trickle in but we are already slightly over time so let's start with the proceedings. Welcome all of you to Carnegie Europe on our last event here... public event of the year so our season closer and I think you probably had a bit of a shock experience when you came into the building because it is actually smelling of booze quite a bit. And that's because you will actually get Glühwein afterwards. We have a little reception as always afterwards and we'll provide you with the warm stuff that you need and of course alcohol you will need after the topic that we're discussing here tonight, so everything is taken care of.

On top of that, and that is the advantage of holding public events on a regular basis, you have caterers that you work with and today's caterer has been with us a number of times this year and as a sign of his gratefulness he gave us a little bit of an extra treatment tonight which we will pass on to you because we can't possibly eat it all ourselves; at least not all of it and that is foie gras dipped in chocolate which clogs up the veins as you eat it but you get a little bit of a Christmas treatment here tonight and it's not only the food for thought part that we will try to take care of tonight.

So, non-Western democracy, or rather the puzzle of non-Western democracy is the topic for tonight. This is a book presentation, as you know, Richard Youngs the Carnegie scholar working for the Democracy and Rule of Law Programme but also for Carnegie Europe has written this books and we've just pre-discussed it a little bit upstairs. The timing of course is impeccable and not only are we talking about transformative power of the EU which has a democracy promotion element in it, but also the West has enormous self-doubt about its own system. The EU of course fights temptations of perhaps not so democratic policies and liberal temptations are everywhere and the question of what the democratic standards, not only for Europe but the world are is very much in the discussion these days.

And Richard who has followed these kinds of things for the last 15 years was increasingly intrigued by this issue and decided that he needed to sort it out and give an orientation on this. And the orientation is this book which you have seen, it's this one here and our great friends from Waterstones in Brussels are here with us tonight as well, over there in the corner and you can buy the book there and also have it signed afterwards by Richard. So if you still want to read after the foie gras then by all means by as many of the books as you can.

Non-Western democracy is about essentially not only the question of course of what is democracy but how much variation can you have in democracy, what is perhaps the core that you can't have variable; what's the minimum standard that you need to have in place at all times? It is the question of whether actually asking for non-Western democracy is just an attempt to actually cloak-up liberal temptations. It's really a way of saying we call it democracy but it's not really that. And how much of the call for non-western democracy is actually not about democracy at all but about policies that you criticise rather than real issues of system relevance; systemic relevance.

All of this and much more is in the book. It's a great read. It provides you with the latest thinking on this issue and with us today to discuss it are two great colleagues and friends of Carnegie. We have Heather Grabbe here with us who has left her exile in Italy to come over to discuss this issue with us. Of course most of you will know Heather from her job here at OSEPI in Brussels. She is currently on sabbatical spending her time in Florence and has decided to trade Florence in for the grey skies of Brussels. Heather is also writing a book on populism and foreign policy at the moment and that also has overlap with the topic that we are discussing here today.

And then we have Mikhail Minakov who is a lot of things; he's a professor of political philosophy. He is the editor of a magazine. He has done various jobs in Central and Eastern Europe; all of them have

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to do with political change, change of political systems. And he is also one of the authors currently providing us with the feedback and input for our Ukraine Reform Monitor, the big Carnegie project where we publish on a bi-monthly basis a big assessment on where the Ukrainian reform effort stands; how much of it is actually bearing fruit. And so again a lot of overlap with the topic that we're discussing today.

Richard will start he will give us the basic outlines and arguments of the book. Then Heather and Mikhail will come in. After that, as always the discussion hopefully with great and vibrant questions from your side and after that also the ritual that many of you will know; we need about two minutes to clear out the seats here. We will open, remove the blue screen over there and then the reception will start over there on that end of the building and everything will be rolled out so I hope that many of you will stay and continue the discussion after the event.

Now I stop and I hand it over to Richard; Richard, thanks a lot for doing this and let us know what we need to know.

RICHARD YOUNGS: Thank you, Jan and thanks to everyone for turning out, especially Mikhail and Heather both of whom have had long trips in. So I've written this book, the Puzzle of Non-Western Democracy. I wrote it because it seems to me that this question of different models of democracy is becoming a much more important and prominent issue in global politics. The future of global politics is not just about democracy versus authoritarianism it's about a more subtle question of what kind of democratic politics are likely to flourish in the future.

Many people, as Jan indicated are very sceptical about these calls for non-Western types of democracy. They tend to think that these calls are in some senses a cover for rather authoritarian or illiberal politics. Other people at the other end of the spectrum argue that liberal democracy has comprehensively failed to deliver and that we need to be open to really radical, fundamentally new forms of democratic politics.

My book comes down in the middle of those two arguments. It makes the claim that this search for variation in democratic forms is legitimate; it's not always simply a cloak for authoritarianism. So it is an issue that needs to be taken more seriously, both analytically and in terms of international policies than it has been so far.

But, at the same time we should not be overly seduced when we hear these calls for different forms of democracy, non-western forms of democracy. Many of these debates have been around for a long time people have been debating whether there exist Middle Eastern forms of democracy or Asian or African forms of democracy. And it's actually very difficult to define these different regional models with any degree of precision. So everyone shares the basic sentiment that we need to be exploring and supporting different types of democratic institutions and practices but my book argues it's actually almost impossible to define wholesale, non-western varieties of democracy.

Rather than posing this or framing this as a debate between Western versus –non-Western types of democracy, it's far more fruitful and far more beneficial to break democracy down; to look at very specific areas of political reform and debate what potential really exists for healthy, benign forms of democratic variation. But also, as Jan indicated where the red lines exist; where the limits to healthy, democratic variation really exist. So that's in a nutshell the core of my argument.

Why is this such an important issue? I think it's become an important issue because several factors combine together today. There is a widespread feeling around the world that liberal democracy is

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failing to deliver to its citizens. Rising powers are becoming more confident politically, not only economically. They want to contribute political ideas to the future of international politics, not just be seen as rising economic powers. There has been a wave of civic protests around the world over the last ten years and this wave of protests has itself engendered much more debate about new forms of representation and accountability; a whole debate about redefining civic politics and the relationship between the citizen and the State.

There is also the fact that many high profile conflict interventions around the world have failed and this has led many people to question what is referred to as the liberal peace-building model; the argument that on the back of conflict resolution efforts liberal institutions, liberal democracy can best help temper and solve conflict dynamics. That argument is much more open to question and criticism today than it was ten or 15 years ago.

There is also the fact that many countries seem to have got stuck in these rather uneasy hybrid transitions between democracy and authoritarianism leading many people to argue that these hybrid political regimes can no longer be seen as an anomaly on the route to full scale liberal Western democracy but should be understood as political regime types in and of their own right.

So basically you can see there's a whole cluster of reasons that I think coexist today that have served to push this issue of democratic variation to the top of the international agenda. So they are the reasons why I think we should be looking at this issue more seriously.

The other side of the coin is that there are real problems, I think, there are real problems when we hear these calls for non-Western democracy. Again, as Jan was indicating often when people make the call for different models of democracy they're actually calling for something very different. One, a first issue, a first problem I think is that often people are arguing around the world about different social values. They're making the argument that their societies adhere to different kinds of social identities, more conservative social values and that therefore their societies need a fundamentally different type of politics.

That linkage is actually very problematic. It is very complicated but we should be alert to people, I think conflating erroneously this quest for more conservative, social values with a call for more illiberal politics. Actually if you look at the correlations around the world there are many societies that adhere to conservative social values but they manage to operate liberally democratic political institutions. So this relationship between social identities and political identities I think is actually much more complicated than many of the advocates of the non-Western democracy allow for.

And then a second area which I think is problematic is in the economics sphere. One of the most powerful arguments you hear around the world is people saying in effect we don't want Western-style democracy because Western-style democracy comes with neoliberal economics and we don't want the neoliberal economics. Whether we think those people are correct or incorrect in their economic views, what they're calling for is a different set of economic outcomes. A different set of economic policies and they're making a claim from that about the nature of political system. And actually in a relationship between different types of economic policies and political institutions again it's very much more complicated than that argument allows for.

And then a third and final problem I think is this whole debate about essentialist cultural values. It is true; it is true that around the world you hear much more strident calls for traditional politics, traditional identities but you also hear much more vociferous pushback against those traditional identities. And so actually what you have in many countries around the world is not a strong

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consensus, a 100% consensus of people wanting non-Western forms of politics you actually have more polarisation. More calls for traditional types of politics but also more people adhering to more modern identities, pushing back against those calls for non-Western or traditional forms of politics.

And of course when you have societies with that degree of polarisation you actually need a very open form of politics so that those differences can play themselves out.

So they are the reasons why I think we need to address this issue seriously. And on the other side of the equation some of the very real problems that I think exist behind these calls for non-Western democracy and ultimately I think mean that it's impossible, it is very problematic to think in terms of a non-Western model of democracy. Rather than seeing it as a sharp division between Western forms of politics and non-Western forms of politics I think the solution to this question of how we understand healthy and positive forms of democratic variation is to break the puzzle down and just look at very specific areas of reform.

And try and tease out what kinds of variation can usefully be explored in different countries around the world. I think a first area where there is potential for democratic variation in this sense is in the very difficult area of democratic rights; what we understand by democratic rights. And I think here the challenge is whether we can combine the traditional liberal concept of individual rights; of the individual being protected from the State while at the same time doing more to develop more communitarian understandings of democratic rights.

And in that way get beyond this feeling that many people have around the world that liberal democracy is somehow a threat to religious identities or moral identities or a community's understanding of collective identities. That's not an easy tension to reconcile; there are always going to be tensions between individual rights and a community's rights but I think anything we can do from a practical point of view to reduce this tension between the individual and the community would help very much in re-legitimising debates about democratic reform.

Then a second area I think is in the economics sphere. I think there's a very strong case for much more participative forms of economic decision-making, even if this may not look like Western templates. This is not about advocating one type of economic policy over another. It's about the process through which economic decisions are made. And I think there has to be a much stronger case today for widening the range of actors who have some kind of voice in economic deliberations and economic policy-making. So that's the second area where I think we understand that there is some potential for different types of democratic practices.

And then a third area which I think is very important and becoming more important is the whole issue of power-sharing, understandings of democracy in societies where there are very, very acute tensions and even open conflict. This is a real policy dilemma and it's likely to become more important, more of a priority and I think we all understand today that in countries like Ukraine, Syria, Iraq and others you need some form of power-sharing deal so that all different factions and parts of a society feel that they have some guaranteed voice and stake in the democratic system.

The challenge I think is to make these power-sharing deals that may be necessary for conflict mitigation work in a way that is fully democratic. And we need to take care that we don't engineer situations where you simply have power shared out between what are very kind of oligarchic or kleptocratic, almost feudal elite that share power between themselves but do not open themselves up to accountability from their own citizens. So I think that's a third area we can debate.

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And fourth and final area, very briefly is the whole debate about what we might call legal pluralism; the exploration of different types or different understandings of the rule of law. And here there's a lot of interest and work in innovation and experiments going on trying to use traditional or local dispute settlement mechanism. And trying to use those in a way that delivers justice to local populations in a way that's more accessible, more efficient, more legitimate in many cases. But to do that in a way that doesn't circumvent the human rights standards of a State's unitary legal system.

So they are my four areas that I think help us understand where there's real potential for democratic variation but breaking the puzzle down in that way I think again as Jan was indicating also helps us understand where the limits are to democratic variation that is genuinely democratic in nature. I'll finish there. I think the basic one line conclusion of my book would be that we need a spirit of two-way openness and exchanging lessons and interesting experiments in democratic forms from around the world rather than getting stuck into these very, rather traditional debates about forms of democracy supposedly being specific to one area or another.

I think the EU and other democracy-supporting bodies around the world have made steps in this direction; they've probably made more steps in searching for democratic variation than their critics would give them credit for. But I think there is a lot more that could be done. A lot of it is also about Western organisations cooperating with non-Western rising democracies. Countries like Brazil, South Africa, India, Indonesia themselves have gone through very different models of democratic transition and could in the future usefully share those experiences with other countries around the world.

So basically I think this is a very difficult, very complicated analytical question but it's not merely an academic abstract question it's very relevant to the way that organisations like the EU operate in what is a very fast-changing global politics. I think there's a very fine balance, a very fine line that the EU and other organisations have to walk between supporting and encouraging a sufficient degree of democratic variation without going too far and ending up supporting practices that are rather illiberal in nature.

JAN TECHAU: Richard, thank you very much. To all of you here what Richard has just presented is really just the tip of the iceberg. When you actually delve into the book you will find unbelievably interesting ponderings and considerations, for example, about the compatibility of parts of Sharia Law with classic Western ideas on the rule of law and democracy; stuff that you don't really hear a lot about elsewhere. It's an unbelievably intricate study of the subject.

Richard I can spare you one quick follow up because we have to get our compass needle straight on all of this. If you could define, very briefly for us what you think is the core of democracy that you have to have in place no matter whether it is Western or non-Western, the kind of stuff that is not negotiable in that pursuit for variability.

RICHARD YOUNGS: The first point there is that I deliberately don't try and map out an alternative model of democracy. That would in a way contradict the basis thesis of my book that it's very difficult to pin down specific definitions of democracy. I think the red lines basically – it sounds rather academic – but basically I think the irreducible core accords to what people would call polyarchy, basically competitive elections, basic rights, freedom of expression, organisation, association. I don't think we should be entertaining major infringements to those core liberal rights in the name of democratic variation.

I think it's more about changing the narrative of liberal democratic rights so that people understand that they do not need to constrict people's alternative understandings of identities or economic

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priorities. But they can act as a kind of framework for greater variation of tolerance of different understandings of rights and laws. For me that's how the irreducible liberal core can actually empower greater understandings and variations at a social, political and economic level rather than being seen as one model that is superimposed on top of other cultural identities.

JAN TECHAU: I'm asking this because when you read the book what's quite clear is that it is easy to lead this discussion very much based on process and procedure and institutionally questions, like questions we have ourselves in the West; should you have a more centralised system or a more federalised, should you have parliamentary system of democracy or presidential and so on and so forth. But that's not what it's all about. In the end it is about values and the core and how much can be relativated, if you want, and how much of it can't.

Thanks, Richard I want to hand it over to Heather who in her work of course has confronted these questions quite a bit and has read the book and I think I would like to hear what you have to say about, Heather.

HEATHER GRABBE: It's a pleasure to be here and I really enjoyed reading this book because it takes the critique seriously but it also examines the critique critically and that's quite unusual. Usually if people don't like an argument they tend to dismiss it they don't tend to dive deeply into it. And here Richard's looked at both the critique and also the problems of democracy in parts of the world very deeply. So it's really great it goes into the logic of the arguments, it looks at the evidence for and again them.

And I have to give you a special plug for why you must buy this book before you leave tonight; you must go to that desk and pay money for it. And that's because you really need this for your next trip to almost any other continent. So the next time you're going to go to the Middle East you need to know the answer when people say, well isn't Europe having all kinds of problems with democracy? I've seen on Al Jazeera that the Roma are being persecuted in Europe so why are you having at a go at us about minority rights?

What you need to ask them, I don't actually have the page number here but in Chapter 3 you have exactly what you need to say to them, which is can you just explain to me then how these concepts, like hijab, concept in Sharia Law actually would lead to a different form of democratic institution from the ones that are also there in the West? What exactly would be the difference; can you just explain that to me? Or if, for example, you went to, say, Rio de Janeiro and somebody said to you why do you Europeans go on and on about the rule of law? And what you say to them is can you explain to me why the rule of law is so controversial in Latin America; within Europe it is completely non-controversial everybody is in favour to the rule of law.

And in Latin America it is a deeply controversial concept because it is seen as solidifying property rights belonging to an elite. So you can have a much better conversation with people in other continents once you've read this book. And in Asia of course the obvious question is, so these Asian values exactly which kinds of different sorts of democratic institution would institutionalise Asian values in Singapore as to, for example, in Burma; can you explain that to me? So it's a really good reading document.

But it's also a very interesting book because rather like Edward Said's *Orientalism* here in Europe what we talk about in other countries and other continents in terms of their problems to democracy reflects back on us; what we're worried about in terms of our democracy. And as Richard said democracy is in the West under question and critiqued as never before. It's a very useful reminder that

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there is a much broader crisis of representative democracy. It's not just here in the EU and it's not just out there in other parts of the world; it's in both.

And some of the critique and some of the debate have very similar common elements. It's about why don't rights deliver social justice? Why don't institutions give everybody a voice? How do you hold governments accountable in an age of globalisation when they have less and less sovereignty? So all of these issues are there but they are expressed in different forms and this book actually gives you a very good guide to this broader crisis and helps you to situate the European debate.

And the fact that so many of these issues come up in liberal and illiberal democracies, in consolidated and non-consolidated democracies, liberal democracies are not necessarily... some are but are not necessarily, they have to oil [?] money any better at delivering social justice. They are not necessarily any better at reducing inequality. So what is it about it; what is the issue here?

I think it's also a very useful book because for the EU at this moment of hyperrealism in EU foreign policy. I must say I get a sense – I'm away from Brussels at the moment, this year – but looking from afar that there's more and more a loss of confidence among policy-makers in the model that they were seeking to promote over the past 25 years, since 1989. And Richard points very helpfully in this book to the conception of leaks leaked [?] and the flawed logic of some of the equation that have been made also in policy because you have to simplify sometimes in policy-making.

So, for example, wrapping democracy very tightly around concepts of rights and also presenting democracy as going with neoliberal economics. That is something that has happened, not only... it has also happened in EU policy in various regions. And of course part of the cost now, we're reaping the harvest of that because people say, well excuse me we thought we were going to get personal freedoms and we were going to get prosperity and now we're not getting really either from this system. So I think there is a great relevance for EU foreign policy.

And it also relates to something that actually Richard doesn't talk about so much in the book, but it's the way the EU has designed a sort of export model of democracy which partly reflects the lacuna in it; the elements that are missing from the export model tell you a lot about where Europeans feel quite squeamish about democracy. So we have, famously no *acquis communautaire* on democracy in the EU. But you can kind of work backwards if you look at what the EU has promoted as models of democracy in the countries that want to join the EU. You can actually see an implicit *acquis* in what it has asked those countries to do in order to become an EU member.

So you have the *acquis* as presented to the Central and East European countries from 1993 onwards with the Copenhagen Conditions. You have the model that has been presented to the Balkans and of course to Turkey. And within that implicit *acquis*, you can see the areas where the EU was really quite nervous about prescribing what anybody should do because there is an enormous variety within the EU itself. For example, the role of political parties is a tricky one. For example, the EU doesn't have a firm view on whether it's acceptable to ban a political party or not because some Member States do it and some Member States don't.

So when the Constitutional Court in Turkey tried to ban a political party which happened to be in power at the time that's a real dilemma; what do we do? I know let's ask the Council of Europe; let's ask the Venice Commission for some recommendations. So that lacuna in the export model tells you something about the variety. There are also areas where the EU is becoming more squeamish, not for historical reasons of diversity but because concepts are extremely controversial within the Member

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States. So issues of integration; what is an acceptable level of integration of minorities and what are acceptable policies for integration of minorities?

What do you do? Do you follow the Finnish model where if your town has more than 12% Swedish speakers it officially becomes a bilingual town with bilingual education? Do you do that? Or do you follow the Greek model where minority languages, or the French model indeed for that matter, minority languages aren't taken into account whatever is the level? These controversial elements and areas of doubt are shown up very much by looking at what the EU tries to put out.

And you also see of course evolution over time because in Central and Eastern Europe in the 90s the EU was putting forward as priorities the elements of democracy that were most important to ensure good functioning of the single market. So it was about rule of law; that was very much equated with democracy. It was about stability; as the Copenhagen Conditions in 93 said stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy. Stability comes before democracy for good reason because that's what you need in order to implement the *acquis* if you're going to join the EU.

But if you look at the Balkans, of course, the priority there for the EU since 2000 has been building up States making them capable of administering and of course reducing conflict in a post-conflict situation. And that's where what Richard was talking about, many of these issues of communitarian democracy are extremely relevant and power-sharing, in particular because what the EU promoted in the Balkans and in many of the peace deals that were actually brokered by the EU, the priority was ensuring that all ethnicities have a stake in the system.

You look at the OHRID Agreement, for example, you look at Dayton the priority was making sure everybody has their quota of MPs in the Parliament, they have their number of civil servants to make sure all parties in the deal were part of the system. But of course that has big problems for democracy if party politics then becomes completely divided on ethnic lines and it's not about policy choices, so we are also reaping the results of those decisions.

So I think that many of these same issues are there but it's very difficult for the EU to use its internal reference point in the way that Americans do. When you talk to an American about democracy you say, okay so tell me – really, anybody on the street – what is democracy? They have a list some of which is based on the... Independence, it's based on the American Constitution which children learn to recite at school in America. They have a pretty clear idea. Ah, it's about having elections, oh yes it's a free press, oh yes it's the Supreme Court it's this kind of thing.

You ask Europeans from Helsinki to Madrid to Bucharest to Warsaw you get different answers and you often get a great deal of ambivalence about it and that surely is also part of why we're questioning ourselves as well as we are not quite sure what to put out there.

And finally I really love the fact that this book comes to a positive conclusion; it doesn't end where many academic books end which is this is all very, very complicated and you have to understand the whole history of it, back 500 years before you can really speak about this. No, it actually puts forward a very positive idea of a liberal plus agenda. You don't like liberal democracy; fine don't take away the aspects of liberalism that bother you why don't you add to it? Why don't you make it into something which fulfils the policy goals and the goals for society that you would like for your own country?

And that is extremely helpful at this moment of hyperrealism for the EU. There's a real danger I think that what happens is our policy-makers and the political masters of the policy-makers have more and more self-doubt about democracy that they chip away at parts of the EU's somewhat patchy agenda

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for democracy and they actually remove more elements from it which they are afraid are going to be controversial, either in the country they're trying to export it to or within the EU itself. For example, support for civil society getting a lot more controversial than it used to be.

So what do you do? Should you reduce the support for civil society? Should you stop funding so many groups? Should you stop talking about rights so much when you get a bad reception in Delhi or in Beijing? No, what Richard says is you should talk about the issues behind them and discuss them and find a language which doesn't just reflect your own culture but also reflects the interests and the aspirations in that culture that you are talking to.

So instead of throwing out the baby with the bathwater you take that baby and you nurture it, you add more elements to what you're talking to the other side about and that makes for a much richer policy. And it also could help us, I would like to suggest, to resolve some of the dilemma and ambivalences that we have about democracy in the EU itself.

JAN TECHAU: Heather, thank you very much. I'm very thankful that you raised the issue of liberalism plus, making democracy special and specialised and variable by adding to it instead of taking from it because I wanted to make this the starting point on my question to Mikhail who is from the Ukraine, a country that is very much in the midst of a battle over some of these issues. A country that has often been described as an in between country; between the West and the East an argument that makes many Ukrainians quite mad but illustrates the kind of battleground that the country has become and as I said in my introduction, Mikhail you've been part of that battle in many variations over the past two decades. And how do you take Richard's central arguments? What do you think about the book and how does it apply to the post-Soviet space that we talk about so much?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Yes I was reading this line over the argument and conclusions that Richard is coming up with the eyes of a person who lived through just another experiment. So my grandpa, my grandpa lived with the socialist experiment and I lived during the times of democratic experiments; experiment after experiment. The first stage was probably in times of perestroika when we tried to invent democracy within the soviet context. Then we tried to invent these national democracies and some countries like Kazakhstan or Belarus failed pretty much fast. Russia failed in the tenth or eleventh year. And in Ukraine we made three experiments actually; three cycles.

In 1991 we tried to invent local democracy and tried to build liberal and illiberal national, maybe romantic democracy with some kind of free market. We failed and we tried another one in 2004. Then we tried again two years ago. And basically every time we tried we tried to invent new institutions and bring new people into picture that would ensure something that is democratic but illiberal. Every time this liberal plus idea is usually taken away.

That's quite interesting and that's why I really support this idea of liberalism plus and I really think that we should translate the book into Russian and Ukrainian just because for these 25 years we've been discussing how democracy can be localised. How can our culture, Ukrainian, Russian, Belarussian actually invest, include democratic institutions? In the beginning of 20th century, if you remember there was the same discussion how to involve socialism into Russian culture; into Russian imperial culture?

And these routes of *opschina*, they become communal type of life of peasants was the core argument, oh, yes we have this in the cultural institution so we can import some sort of socialism. Now in times of Gorbachev we had just the same situation in 1989 when we discussed can Parliament actually work? Can we have actually honest elections? And we actually did, probably these elections in 1989 were the

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most free and fair elections we ever had also in post-Soviet period. It was very romantic, open debate, very tolerant with emerging freedom of press it was so easy to access. No oligarchic press so you could actually easily access means of communication.

And then every time the idea of liberalism was taken aside, oh let's make democracy indigenous and liberalism is not part of our culture. And let's just be democratic without being liberal. And I heard this argument three or four times in my life and now this is what we are discussing in here. Can it be again national or sometimes ethno-national democracy? Do we really have to install division of powers? Shouldn't we just make sure that we are democratic and the majority rules while the minorities have to accept the mission to be very ascetic [?] and wait while the majority enjoys the creation of their own State, democratic State.

And the word liberal, liberalism in post-Soviet context it is special. We had a discussion in Ideology and Politics Journal that's a peer review journal that we dedicated to post-Soviet ideological processes. And there we have this idea that liberal means a swear word; it's a bad word, which means, liberal you can mean the word liberal empire but not liberal democracy; Khodorkovsky with his project of liberal empire, liberal imperialism was quite popular among the liberals in Moscow and St Petersburg some time ago which was making us in Kiev crazy. And also the isolation in Minsk were also not that much in favour of it.

But I would like to conclude my short speech and assessment with an idea that democracy as part of modernisation process, cultural modernisation is connected to universalism. And probably liberalism if we use your framework of definitions, including power-sharing, tolerance and participation, rational debate, political forms of self-expression for individuals and groups that would probably be the core, the universal core that could later be re-wrapped within the local cultures. And being a liberal democrat from Ukraine I really think that your book is doing a very good service for our part of the world and hopefully for other regions to come back and reassess the idea and the value of liberal idea.

JAN TECHAU: I have on quick follow-up for you as well, Mikhail thank you for your statement. You say that in each of these experiments that Ukraine has conducted after the end of the Cold War they tried to do something unique and national and perhaps even ethnocentric and liberalism was dismissed. But now the Maidan revolution was at least partly about liberal values, liberal democracy; Western-style democracy. How much of a clash is there between those people who want to change Ukraine but don't want the liberal part and those who want to change it including the liberal?

It's often hard for us to judge over here because so many people claim that they want to change Ukraine for the better but how much of a clash is there between liberal and illiberal democracy between Western and non-Western models of democracy? Or is that a marginal issue given the other huge problems the country has?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Well, the entire Euromaidan was the place where we had a civic revolution; a civic protect where I, radical liberal was standing hand to hand, shoulder to shoulder with a radical nationalist. It was the place for different ideologies and for different political sides fighting against this kleptocracy and authoritarian regime and the vertical of power. What we wanted is to rebuild our republic and continue this competition. We want to compete with the nationalists. We want to compete with the left wing parties as liberals but we want to have a say and we want to share the responsibility and the power.

And in our case, in post-Soviet case every time we have discussion about these alternative forms of democracies these discussions inevitably lead us to different forms, alternative forms of illiberal

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authoritarianism. So the post-Soviet experience it is rather a vast experience to study different forms of authoritarianisms rather than democracies. And brave attempts, in spite of all these doomed authoritarian roots of the past to try and to build democratic republic once again.

JAN TECHAU: I want all of you to get your questions ready but I have one more question to you and perhaps also to Heather before I give it to all of you. To what extent are you worried that the West itself is losing confidence in Western democracy? Do you sense that lack of faith, lack of self-confidence that Richard also alluded to? That would be my question to you and then to Heather, you've been operating with OSEPI which really is about promoting open societies and open liberal values; how much has this lack of confidence in the West that we talk about a lot affected your work in that field and is that a bad sign for Western democracy and is there something new emerging, coming out of those doubts perhaps?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Well, from my communication with the German and Italian intellectuals with whom I'm in personal contact I see that there's really some sort of pessimism, grounded pessimism. But at the same time whenever East meets West; every time I say you have much more opportunities to redo what you think is working wrong in the West but please do not lose the institutional capacity that you guys have in the West. Because if the West fails in terms of democracy, in terms of liberal democracy well the rest of the world will be a hopeless place.

JAN TECHAU: Can you put that on... that's a great one-liner?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Sure, but it's ongoing communication and ongoing debate especially in Italy where the young left, bright, intellectuals are in place they are looking for the liberal socialism; the liberal left idea which I find a very scary move. And I see how some nationalist movements start thinking hard about some liberal ideas. In Italy at least there are some interesting processes connected with the far right movements thinking about some liberal ideas but it's probably a different seminar to discuss.

JAN TECHAU: And a little bit complex, Heather.

HEATHER GRABBE: Well I just point to one thing that I've noticed a great deal which is over the time that I've been in Brussels which is 11 years the number of people whom I could talk to about human rights elsewhere in the world has shrunk quite dramatically. Because whatever the silver thread or other forms of supposedly mainstream rights have had it means that within institutions the number of people who actually have rights as part of their agenda seems to have got smaller.

And that's to the great frustration of colleagues of mine and indeed the many civil society organisations that open society supports everywhere in the world; in many countries in the world who say well look, as you were just saying in fact if you stop talking about these issues with our governments we have no hope of pushing things forward here. If you just remove this from the agenda and you're inconsistent about it this is so frustrating for us. This comes out particularly in neighbourhood where I think there's been a great deal of self-doubt about what's the neighbourhood policy? Why has it not delivered the results that were expected or promised? Why doesn't it have the appeal that it used to have and so on?

And very often you'll hear a critique that well we pushed the idea of rights too much. But if you actually look at surveys of what people want in terms of personal freedom that hasn't changed since 1991. And if you look at what the people who work on those issues in the countries are asking for, that also hasn't changed. So I think there is a big danger that the EU does a big disservice to the

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people who have most effectively and most consistently promoted its own agenda in their own countries, if it then withdraws support at critical moments.

JAN TECHAU: Richard, one part of your book is dedicated to recommendations to those people who actually do democracy promotion and it comes at the end of your book. Can you give us top, one/two recommendations; if it's getting so much more difficult, if there are less people who want to talk about and if there are more people actually exasperated about the Western weakness to raise these issues then what can we do?

RICHARD YOUNGS: That would kind of give away the punch line of the book but I would say I think more is being done practically than people realise. The US, European donors and agencies, political foundations have been talking the language of democratic variation for a number of years. And they've begun to explore different concepts so it's not an agenda... And everyone in the West, at least in policy-making circles agrees with the agenda and at a conceptual level. I think that unfortunately the tendency is then when people start running programmes and concrete initiatives in particular countries on the ground they tend to lapse back into what's most familiar.

I think no European country, whether it's Germany, the UK or Denmark would say that they are exporting their own model of democracy. They would all vehemently deny that that is the case. But I just think it's a kind of reflex to do what is most natural. What comes most naturally to you is the way your own political system operates. And the book again breaks down what can be done into a number of issues, whether it's rights, economic policy-making, conflict interventions. But I would say as a general ethos what can be done is just for organisations, whether it's the EU, the US or individual Member States is just to be a little bit less risk-averse and realise that there's a lot going on in terms of interesting democratic innovation, whether it's in Brazil or South Africa and to learn from that.

These new practices don't constitute completely new models, they don't offer an easy panacea for all the problems that democracy is suffering but I think sometimes when we're supporting new actors, new practices we would do well to have a spirit of experimentation. And just realise that things won't always go in the right direction but we need to breakout of the old moulds and templates to which we've been operating over the last ten or 20 years.

I do realise in the book and I stress this time and again, for those of you who are policy-makers here it's a very, very difficult balance to strike. In a way we're talking about the issue of confidence. In a way it's positive if the West becomes a little bit less confident in its own model. In the past the West has sometimes been a little bit too confident in the primacy of its own political models. So in a way if we're less confident I think that opens our minds to the fact that the most interesting experiments in democracy may be going on in Brazil or Indonesia today, not necessarily in Europe and that we can import lessons as well as seeking to export our own institutional forms.

But I think Mikhail is right that sometimes this is tending now to a kind of fatalism where because the problems that we are facing are so acute we look for quick solutions and it's always illiberalism that offers you those quick solutions. For me a key message I would want to transmit through the book is that this wall, this barrier we've always supposed exists between well-performing Western democracy that we impart to the rest of the world where rights are struggling no longer holds.

Heather made this point and it's good that she is working now on this issue with this interface between domestic problems and foreign policy because for me that's the big debate of the next decade. How we understand the fact that these global dynamics are completely changing and inverting upon themselves and it's not simply a question of funding a little bit more of the same kinds of right

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projects we've done in the past; it's understanding the whole vectors of influence in global politics will be very different, I think in the next 20 years to what they've been since the fall of the Berlin Wall.

JAN TECHAU: Richard, very, very briefly and then it's to you, there has been a tendency in democracy promotion over the last decade or so to go away from the very high ambitions of democracy promotion and instead do more rule of law promotion. Is that a sign of weakness or is it a sign of realism?

RICHARD YOUNGS: Well I think Heather made this point, thinking that you can build components of democracy in an apolitical way through talking about rule of law or rights or certain kinds of economic justice, in that way avoid the controversial politics I just think is illusory. The concept of the rule of law is itself very politicised in different parts of the world. But I think Mikhail makes a very important point that the dirty word today is liberalism, it's not democracy.

I think people are not pushing back so much against democracy; they're pushing back against concepts of liberalism. Mikhail, if that's true in the post-Soviet space it's true to an even greater extent in parts of the Middle East or in Asia. And I think in a way we have to work with that, we have to understand it; we have to understand the legitimate aspects of this rising tide of conservatism. But at the same time we have to realise that people are, when they're pushing back against Western liberalism they're conflating many issues.

They are looking at the way that maybe Western societies operate and maybe they have values, rather decadent values in the eyes of many people, other people in other societies in the world. And people may reject those values but then they're reading into that a more illiberal form of politics. And I think we need to understand analytically clearly that we're talking about different things here. And we need to, in a way preserve and encourage the liberally democratic core but in a way that allows more margin for these different understandings of social values.

JAN TECHAU: Thanks for making that once more clear that this is not necessarily about process but really about values and substance more than anything else. Now we have about 30 minutes left and I'm sure that you have a few questions after this barrage of arguments on this very, very important question so you raise your arms and wave. There's one question over here, I'd like to collect perhaps two or three and then we have one cluster of answers after that. The gentleman in the orange tie, please and please introduce yourself.

PARTICIPANT 1: Thank you, my name is Apostolos. I left the office at 18:30 I came here in a personal capacity. I have a question to address primarily to Mr Youngs. I haven't read the book yet but traditionally speaking when we talk about democracy promotion what we're really talking about is the pursuit of two related but distinct objectives; stable democracy and better democracy. So bringing democracy about and then looking at what the democracy is about and then whether you can improve it.

The way I listened to your very enticing presentation I understood that your book focuses mostly on the second, whether democracy is really good or not and how can we improve it, whether we should improve it? And the question I have for you, which is slightly provocative I should admit that is whether I'm right to infer from your argument that you've already given up on the first question, the bringing about of stable democracy. That what Thomas Carothers, your colleague refers to as successive ways of democratisation, for you they are already over now there won't be any more major transitions coming about.

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And all there's left to do for democracy promotion is to focus on the quality of democracy; no more stable democracy coming about let's just focus on what kinds of democracies we have around. Thank you.

JAN TECHAU: Great question, have we actually given up on creating democracy that's a very big question? Who else wants to come in on this, please? You all want the Glühwein I know but you have to have questions before otherwise no Glühwein for you. Yes please, microphone is coming.

ILKE TOYGUR: Thank you all for this great presentation I'm sure it is also a great book that I am looking forward to reading. My name is Ilke Toygur coming from Universita Autonoma de Madrid, from Spain. Actually while I was listening to the discussion here I started thinking of a person looking for the couple of his or her life for years and can't find him/her and settling down for whatever he can or she can find. So what I was thinking is right now the EU especially needs a common ground for collaboration with all these countries including Turkey, giving the example.

So thanks to real politics now there is... I think there is a need to collaborate with these countries and I was really wondering what are the red lines because free and fair elections, media freedom, freedom of expression they are not that common outside of the Western world. So what should be the red lines to look for collaboration and why do we define them still democracy?

JAN TECHAU: Also a great question and we have space for one more in this round and then we go into answers; is there one more who wants to come in at this point? Yes please, no I'll take the lady first and then we take you in the next round.

ELA HOROSZKO: Hello my name is Ela Horoszko. I work for the European Association of Local Democracy Agency although I spent some time working for the EU delegation in Kazakhstan, human rights specifically. I'm familiar with the post-Soviet space a little bit and I often... I right now work on projects promoting democracy get the question from well counterparts that not only democracy is a tool and that it's all about pushing certain agenda and I don't really know how to answer that question so I always get a little bit puzzled. So Heather earlier mentioned that this book makes you think about this question so I wonder what will be your answer to that question and what I should say to a Russian I meet in Ukraine next week?

JAN TECHAU: So what you mean to say is democracy is really only a Western tool.

ELA HOROSZKO: Yes a tool to push certain agenda, I don't know which one it's not really clear to me..

JAN TECHAU: Yes the big conspiracy type thing.

ELA HOROSZKO: Yes we can refer to that so really curious to hear from you.

JAN TECHAU: Fantastic three great questions; have we given of bringing about democracy, what are the limits to the apolitical, do we have to stop doing this and then this question here about is it all just a big kind of plot to really create progress and outcomes around the world? Who wants to start?

RICHARD YOUNGS: Well personally I haven't given up hope on non-democratic countries becoming democratic. Rather, the point of the book was this that most analyses of international dynamics of democratisation tend to have focused precisely on the process; on the processes of democratisation. What is needed to unblock processes of political change and political liberalisation?

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And it was always assumed that the end goal was fairly uncontroversial it would look something like Western liberal-style democracy so we didn't need to spend too much time debating that. It was all about the tactics, how we dissembled the vested interests and the institutional blockages that prevented societies from getting there.

And all I'm saying in the book is not that understanding those processes of change is not important, but the end goal itself does need to be open to a bit more debate. And actually I think the two things, the process and the end goal actually go together because if we are I think more open to discussing what democracy means, what an effective democracy is then we are more likely to be supporting effective political processes which in itself will unblock processes of democratisation that have become stuck.

If you look at lots of the transitions that have started and then gone backwards in a way it's because democracy itself as a concept hasn't taken root or it's become de-legitimised among large parts of the population that means that the early momentum you get towards political change can easily be lost. So I think it's combining the debate about what democracy is and how we get to democracy that can lead to a much more fruitful debate. And I'll just take the question about real politic, we have to do the real politic I don't think you can have a black and white scheme where you say that this country is democratic and we will cooperate with it. This country is now not democratic and we will not.

In fact democracy is an issue of gradations, all countries have some degree of open politics, there is no country that is perfectly democratic so I think we need to do that. I think we can do the real politic but if at the same time we can kind of de-Westernise support for democracy that in itself will help us avoid the situation where we're only doing the real politic. And avoid the situation where if we do anything else people will think it's a disingenuous tool on the part of Western countries which isn't about empowering local communities it's only about our own strategic interests.

We shouldn't ignore the fact that foreign policy is there to pursue to strategic interests otherwise we'd be overly naïve but to reduce any support for human rights to these kind of Machiavellian strategies I think in a way it's people can argue that because the whole concept of democracy itself has become so problematic. And if we can change the narrative of liberalism and democracy then I think it should help address that problem.

JAN TECHAU: Mikhail, is democracy just a big Western conspiracy to subjugate the world or should we ask the Japanese or the Koreans that question?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Well you're asking a Soros guy so of course I'm part of the conspiracy, I worked for Soros for six years. Actually, democracy promotion as an idea goes back to 18th century and the guys who tried to invent eternal peace and what are the conditions? And in the beginning of the 18th century they thought... French and German idealists thought that probably if we create republics they will not start fighting with each other so it's already a good tool to stop wars and to continue lives and to dwell on cultures.

Then Immanuel Kant at the end of the 18th century reassesses. He lives in the period when Republican France makes an annexation of right bank Rhineland and when two or three [unclear] takeover the almost Republic of Poland. So he has to reassess because the first idea that democracy promotion may create a world without wars and with more or less stable order doesn't work. So since that period the Western ideas of democracy promotion were changing and probably this open society idea and an attempt to open up those societies like in Central Asia, for example, and to make these societies more horizontal at least from within may create situations when we will not necessarily be living in a hostile world, like the post-Soviet context is actually now.

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So definitely democracy is a tool and democracy promotion is a tool but it's a tool for us not for those who promote it in many ways. And here I would like to finish with the idea that politics itself, one of the definitions of politics is a tool for collective survival. And you can survive in different ways; in [unclear] or in vibrant democracies. So if it's democratic politics again it's the narrative of dignity that we were very much dealing... the Euromaidan recently. So to survive in a dignified way you can probably do only in democracy and democratic politics is a tool for dignified survival.

JAN TECHAU: And I have to apologise for the term open society because Mr Soros, of course, borrowed it also just from somebody else, Mr Popper and others. Helen, over to the next open society person.

HEATHER GRABBE: Well the great thing about open societies is that they depend on critical thinking, fierce debate between radically different positions and pluralism of ideas and expression of opinion, so this panel can also be a lively version of that. I think that you also have to... really what democracy is about the limits of politics; it is what is physically [?] contestable and what is not. That's what it really should be about. What is a legitimate subject for political debate and what is untouchable because it is fundamental for democracy itself to succeed?

I think one of the biggest challenges that we face in the new concept of illiberal democracy that has also arrived in the EU is if you erode certain institutions does that actually change the rules of the game where it becomes impossible to have an open political contest or not? And that's an issue that we haven't resolved within the EU. For example, if the Broadcasting Licensing Authority is run by a friend of the Prime Minister does that mean that there can be free and fair expression in the press or not? We haven't resolved those issues and that's what makes it so tricky.

Now within the institutions where practical people have to actually write briefing notes and prepare negotiations and do things while the battle of ideas rages... are going on outside them they've actually tried to come up with rules of thumb. So if you look at, for example, the EU's foreign policy documents the strategic partners of the EU are supposed to be countries which have at least stable democracy, if not a fantastic quality of democracy, as the distinction was put. That was the idea and then some of those turned out to be not quite so stable and others became more stable and then the EU found it very difficult to calibrate because they didn't want to take away the status of strategic partners from some countries.

So it's a tricky thing but that is precisely what's happened. If you look at foreign policy again I think it's a really interesting mirror of how the EU sees its own state of affairs. But I have a different proposal for resolving many of these questions, both in terms of what the EU tries to do in the world and also in trying to wrestle with this new agenda that is certainly not going away; it is getting bigger that Richard referred to of the interaction between domestic politics and global trends.

And this is getting much bigger, not only because of the problems of democracy but also because people have access to new sources of information. They don't need to rely on diplomats to tell them what's going on in the world they can read it on their Twitter feed. They might disagree rather fundamentally with the diplomats and their Foreign Minister because of what they see on Twitter. So the democratisation, if you will of information on what's happening everywhere in the world means everybody feels they have a view on foreign policy and how it should be run and that may be very different from what their governments' is.

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What I suggest we should actually do to make sure that the fundamentals of democracy don't become... that there are limits on the contestation of politics because you can test the things that don't damage the fundamentals of the democratic debate but don't change the rules of the game to make it less pluralistic and to skew it towards one set of interests rather than others. And that is a very fundamental thing that needs to be discussed by politicians in a parliamentary body. This is a very useful agenda for the European Parliament to take up.

Now we don't want to have another Constitution; oh, no-no-no let's not go there. The charter of fundamental rights is very important let's not try and damage that. But wouldn't it be a good idea if the European Parliament had a big debate about varieties of democracy within the EU, celebrating them not as a weakness but as a strength, where MEPs from Catalonia, from Krakow and from other parts of the EU can debate among themselves what are the most important defining features, what are the red lines?

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: Hungary?

HEATHER GRABBE: Yes exactly, why not get the [unclear] guys to discuss what should be the appropriate role of Constitutional Court? What is the appropriate accountability mechanism of an independent Central Bank towards the people it is meant to serve? Actually to get down to the nitty-gritty and this is I think the lesson of Richard's book; if you delve deep into the issues instead of allowing them just to fly past in the political debate like tennis balls, if you really go into them in detail and you force people to engage with them you get much richer answers.

I think this would be a really useful thing to do. To debate not necessarily what should the EU's policy be on X or Y or Z but what is...? Celebrate the rich diversity of democracy within the EU and let's decide what it is that we hold to be self-evident truths, as the Americans put it; to be the absolutely fundamental elements of democracy that no country would contest. And if you have your big MEPs contesting with British Labour Party and the Swedish Moderata and all the others about these issues you might get much more interesting answers.

JAN TECHAU: Great suggestion, before we go into the second round and this gentleman is going to be first, if I may I would like to launch a small sneak attack, Ambassador Eichhorst is here with us tonight who was the EU's ambassador to Lebanon for a couple of years is now back in Brussels in External Action Service dealing with Turkey. And I wanted to ask you from your experience out there in the field and now here in a different country how variable could you be out there in the field and to what extent did you have to stick to the prescribed model when you were actually trying to promote democracy and improvement in those countries?

Could you give us just a small inclination what it looks like for the practitioner coming from the EU institutions; microphone is coming? Sorry to put you on the spot but I had to make use of your presence tonight.

ANGELINA EICHHORST: I was actually so much enjoying the debate rather than wanting to participate.

JAN TECHAU: I just ruined your evening.

ANGELINA EICHHORST: No problem at all but on the ground it's very much like what Heather said, people no longer believe what diplomats say so you go and interact rather differently and you don't have a script book you work with. You engage as much as you can. You are out there, you are

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there you want to show as much as possible that you are, as EU not just representing what so-called values are but more engaging on how people feel about all the issues. And that's a lot of, what was mentioned here criticism, a lot of questions.

I'm not sure we are all ready to answer them on the ground. I think there's a lot of work that needs to be done there, also in the diplomacy.

But what is striking and that I can only confirm is that while here in headquarters less and less human rights want to be addressed, as was said on the ground that is our daily bread and butter. And I think that's where we all need to be more aware and more engaged and more actively involved in, whether it is in Lebanon, Turkey or elsewhere.

JAN TECHAU: Thank you very much. If you want to hand over the microphone to the gentleman in the back row who has the next question and then I encourage you to all come in with the second round before we conclude here in about ten minutes.

KRASSIMIR NIKOLOV: Good evening, thank you very much for the presentations. My name is Krassimir Nikolov I work in the European External Action Service and I'm responsible for relations of the European Union with sovereign democracy. And this is actually my starting point, I remember that when the concept of sovereign democracy came in fashion there was, I think even [unclear]'s remark that with all these variations of democracy the adjective is killing the noun.

Whereas, as Heather pointed out your book seems to be much more optimistic about democratic variation. My question to Richard is about universalism. Is it correct to understand that by helping the West stand down from the messianic posture of the ultimate possessor of truth about democracy you are in fact helping the universalization of the concept of democracy?

It sounds very good if it is so, if I understand it correctly but then I think about people who whom I saw during the last couple of weeks on French television who said that we stand up for our values after 13 November terrorist acts. How will they understand the acceptability of Sharia Law, for example, of the legitimacy of this understanding of a political concept which in some cases brings about this terrible result? So how will Western citizens cope with democratic variations?

And I have a question also to Heather actually it's a request for additional reassurance because I was a bit puzzled by your recommendation that this book of Richard can be a briefing book in our trips abroad. How much can we operationalize this debate about democratic variation? I'm afraid if the book becomes a briefing book the whole human rights industry within the EU will have to stop functioning for at least a year.

JAN TECHAU: That's a pretty big thing. I think that's a question more for Richard.

KRASSIMIR NIKOLOV: To adapt it's all about programmes, reports, tenders, selection it's a huge thing which cannot be changed.

JAN TECHAU: Two questions taken, final question to Ambassador Vandemeulebrouck and then perhaps this lady in the front row as well. And then we have to go into a final round of answers.

ROBERT VANDEMEULEBROUCK: Thank you. I wonder if one of the conclusions of the book should not be that Western democracies have been the victim of their own success. 60 years ago most of Africa was colonies, a number of countries in Asia were also colonies and it remains debatable

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whether the Western type of democracy was exported to the new countries when they became independent. Now 60 years' later these countries are saying, hey all right there are a number of core values but we have our own flavour.

And as you said it's a graduation exercise as well. You cannot have 100% on all the core values. There is no Western country that is 100% democratic. So these countries are flavouring their democracy and some are not flavouring their democracies but they are fighting some of the core issues like, for instance, to mention one country, Turkey is still a democracy but press freedom is very wide of the mark.

JAN TECHAU: Thank you very much final question to your left, please. Please introduce yourself.

BETTINA MUSCHEIDT: I am EU Head of Delegation Yemen. I welcome this discussion, particularly against the new model I hear, is coming back the old one, more of the, let's say, good old authoritarian rules will fix the problems we have around us and a little bit further afield. I think what you're offering here in terms of debate and I haven't read the book yet is I think becoming inevitable because the old model will not function anymore against demographic pressures in these countries notably the one I'm dealing with where there's a particularly blatant example with 3.1% population growth.

The economic pressures, the lack of opportunity so I do hope that your book will look at the inevitability of looking for an alternative model when we simply cannot go back to the temptation of the good old times. Thank you.

JAN TECHAU: Thank you very much, again these are questions that go very much to the core. As always when we do the final round of answers we do it in reverse order so I start with Mikhail and then to Heather and then finally to Richard for famous last words and then, as I said over to the funny part of the evening.

MIKHAIL MINAKOV: I would like to address only this sovereign democracy issue and my friend, a colleague, Yvonne Krasti [?] we had several debates recently about this. What actually is going on right now in our part of the world? It's the conflict of two ideologists, one is a dominance of sovereignty against the dominance of liberal values and the battlefield of Ukraine is the battlefield of these two ideologists. So in a way the agenda that is being promoted by Putin or Assad it's that sovereignty is the highest value.

And in our case it happened that we are a nation that is trying to be a defender of liberal democracy that we never cherished yet. So in a way we had the idea at the Euromaidan that we will be able to create a liberal democracy in Ukraine. Today, the war agenda, for example, is the agenda against Euromaidan agenda we cannot create a vibrant democracy until we have the war growing out. And the challenges, economic, demographic challenges we have today they do not let us to be that vibrant democracy.

But at the same time we are definitely not decadent and this decadence is an issue for European Union must be treated seriously. There's no zero tolerance for democratic or liberal decadence and I hope European intellectuals, European politicians will be effective on that.

HEATHER GRABBE: These are really fascinating comments, I think particularly from the practitioners who out on the frontline have rule of thumbs, have to have concepts which can be used. And it's really difficult because when these concepts are increasingly tested at home but also when

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you've got very rapidly evolving debates in countries. And democracy is very often touted as the solution to problems that are not amenable to political, institutional practices as a solution to them. For example, inequality or indeed social justice and that's what makes it very tricky.

So I think that's why I advocated the idea of this book, not so much as a briefing because it allows you to have much richer conversations and that's really what's needed. Going out into the world with a megaphone is no longer an acceptable form of diplomacy in the world. That was the age of the Empire; that was the mocs [?] and chaps and carry on up the Khyber. It's all over and the idea that Europe is going to preach I think actually died some time ago. It's something of a figment of the imagination. It's a useful insult to throw at people. I don't think that's been happening for a really long time, partly because of course EU diplomats are incredibly aware of the fact they've got 28 Member States to answer to, not just their own country.

And Richard was pointing out that inevitably if you're Danish you go abroad and you have in your head the Danish model of democracy but that means that the EU does in fact, in practice in conversations with people all over the world, the EU delegations have a variety of civil servants who are Greek and Finnish and British and Slovak and Rumanian and they all have different ideas of democracy born of their own experience. So I think the EU is already quite a good representative of democracy. What's tricky is when you get into a debate with the Member State representations, the heads of delegation in that area.

But where I think this richer conversation is not just a throw away thing, I think it's actually really fundamental because there are problems with democracy and there are debates about democracy everywhere in the world. And the degree to which you can have a really good conversation when you show you are taking somebody else's problems with democracy as seriously as you take your own is the moment when you make a real contact with them.

And I think especially with rights this is absolutely vital. I noticed in the Human Rights Movement, having worked for open society I really noticed this that there is a bit of a tendency to speak, Americans and Europeans to talk about rights in the abstract. I think we need to bring the human part back into human rights to talk about, okay so how does this affect human beings? It's not rights that are simply there because they have some kind of totemic significance it's because they actually affect people's daily lives. When you talk about it in those terms it is easier to deal with.

So to give you an example of this, if you go to New Delhi or to Beijing, say you're advising Mogherini and she's going to New Delhi or Beijing and she's saying please don't give me the speech about rights again because they don't want to hear it and it will just set the wrong tone. What can I talk about instead? You say it's fine, you talk about prosperity and particularly more equal outcomes; prosperity for all. What do you need to have prosperity for all? Well you actually need the institutions that ensure voice representation. You need access to justice for everybody because if the small shopkeeper in New Delhi cannot get enforcement of contract or get his creditors to pay him through the courts because he doesn't have access to justice then inevitably there's going to be more violence in society because people seek extrajudicial [?] means of settling their disputes.

So once you actually get into what are the dilemmas faced by these human beings then the issues of rights come up naturally. And the economic agenda I think instead of being so closely wrapped around neoliberal economics; if you talk about prosperity for all or concepts like sustainable economic development which is something of great interest in China then rule of law comes in but so do sustainability of political institutions because they have roots in society. And then you can have a conversation about those roots in society.

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So I think instead of getting into the semantic debates which is what we all tend to do having done political theory, if you go into what are the absolutely hot button issues in societies they are pretty universally... it's about corruption, it's about elite not being responsive, it's about how to deliver economic justice. You can find these issues in many, many different societies and then you can work your way backwards to which are the key elements of democracy that will help you to reach those goals.

JAN TECHAU: Thanks a lot. Richard your book would bring the European democracy process to a halt, at least for a year do you have to rewrite it after tonight?

RICHARD YOUNGS: It's a very short book as well. I think Heather made a key point about Western preaching or EU preaching, I agree very much I think that's over with now. I don't think that's the major problem. I notice in ministerial speeches when the high representative speaks they still always include this language about I'm not here to preach, I'm not here to impose our values. I would take all these references out of speeches they are completely redundant because we couldn't impose our values even if we wanted to, first of all.

And they're not our values; there are many, many more people living under democratic regimes outside the West than inside the West, so this idea of whose values democracy really... it just seems a redundant debate to me. So I think it is about universalising universalism. That's not to over-idealise what's happening in terms of democratic development in other countries, all of whom have very serious problems. But I just think it's about changing the whole narrative in that sense and the whole dynamics will be fundamentally different.

Sharia is a big one to do in 20 seconds but the gist of what I'm arguing is that in the Middle East, not in European countries you can have a flavour of Shia principles that inspire constitutions that are still broadly liberal without Sharia actually dictating legal outcomes. It's a kind of mix that a country like Tunisia is trying very tentatively to put into operation. And then this issue of values and institutions, it's also a very good point. Often when one is discussing this issue a very standard line is, but other countries want the same values they just want different institutions to express those values.

Actually, it's a bit more complicated than that I think, as several people have alluded to. People are actually debating different kinds of values and it's actually on the institutions where they don't seem to have such serious problems. Most countries around the world when they start developing democracy they end up with something that looks more or less like free elections, something that looks like a parliament, something that looks more or less like political parties. So nobody yet has invented an institutional template that in formal terms looks radically different from what's in the West.

But they are debating what values they think democracy is important to embed. So for me the most interesting debates are around values and how democracy relates to values rather than the formal institutional templates.

JAN TECHAU: Thank you very much we are only 5.5 minutes over time which is a very good average. And I would like to thank Richard specifically but also our two commentators for travelling to Brussels to make this possible. I think it was a very rich discussion, lots of stuff in it. As I said, this was the season closer for us here at Carnegie Europe and we will commence again with public events next year. You will receive the invitations as you always do. If you are not on the invitation list leave us your cards here with the staff members around.

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And until then all I can say, first of all, enjoy the reception that we'll be holding now and other than that have a great Christmastime and a Happy New Year 2016. Hope to see you all again, thank you very much.