The international dimension of autocratisation and its prevention

Linking an actor-centred approach with a concept of external autocracy prevention

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Executive summary

Democratic achievements resulting from political transformation processes of the 20th century are globally threatened by a manifesting third wave of autocratisation. Driven by trends of increasing political polarisation, populist leadership styles, and the gradual curtailment of core democratic institutions of accountability, participation, and competition, this wave poses a challenge to democracy worldwide. Conceptually, autocratisation processes of recent years are especially characterised by gradual, incremental processes *within* regimes that are deliberately initiated by – often elected – populist political leaders with prominent cases such as Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro or the U.S. under Donald Trump. In general, the introduced changes to the political systems are often executed legally by using existing institutions and presented as reforms intended to lead to more security or better democratic conditions, e.g. as agendas that officially claim to combat corruption, inequality, and/or to deal with inefficient bureaucratic systems. Nevertheless, institutional changes can gradually lead to substantial power shifts by slowly reducing checks on the executive, which also set them apart from more abrupt transitions that were more prevalent in the past (e.g. *coup d'états*).

It is against this background that democracy promotion practitioners and researchers are increasingly examining strategies for protecting democracy from abroad and looking for measures to prevent autocratisation. Although scholars are assessing these similar patterns of incremental autocratisation across countries and regions all over the world, the analytical focus remained mostly on the domestic processes and actors. Relating these domestic processes to the international level and analysing how external influences may affect or even prevent autocratisation in the third wave of autocratisation poses challenges – and is thus hardly done. This is not surprising, since most theoretical explanatory approaches developed to explain regime transition and the international dimension of regime transition focus predominantly on *democratisation* processes with democracy as the main direction of change. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis in regime change literature that external factors mainly exert their influence on regime changes via domestic processes. This is why an explanatory approach for current autocratisation processes that includes the international dimension still needs to take the domestic level as a starting point and be sensitive to the complex interplay of domestic and external factors.

Nevertheless, there are specific subfields at the intersection of the two political science subdisciplines of Comparative Politics and International Relations that explicitly or implicitly touch upon the role of external factors on preventing autocratisation. Most notably in this regard is the recent conceptual development of a democracy protection concept by Leininger (2022), which conceptualises democracy protection as a subtype of democracy promotion besides democracy support. Furthermore, it explicitly distinguishes external measures and processes along the objectives to protect democracy and prevent autocratisation, on the one hand, and to support democratisation, on the other. More implicit contributions that help to shed light on how external influences may prevent autocratisation are coming from studies on specific instruments such as election monitoring to prevent election fraud or democratic sanctions. However, we lack theoretical, conceptual, and empirical knowledge about the relation between autocratisation and external factors contributing to its prevention – especially in the context of the

more recent phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven processes of autocratisation. In order to contribute to closing these research gaps, I focus in my thesis on the following overarching research question:

How do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation?

To approach the research question *theoretically*, this thesis draws upon a combination of a deductive actor-centred approach from transition literature with elements of the current autocratisation and democracy promotion/protection literature. This approach allows for the analysis of decision-making moments of a ruling contra-democratic group in power by analysing their prevalent costs and benefits of whether to initiate an institutional change or action that weakens the democratic quality of a regime or not. Thereby, the influences of external factors as potential perceived costs and benefits are explored in addition to and in interplay with domestic factors. *Conceptually*, this thesis contributes to the development of a more concise concept of external autocracy prevention as a combination of intended and direct democracy protection measures, on the one hand, and pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade and security cooperation) with democracies that are *not intended* to promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage, on the other.

Methodologically, I apply a two-pronged mixed-methods design approach that includes a quantitative and a qualitative component. In the first step, I conduct a statistical large-N quantitative analysis based on a fixed effects modelling approach to gain a more exploratory access to the research question and possible relations between autocratisation and external factors along different temporal and regional patterns. In the second step, I present two in-depth case studies on incremental processes of autocratisation in Senegal and Indonesia. The case studies focus on influences on decision-making moments of the contra-democratic executives in four observation periods to assess the mechanisms behind the relation of autocratisation and external autocracy prevention and to answer the underlying *how* question.

Empirically, the overall results indicate that external democracy protection measures ranging from more cooperative measures such as democracy aid to more coercive ones such as democratic arms sanctions, contribute to the prevention of autocratisation and that there are traceable statistical correlations. However, the thesis finds a high threshold for the use and effectiveness of democracy protection measures by external pro-democratic actors that relates to the domestic and international context. Thus, the analysis of specific critical decision-making moments such as the 2012 presidential elections in Senegal against Abdoulaye Wade or the reform-process initiated by the Joko Widodo (Jokowi) government in 2019 that included the overhaul of the criminal code underlines that external democracy protection measures can strengthen pro-democratic forces and contribute to the prevention of autocratisation when used in conjunction with a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition, mobilisation, and/or protest. In addition, the results indicate that the general use and effectiveness of external democracy protection measures are connected to levels of linkage and leverage, which speaks to the conceptualisation of external autocracy prevention.

Keywords: Autocratisation, democracy promotion, democracy aid, democratic sanctions, Senegal, Indonesia, democracy protection, autocracy prevention

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Content

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Abbreviations

2019GP	2019 Change the President movement
ACFTA	ASEAN-China Free Trade Area
AFISMA	African International Support Mission to Mali
AFP	Alliance des Forces du Progrès
AJ/PADS	And-Jëf/African Party for Democracy and Socialism
APCC	Assistance in Preventing and Combating Corruption in Indonesia
APR	Alliance for the Republic-Yaakaar
ASA	Association of Southeast Asia
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
BBY	Benno Bokk Yaakaar
BDF	Bali Democracy Forum
BoP	Balance of Payments
BPK	Audit Board of Indonesia/Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan Republik Indonesia
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CGI	Consultative Group on Indonesia
CP	Comparative Politics
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DiD	Difference-in-Difference
DPD	Regional Representative Council/Dewan Perwakilan Daerah
DPR	People's Representative Council/Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat
EAS	East Asia and Pacific
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECS	Europe and Central Asia
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investments

FE	Fixed effects
Franc CFA	Franc of the Financial Community of Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
GED	Georeferenced Event Dataset
Gerindra	Great Indonesia Movement Party/Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GMM	Generalised method of moments
GSDB	Global Sanctions Data Base
GTZ	German Technical Co-operation
Hanura	People's Conscience Party/Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat
IA-CEPA	Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IDP	Institute for Peace and Democracy
IFES	Foundation for Electoral Systems
IGGI	Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INP	Indonesian National Police
INTERFET	International Force for East Timor
International IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IR	International Relations
JCLEC	Jakarta Centre for Law and Enforcement Cooperation
KPK	Corruption Eradication Commission
KPU	General Elections Commission/Komisi Pemilihan Umum
LCN	Latin America and the Caribbean
LD-MPT	Ligue Démocratique/Mouvement pour le Parti du Travail
LSDV	Least squares dummy variable
M23	June 23 Movement
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MPR-RI	People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia/Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia
NAC	North America
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPT	Nuclear Proliferation Treaty
NU	Muslim Nahdlatul Ulama
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OEC	Observatory of Economic Complexity
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OLS	Ordinary least square
OLSDV	Ordinary least squares dummy variable
PAN	National Mandate Party/Partai Amanat Nasional
PAPS	Political Affairs, Peace and Security
PASTEF	Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité
PD	Democratic Party/Partai Demokrat
PDI	Democratic Party of Indonesia
PDI-P	Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan
PDS	Senegalese Democratic Party
Perindo	Indonesian Unity Party
PIT	Parti de l'Indépendance et du Travail
PKB	National Awakening Party/Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa
PKI	Indonesian Communist Party
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party/Partai Keadilan Sejahtera
PPP	United Development Party/Partai Persatuan Pembangunan
PS	Parti Socialiste du Sénégal
PSE	Plan Sénégal Emergent
PSI	Indonesian Solidarity Party
RE	Random effects
RoW	Regimes of the World
SAS	South Asia
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SEAN-WFZ	Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone
SEM	Structural equation models
SSF	Sub-Saharan Africa
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations

UNAMET	United Nations Mission in East Timor
UPS	Senegalese Progressive Union
URD	Union pour la Renouveau
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAEMU	West African Economic and Monetary Union
WTO	World Trade Organization
ZOPFAN	Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality

1 Introduction

Democratic achievements resulting from political transformation processes of the 20th century are globally threatened by a manifesting third wave of autocratisation. In this context, increasing populist leadership styles, political polarisation, and the undermining of core democratic institutions of accountability, participation, and competition are discussed among scholars of Comparative Politics (CP) (Bermeo, 2016; Diamond, 2021; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019; McCoy, Rahman, & Somer, 2018) as overarching challenges to the democratic idea of political freedom, equality, inclusivity, and the rule of law as a universal value (Sen, 1999). At the same time, China's rise is perceived by some as an alternative model of economic success to the 'Western' model, which also benefits the perception of authoritarian political systems. Although these challenges to democracy have to be met primarily within societies at home, there is undoubtedly an international dimension to the phenomenon in an ever more interconnected world. Hence, democracy promotion practitioners and researchers are increasingly examining strategies for protecting democracy from abroad and looking for measures to prevent autocratisation.

In view of the current third wave of autocratisation, it is highly relevant to 'widen the view to the outside' and assess external factors more systematically when explaining domestic political transformation processes. This relevance becomes evident once looking at political transformation processes of the past in which intended foreign policy approaches of states and other external influences undoubtedly played an important role. During the post-Cold War period, for example, 'Western' states put ambitious democracy promotion programmes on their realigned post-Cold War foreign and development policy agendas (Bush, 2015; Carothers, 2002, pp. 5-6; Leininger & Richter, 2023; Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 380-381; Santiso, 2001, p. 387). International support for democracy included various instruments for providing financial, technical, or material support, while also diplomatic measures such as democratic sanctions or condemnation were used as part of democracy promotion agendas. While the effectiveness of some instruments (e.g. Official Development Assistance (ODA)-related democracy aid) to promote democratisation is already well established (Gisselquist, Niño-Zarazúa, & Samarin, 2021), the effectiveness of others (e.g. democratic sanctions) is more contested (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, pp. 5-6; von Soest & Wahman, 2015).

In the post-Cold War era, democracy promotion efforts were accompanied by a narrative, which prominently framed the collapse of the Soviet Union as democracy's triumph over all other forms of government and even labelled this turning point as the end of history (Fukuyama, 1992). However, it soon became apparent that democracy's triumph may have been proclaimed too early. With key events in the early 2000s (especially 9/11 and the following wars in Afghanistan and Iraq), efforts to promote democracy abroad and even democracy itself experienced strong international and domestic headwind (Carothers, 2006; Leininger & Richter, 2023, p. 477). At the same time, the influence of autocratic actors such as China and Russia with potential autocracy promotion agendas are being discussed as a counter-proposal to the promotion of democracy (Bader, Grävingholt, & Kästner, 2010; Leininger & Richter, 2023, pp. 487-490). Accordingly, the beginning of the current wave of autocratisation, which is dominating

since 2017, is even seen by some as dating back to the mid-1990s (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, pp. 1102-1103).

Many of the autocratisation processes of recent years share certain characteristics, which set them apart from processes that were more prevalent in the past. CP scholars try to capture the facets of this new manifestation of autocratisation with concepts such as 'democratic erosion' (Kneuer, 2021), 'democratic regression' (Tomini & Wagemann, 2018), or 'democratic backsliding' (e.g. Bermeo, 2016; Waldner & Lust, 2018). These concepts are especially characterised by gradual, incremental processes of regime change that are deliberately initiated by – often elected – populist political leaders. Although most scholars only refer to processes taking place in democracies, similar patterns can also be found in autocratic settings (Leininger, Lührmann, & Sigman, 2019, pp. 7-8). There are prominent examples of these recent more incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes across all world regions, such as Brazil under Jair Bolsonaro, Hungary under Viktor Orbán, India under Narendra Modi, or the U.S. under Donald Trump. Introduced changes to the political systems are often executed legally by using existing institutions and presented as reforms intended to lead to more security or better democratic conditions, e.g. as agendas that officially claim to combat corruption, inequality, and/or to deal with inefficient bureaucratic systems (cf. Bermeo, 2016, pp. 10-14). Another common pattern is that unpleasant opponents of the regimes are frequently associated with external forces to silence them (Bermeo, 2016, p. 14; Diamond, 2021, pp. 30-32). In general, institutional changes can gradually lead to substantial power shifts by slowly reducing checks on the executive. Instead of sudden transitions *of* the regime from democracy to autocracy (i.e. democratic breakdown), transitions *within* the regime through a loss of democratic quality become increasingly relevant (Tomini & Wagemann, 2018). As a result, changes affect the overall democratic quality and inclusiveness of core political institutions and do not necessarily cause complete transitions between regime types. Thus, they stand in contrast to more sudden democratic regime collapses with a high visibility of change, such as due to a *coup d'état* or an executive coup. Nevertheless, when looking at full autocratisation episodes that started in democratic regimes over the last decades, democratic breakdowns are still the most frequent outcome of these processes (Boese, Edgell, Hellmeier, Maerz, & Lindberg, 2021).

Scholars are assessing these similar patterns of incremental autocratisation processes across countries and regions all over the world as well as the international extent of the phenomenon (Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019). However, analysing how external influences may affect *or even prevent* autocratisation in the third wave of autocratisation poses challenges – and is thus hardly done. This is not surprising, since most theoretical approaches developed to explain the international dimension of regime transition and the effectiveness of democracy promotion instruments focus predominantly on *democratisation* processes with democracy as the main direction of change. Research thereby follows historical trends and especially democracy's latest upswing in the post-Cold War period that gave rise to the second half of the third wave of democratisation, which began in the 1970s. Furthermore, there is a strong emphasis in regime transition literature that external factors mainly exert their influence on transition processes via domestic processes (see, e.g. Leininger, 2010; Lust & Waldner, 2015, p. 47; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 106), which is why an explanatory approach for current autocratisation processes that includes the international dimension and specific external measures to prevent autocratisation still needs to take the domestic level as a starting point and be sensitive to the

complex interplay of domestic and external factors. Nevertheless, there are different subfields at the intersection of CP and International Relations (IR) that explicitly or implicitly touch upon the role of external factors on preventing autocratisation. Most notably is the recent conceptual development of the democracy protection concept by Leininger (2022), which conceptualises democracy protection as a subtype of democracy promotion besides democracy support. Furthermore, the conceptualisation explicitly distinguishes external democracy promotion measures and processes along the objectives to protect democracy and prevent autocratisation, on the one hand, and to support democratisation, on the other. More implicit contributions that help to shed light on how external influences may prevent autocratisation are coming from studies on specific instruments such as election monitoring to prevent election fraud (Hyde, 2007) or democratic sanctions (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015).

However, we lack theoretical, conceptual, and empirical knowledge about the relation between autocratisation and external factors contributing to its prevention – especially in the context of the more recent phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven processes of autocratisation. Moreover, on a theoretical/conceptual level, the strong focus on democratisation in regime transformation and democracy promotion research makes it difficult to generalise explanatory approaches and knowledge to autocratisation processes and their prevention from abroad. It is therefore necessary to connect knowledge from recent autocratisation literature with insights from different subfields already assessing the role of different external factors for regime transformation, e.g. in regard to Leininger's (2022) conceptualisation of democracy protection. While doing so, special attention has to be given to the complex interplay between domestic and external factors in autocratisation processes. Connected to these research gaps, which are outlined in more detail in the course of the subsequent state of the art chapter (see *Chapter 2.1*), I address the following overarching research question in this thesis:

How do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation?

1.1 Research design and contributions

In order to approach the research question *theoretically*, this thesis draws upon a combination of a deductive actor-centred approach from transition literature with elements of the current autocratisation and democracy promotion/protection literature. This approach allows for the analysis of decision-making moments of a ruling contra-democratic group in power by analysing their prevalent costs and benefits of whether to initiate an institutional change or action that weakens the democratic quality of a regime or not. Thereby, the influences of external factors as potential perceived costs and benefits are explored in addition to and in interplay with domestic factors. *Conceptually*, this thesis develops a concise concept of external autocracy prevention as a combination of intended and direct democracy protection measures, on the one hand, and pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade and security cooperation) with democracies that are not intended to promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage, on the other.

Methodologically, I apply a two-pronged mixed-methods design approach that includes a quantitative and a qualitative component. In the first step, I conduct a statistical large-N quantitative analysis based on a fixed effects modelling approach to assess possible relations between autocratisation and external factors along different temporal and regional patterns. In the second step, I present two in-depth case studies on incremental processes of autocratisation in Senegal and Indonesia. The case studies focus on influences on decision-making moments of the contra-democratic regimes in four observation periods to assess the mechanisms behind the relation of autocratisation and external autocracy prevention to answer the underlying *how* question.

Empirically, the overall results indicate that external democracy protection measures ranging from more cooperative measures such as democracy aid to more coercive ones such as democratic arms sanctions, contribute to the prevention of autocratisation and that there are traceable statistical correlations. However, the study finds a high threshold for the use and effectiveness of more coercive democracy protection measures by external pro-democratic actors in response to contra-democratic incumbents. This threshold depends on the strength of domestic pro-democratic opposition, on the one hand, and the international context around high pro-democratic linkage and leverage, on the other. Thus, in regard to the interplay of the domestic and international level, the analysis of specific critical decision-making moments such as the 2012 presidential elections in Senegal with Abdoulaye Wade's third term attempt or the reform-process initiated by the Joko Widodo (Jokowi) government in 2019 underlines that external democracy protection measures used in conjunction with a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition, mobilisation, and/or protest as domestic safeguards, can strengthen pro-democratic forces and contribute to the prevention of autocratisation. These results also speak to the novel conceptualisation of autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations introduced in this study.

With this thesis, I aim to contribute to several strands of literature at the intersection of CP and IR as well as to the case specific literature on Senegal and Indonesia. First, I contribute to current autocratisation literature, which has so far focused predominately on domestic theoretical approaches for explaining autocratisation and only lately on domestic approaches of defending democracy (van Lit, van Ham, & Meijers, 2023) or resisting autocratisation (Tomini, Gibril, & Bochev, 2023). In this regard, I contribute to *theory-building* by further developing an actor-centred approach from democratisation literature through applying it to an incremental, incumbent-driven process of autocratisation and additionally taking into account external factors. In addition, with my novel *conceptualisation* of external autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations, I derive a useful concept to capture the conditions for the use and effectiveness of democracy protection measures. My contribution is also *empirical* given the insights gained on the role of external democracy protection measures in a specific international environment that complement domestic pro-democratic opposition actors in the final stage of an autocratisation process.

Furthermore, I contribute to the different strands of literature already dealing with the influence of external factors on autocratisation, namely the democracy promotion/protection literature (e.g. Leininger, 2022) or the literature focusing on specific instruments such as democracy aid (e.g. Gisselquist et al., 2021) or democratic sanctions (e.g. Pospieszna & Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015). Here, my contribution is both *theoretical* and *conceptual* by bringing the different fields closer together as well as *empirical* by providing valuable quantitative and

qualitative results on different democracy protection measures such as democracy aid and democratic arms sanctions, while paying attention to international linkage and leverage as well as to the interplay between the domestic and international level in autocratisation processes. Regarding the case specific Senegal and Indonesia literature, I mainly contribute *empirically* by shedding light on the role of external democracy protection measures as well as on the interplay between the domestic and international level in critical autocratisation processes. Thus, my analysis shows the differences between the autocratisation processes during the presidencies of Wade and Macky Sall in Senegal as well as in the course of the presidency of Jokowi in Indonesia. Lastly, my findings are also highly relevant for ongoing policy discussions among pro-democratic foreign policy-makers about how to prevent autocratisation from abroad, by showing that context-sensitive external democratic protection measures can actually contribute to autocracy prevention.

1.2 Outline of the dissertation

Following this introduction that briefly sketched out the research gaps and presented the guiding research question, my research design as well as contributions, the thesis is structured as follows: In the second chapter (*2 Theory*), first, the current state of the art is outlined to derive the main research gaps at the intersection of relevant CP literature explaining autocratisation predominantly by looking at domestic political processes and actors as well as of the CP and IR literature dealing with external influences on regime change – with democracy promotion as an influential policy and concept under study. The state of the art is followed by the theoretical framework chapter (*2.2 Theoretical framework: Linking an actor-centred approach with a concept of external autocracy prevention*) that, first, defines key concepts, second, introduces an actor-centred approach for explaining autocratisation, third, widens the view to the outside by bringing in external factors preventing autocratisation, and fourth, derives hypotheses for this study. In the third chapter (*3 Methodological approach*), the two-pronged mixed-methods design approach is outlined and the specific approaches for the quantitative and qualitative components of the analysis are described in more detail. Chapter four (*4 Statistical analysis*) focuses on the results of the quantitative statistical analysis, while chapter five (*5 Cross-regional case studies*) presents the cross-regional case studies of incremental autocratisation processes in Senegal and Indonesia. The two analysis chapters are followed by a dedicated discussion chapter (*6 Discussion of the results, generalisation, and limitations*) that, on the one hand, discusses the results along my hypotheses and, on the other hand, the generalisability of my findings while taking into consideration limitations of my study. In the concluding chapter (*7 Conclusion*), I shortly summarise the main elements and findings of my study, expand on the contributions of my work (*7.1 Contributions*) and I point out potential avenues for future research (*7.2 Future research*).

2 Theory

To approach the research question of *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation*, this chapter begins with a broad overview of the current state of the art (*Chapter 2.1*) to identify key research gaps and a theoretical approach that serves as a starting point for the subsequent development of the theoretical framework (*Chapter 2.2*) and derivation of hypotheses for this study.

2.1 Current state of the art

The assessment of the current state of the art includes two sub-chapters. I start with a general classification of the research topic at the intersection of the broader thematic fields of CP and IR dealing with external influences on regime change and the relevant CP literature explaining autocratisation and its prevention predominantly by looking at domestic political processes and actors. This classification is followed by a bundling of current empirical results on the potential external factors contributing to the prevention of autocratisation. In a subsequent second sub-chapter, I close with a summary of the five main research gaps based on the previous overview to further draw on in this study.

2.1.1 The international dimension of autocratisation and its prevention

Comparative Politics scholars' interest to better understand the role of external[1] influences in democratisation processes in the post-Cold War international environment was decisive for the development of the research field of the 'international dimension' of regime change with democracy promotion as a core concept (cf. Carothers, 2002; Leininger & Richter, 2023, p. 479; Levitsky & Way, 2006, p. 379). It is no coincidence that the study of regime change follows historical trends of democratisation and autocratisation and as these trends come in waves (cf. Huntington, 1991; Leininger, 2022, p. 1), scholars emphasise different concepts of democratic breakdown, transition, regression, or consolidation depending on their sequence (Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 97) – with international/global developments as the shaping context. In general, the range of different external influences that can affect regime change to varying degrees is very broad and can include more indirect global socio-economic linkages, external shocks, and long-term global trends as well as more short-term and direct measures/actions of individual actors with a clear intention. After the Cold War, following Levitsky and Way (2006, p. 379),

[1] The usage of the terms 'external', 'international', or 'foreign' to depict *external* influences on regime change varies among scholars and is often used interchangeably (see, e.g., in Carothers, 2009; Gleditsch & Ward, 2006; Levitsky & Way, 2006). When referring to external or international influences, I explicitly mean influences that do not emanate from the domestic level.

"scholars have pointed to diverse forms of external influence, including diffusion, promotion of western democracy, multilateral conditionality, and the spread of new communications technologies and transnational human rights networks." Many of these elements emanated from the U.S. and European states as main actors who put democracy promotion on their realigned post-Cold War foreign policy agendas (Carothers, 2002, pp. 5-6; Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 380-381; Santiso, 2001, p. 387). The foundation to capture and classify external influences on regime change (mainly in the direction of democracy) conceptually and empirically more clearly was laid with influential studies, *inter alia*, by Levitsky and Way (2006) framing the international dimension around the concepts of (Western) linkage and leverage, Gleditsch and Ward (2006) looking at regional diffusion effects on democratisation, or Hyde (2007) focusing on international election monitoring as a measure to prevent electoral fraud. Moreover, there are ongoing discussions about the influence of foreign aid (see Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 106) and numerous contributions on the role of democracy promotion (see, e.g. Carothers, 2009; Gisselquist et al., 2021; Leininger & Richter, 2023).

One common element, which Leininger and Richter (2023, p. 478; see also Beichelt, 2012, p. 1) point out in the context of democracy promotion, is that in their analyses CP scholars "include external factors as one among many drivers of regime change within a state." From the CP' research lens, external factors thus mainly unfold through domestic mechanisms (cf. Resnick & van de Walle, 2013, p. 28; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 105). IR scholars, in contrast, emphasise "democracy promotion [as] one of many dynamics between the international sphere and the substate level" (Leininger & Richter, 2023, p. 478), which is part of a state's foreign policy, and take up elements of norm diffusion and the role of international organisations. Building on the CP' understanding of how external influences come in as drivers in processes of regime change within a state unfolding primarily through domestic mechanisms, external influences connect to the other CP' 'theory families' – with the main difference that an external actor takes action instead of a domestic one (Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 105). According to Waldner and Lust (2018, pp. 95, 97-106)[2], there are five broad theory families – besides the one addressing external actors – mainly aiming to explain democratic transition and consolidation. These families cover structural explanations focusing on 1) political economy, 2) political culture, 3) political institutions, 4) social structure and political coalitions as well as 5) agency-based/actor-centred theories. In regard to external influences on regime change, the domestic mechanisms remain the same as "the instruments of change are efforts to catalyze cultural, institutional, or economic change, as well as diplomatic efforts to persuade local political leaders to alter their behavior" (ibid., p. 105). Based on this assumption, the use of an established explanatory approach developed to explain domestic mechanisms leading to democratic transition and consolidation is generally also suitable to take up external factors. Nevertheless, when considering external factors, it is important to simultaneously understand their *interaction* with domestic actors and mechanisms.

[2] Waldner and Lust (2018) assess all of these theory families to explore their explanatory power for analysing processes of democratic backsliding, thereby referring to incremental, within-regime processes of autocratisation. In their study, Waldner and Lust (2018, p. 95) focus on democratic backsliding taking place in democracies. However, their conceptualisation of democratic backsliding explicitly also covers declines of democratic quality in autocracies.

As noted at the beginning, CP scholars of the post-Cold War international environment were mainly interested in assessing the role of external influences (e.g. democratic diffusion or democracy promotion) in democratisation processes, building a sound knowledge base around concepts such as democracy promotion and its role in supporting democratisation from abroad. It is, however, a comparatively more recent development that scholars are now increasingly focusing on processes of autocratisation (also connected to the notion of a third wave of autocratisation) – as well as on the role of external influences in autocratisation processes. A growing body of CP literature around different nuanced concepts of autocratisation is emerging that is especially referring to incremental, *within-regime* processes of autocratisation described with concepts such as 'democratic erosion' (Kneuer, 2021), 'democratic regression' (Tomini & Wagemann, 2018), or 'democratic backsliding' (e.g. Bermeo, 2016; Waldner & Lust, 2018). These concepts that capture losses of democratic quality stand in contrast to more sudden transitions *of* the regime from democracy to autocracy, i.e. forms of democratic breakdown (Tomini & Wagemann, 2018). One common element among these within-regime autocratisation concepts is the general emphasis of predominantly incumbent-driven, intended and strategic actions, pointing to "conscious actions political actors take in order to change a regime" (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, p. 1099; see also Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 95; Leininger et al., 2019, p. 7) – an emphasis that fits with an agency-based/actor-centred research lens. These changes are initiated in states that are led by a new generation of populist politicians such as Trump in the U.S., Orbán in Hungary, Bolsonaro in Brazil, or Modi in India, who promote widespread polarisation, division, and mobilisation of supporters against a denigrated opposition labelled as "corrupt elites – the professional or 'deep' state and their effete, educated handmaidens in the other (liberal) political parties – as well as a host of alien threats, such as international institutions, refugees and migrations, and 'undeserving' minorities who really don't 'belong' in the country" (Diamond, 2021, pp. 30-32). Democracy eroding reforms under those leaders are mainly executed legally by using the existing democratic institutions and are often presented as changes intended to lead to more security or more democratic conditions (e.g. agendas that officially claim to combat corruption, inequality and/or to deal with inefficient bureaucratic systems) (cf. Bermeo, 2016, pp. 10-14).[3] However, these changes can gradually lead to structural power shifts, e.g. by reducing checks on the executive, by replacing personnel in the judicative sector, through influencing the media, or by shutting down opposing news sources and criticism – and can therefore result in the autocratisation of a political system (a process also called 'executive aggrandisement') (ibid., pp. 10-13). Nevertheless, it is important to point out that despite this shift to more gradual autocratisation processes and the less frequent occurrence of sudden regime changes in the post-Cold War era (Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019), the outcome of most completed autocratisation episodes are still democratic breakdowns (Boese et al., 2021, pp. 891-893).

In light of these similar patterns of autocratisation trends across different countries and regions, there is also a growing interest in autocratisation research on *domestic* institutions and actors of democratic resilience (Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann, 2021), democratic resistance (Tomini et

[3] Bermeo (2016, pp. 10-14) refers to these processes in the context of backsliding as 'executive aggrandisement' and 'strategic election manipulation'. Bermeo's third backsliding category, 'promissory coups', is not describing a gradual *within* regime change, but a short-term transition from democracy to autocracy with the declared aim to establish a democratic order again.

al., 2023), and democratic defence (van Lit et al., 2023). While using a large-N episodic approach to assess patterns of democratic resilience at different stages of autocratisation, Boese et al.'s (2021) findings indicate an important role of domestic democracy protection institutions. Thus, strong judicial constraints in political systems that constrain the power of the executive and a history of strong democratic institutions in general (so-called democratic stock) can prevent the onset of autocratisation episodes and the actual breakdown of democratic regimes. In another important contribution to the field, Lührmann (2021) is looking at the autocratisation sequence as a whole, identifying different stages to democratic breakdown and specifying entry points for pro-democratic actors to strengthen democratic resilience. In doing so, she describes the role of mounting citizens' discontent and rising anti-pluralism as the first two stages of autocratisation sequences, which are followed by the actual autocratisation stage. Especially with a view to the last stage of the sequence, Lührmann (2021) draws on Boese et al.'s (2021) findings, which emphasise strong institutions and additionally highlights the important role of the political opposition and civil society as further accountability actors.

With a specific focus on domestic actors and strategies of democratic resistance against autocratisation across different regime types, Tomini et al.'s (2023) study directly relates to these findings. Following Tomini et al.'s (2023, p. 121) actor-based approach, "the outcome of autocratization is defined by the strategic interaction between drivers and opponents of autocratization within a specific context", with the contra-democratic executive as driver and actors from the institutional, political, or social sphere as opponents. While drawing on theoretical considerations and the results of six case studies, the authors derive two testable hypotheses: for one, that the "more the resistance is diffuse and transversal across types of actors and the wider it is, the greater the chances of success;" and for the other, "that that resistance should be tailored to the context and targeted primarily at its most effective dimension (e.g. institutions, in liberal democracy)" (ibid., pp. 132-133). This means that in the context of autocratisation processes taking place in liberal democracies, a combination of institutional resisters (e.g. judges or executive agencies) and political resisters (e.g. from within the incumbent's party or in form of a unified opposition) are likely to play the main role besides an organised civil society. However, in the context of autocratisation processes in electoral democracies, the main resistance most likely relies predominantly on political (e.g. the political opposition) and social resisters (e.g. social movements). In cases of even more authoritarian regimes, resistance is likely to be even more restricted with the political opposition diminished and potential resistance emanating from social movements or military officials.

Further evidence derived in a study by van Lit et al. (2023) that also applies an actor-centred approach sheds light on the strategic interactions between different 'democratic defenders' in incumbent-driven autocratisation processes. With an explicit focus on the interaction between different democratic defenders, van Lit et al. (2023) construct a two-level model of democratic defence that identifies "elite democratic defenders" and the citizens as two important levels of democratic defence (ibid.). The strategic interaction between both actors is central in this model, whereas it also highlights the elite democratic defenders' self-interest and credibility as well as the incumbent's autocratising action's ambiguity as core elements that determine the interaction between both levels of democratic defence.

These studies already provide valuable insights into *domestic* institutions, actors, strategies, and interactions for preventing autocratisation. However, notably less attention has been given to

the role of external influences in autocratisation processes and especially to the question of how external influences may prevent autocratisation in the third wave of autocratisation (see Lührmann, 2021, p. 1031). Lust and Waldner's (2015; 2018) contributions are early and rare deviations of this gap. In their attempt to map out relevant hypotheses for further exploration of the democratic backsliding phenomenon, they relate the six previously mentioned CP' theory families developed to explain democratic transition and consolidation to assess their explanatory power for analysing processes of democratic backsliding in democratic countries, thereby referring to incremental, within-regime processes of autocratisation (Lust & Waldner, 2015). In regard to the theory family of 'international factors', Lust and Waldner (2015, pp. 62-64; 2018, pp. 105-106) derive five testable hypotheses[4] about international linkage and leverage drawing on Levitsky and Way (2006)[5], connected to linkage and leverage about membership in international organisations along Levitz and Pop-Elches (2010), about international diffusion following Gleditsch and Ward (2006), about foreign aid drawing on different authors (especially Djankov, Montalvo, & Reynal-Querol, 2008), and lastly about international election monitoring based on Hyde's (2007) study. In this context, however, they again emphasise that international factors primarily work through domestic factors (Lust & Waldner, 2015, p. 47; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 106). This connection of domestic and external factors is conceptually and theoretically, however, not further explored and only partly inherent in some of the concepts (e.g. in linkage and leverage). In addition, Waldner and Lust (2018, p. 95) specifically focus on autocratisation processes in democratic countries, although their definition of democratic backsliding explicitly refers to processes within any regime type. As there are likely similar patterns among autocratisation processes in democracies and autocracies (cf. Leininger et al., 2019, p. 8), an expansion of the research subject seems worth considering. Lastly, Lust and Waldner's (2015; 2018) selection of international factors is not carried out in a structured and comprehensive way and tends to select factors from the sphere of IR, thus leaving out other promising influencing factors and already established theoretical/conceptual links (e.g. in regard to democracy promotion or sanctions). Overall, the authors highlight the general applicability of international explanatory approaches to recent autocratisation concepts and processes and thereby deliver a substantial contribution for bringing the two research fields together. However, it becomes clear that exploring external influences on autocratisation processes necessitates a change of underlying research questions from *how processes of regime transition to democracy or democratic consolidation are influenced or supported by external actors* to *how external influences may (un-)intentionally facilitate or prevent processes of autocratisation from abroad*.

[4] H1: "The absence of western linkage and leverage may facilitate democratic backsliding." H2: "A higher proportion of democratic neighbors decreases the probability of backsliding and increases the probability than [sic!] a democracy will survive." H3: "Membership in international organizations creates linkage and leverage, which helps induce and consolidate democratic reforms and thus impede backsliding." H4: "Direct foreign aid to a government may lead to backsliding." H5: "International monitoring of elections can deter electoral fraud. This can increase the quality of elections, and thus prevent democratic backsliding" (Lust & Waldner, 2015, pp. 62-64).

[5] Although the concept of linkage and leverage is explicitly framed as an access to 'rethinking the international dimension of regime change' – and not only of democratisation –, it was mainly used to assess international/Western influences in democratisation processes in the post-Cold War international environment (see Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-386).

More conceptual contributions and evidence that help us to shed light on the international dimension of autocratisation with a focus on potential preventive factors is coming from scholars working on specific subfields such as democracy promotion and on measures from its toolbox, especially democracy aid, democratic sanctions, or (again) international election monitoring. To begin with the framing concept of democracy promotion, as Leininger and Richter (2023, pp. 478-479) stress, "[by] definition, democracy promotion is very strongly oriented towards one specific direction, namely democratization, i.e. contributing to *more* democracy. One result of this is that knowledge about how democracy can be protected from backsliding or autocratization is still missing." In an attempt to address this shortcoming, Leininger (2022) recently drafted a concept of international democracy promotion where democracy protection is conceptualised alongside democracy support as two separate subtypes of democracy promotion. The main conceptual distinction between an action of democracy support and protection is made on the basis of the 'direction of regime change' in the state where the intended effect of a measure is supposed to occur (ibid., p. 5). The rationale, objective, and instruments of democracy promotion are thus dependent on the prevalent phase of autocratisation or democratisation of a regime. While democracy support is ideally following the trend of 'fostering democratisation' in a state with the objective to "[s]trengthen pro-democratic actors and facilitate reforms of institutions", democracy protection is directed against an ongoing trend with the rationale to 'counter autocratisation' and objective to "[p]rotect pro-democratic actors, counter autocratic forces and prevent institutional reforms" (ibid.). Accordingly, the measures also shift from exclusively cooperative to cooperative and cohesive measures. Furthermore, Leininger (2022, pp. 7-13) emphasises the role of specific institutional reform patterns and actor constellations during phases of regime transformation along democracy support and protection, which can guide selecting a theoretical approach for an analysis. Thus, depending on the autocratisation phase, a focus on the protection and support of different domestic pro-democratic institutions and actors acting as local safeguards of democracy is central, which in more autocratic contexts might be complemented by cohesive measures such as conditionality and sanctions against the regime (ibid.). Moreover, by pointing out that different democracy protection strategies should be emphasised depending on the prevailing autocratisation phase – or at certain points of typical autocratisation sequences/stages – Leininger's (2022) framework connects very well with recent analyses focusing on domestic democracy protection measures to disrupt autocratisation sequences at specific stages (Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann, 2021; Tomini et al., 2023; van Lit et al., 2023). With this conceptual framework, Leininger (2022) therefore makes an important contribution that can be drawn on in the further course of this study to classify external factors in the context of democracy promotion in specific autocratisation phases and to derive the concept of autocracy prevention, which combines measures of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations that are *not intended* to directly promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage (for more explanations of the underlying definition see *Chapter 2.2.1*).

Leininger's (2022) framework also helps to relate existing evidence coming from scholars – although sometimes not explicitly – working on specific measures/instruments of democracy promotion to autocratisation. A prominent measure related to democracy promotion is ODA-related democracy aid, which can be categorised as a rather 'soft' linkage-instrument. Scholars analysing the effectiveness of democracy aid – and development aid in more general – with

quantitative large-N analyses mainly aim to show aid's effects on democratisation (normally operationalised as changes in democracy indices). Gisselquist et al. (2021) give a systematic and comprehensive review of findings in the literature on the impact of development aid and democracy aid on democracy. They find that most studies (81 percent) that explicitly focus on democracy aid can identify positive effects of democracy aid on democracy levels (ibid., pp. 15-16). In regard to development aid, the results are comparatively not so clear with only 61 percent of the studies showing a positive impact on democracy (ibid., p. 16). In addition to these results, the authors point to substantial shortcomings in the literature, especially in regard to clear specifications of the aid types under study (ibid., p. 11). While scholars have thus established a broad knowledge base around the relation between democracy aid and democracy, only in some recent studies scholars' attention is increasingly shifting to concepts of autocratisation and the specific timing of aid, mainly by looking at 'downturn' trajectories of democracy indicators (Niño-Zarazúa, Gisselquist, Horigoshi, Samarin, & Sen, 2020, pp. 119-128) or at events of autocratisation (see, for instance, Nowack & Leininger, 2022). In doing so, Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020, p. 119) find that democracy aid is "more effective at supporting democratization (upturns) than at preventing democratic backsliding (downturns)." In addition, the authors conduct an analysis of democracy aid's effectivness in different regime types along the 'Regimes of the World' classification by Lührmann et al. (2018). Regarding Swedish democracy aid, they "observe that, in general, democracy aid increases the probability of democracies remaining in that political category, while reducing the probability of autocracies, either closed or electoral, remaining in that classification" (Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020, p. 131). Adding on to this, Nowack and Leininger (2022) focus on the effects of democracy aid on attempts to circumvent presidential term limits as a specific event of autocratisation. They find that democracy aid can actually reduce the risk that presidents circumvent constitutional term limits (ibid.). These recent results suggest that more in-depth and systematic analyses are needed to better understand the impact of democracy aid and other types of aid on autocratisation without a clear intention to prevent it – e.g. in interplay with other democracy protection measures or while testing different operationalisations of the variables under study.

In regard to election monitoring as a specific type of ODA, Hyde's (2007) influential study using micro-/polling-station-level data showed that the presence of international observers can reduce the rate of fraud and improve the quality of elections (ibid., p. 63). Although Hyde frames her study around the question of "[h]ow do international actors influence democratization in developing countries" (ibid., p. 38) and considers election monitoring as a measure of democracy promotion that might have an effect on the cost-benefit-assessment of leaders in power[6] and thereby "improve the quality of electoral governance and contribute to democratization" (ibid., p. 42), she later concludes that her "study shows that reducing election fraud does not translate inevitably into democratization" (ibid., p. 63). In agreement with her conclusion, I further argue that preventing election fraud can additionally be related to democracy protection, thereby making international election monitoring a measure of protecting core domestic democratic institutions and contributing to the *prevention of autocratisation* from abroad against an incumbent-driven trend instead of solely supporting democratisation.

[6] Hyde (2007) thereby implicitly draws upon an actor-centred approach.

Connected to aid is also the element of (development) aid conditionality as well as potential incentive effects of aid – theoretically often based on a linkage and leverage logic. In the past, there were wide-ranging discussions on the use of 'political' or 'democratic conditionality' in foreign aid provision as well as on their assumed effectiveness (see, e.g. Faust, 2013; Montinola, 2010; Youngs, 2010). In general, as Kersting and Kilby (2014, pp. 127-128) point out while reviewing the scope of existing studies, the relation between aid and democracy in receiving countries seems to be complex and researchers (as well as practitioners) are faced with substantial measurement challenges, e.g. in regard to linking incentive effects of aid with current or future democracy ratings while assuming the right causal timing. That conditionality is actually used by donors to react to political developments, including to deteriorations of democratic quality, has been shown by Molenaers et al. (2015) for the suspension of budget support. Evidence from Kersting and Kilby's (2014) approach that focuses on an "incentive effect when recipients do expect future aid to be conditional on democratic reform" (ibid., p. 139) while controlling for the recipient countries' geopolitical importance further finds a substantial incentive effect of aid on changes in democracy ratings. This also connects to previous findings that, e.g. showed that aid effectiveness may also depend on the regime type in the recipient country – with conditionality only being effective in more democratic countries (Montinola, 2010). Interestingly, Kersting and Kilby (2014, p. 128) also identify the role of aid for preventing shifts toward autocracy as an empirical gap in the course of their literature review. In the discussion of their results, Kersting and Kilby (2014) mention in brackets that "the incentive effect of additional future aid as a reward for democratization" can also be interpreted as "the loss of future aid as punishment for democratic reversals" (ibid., p. 138) – thereby providing first evidence on the potential effects of (intended as well as unintended) incentives on preventing autocratisation. To further shed light on this relation, a clearer conceptualisation and operationalisation of autocratisation, distinct from the focus on democratisation, could be a fruitful further development.

Membership in pro-democratic international organisations such as the European Union (EU) as well as their use of political conditionality in accession negotiations and international organisations' external democracy promotion agendas in general are another relevant type of external democracy promotion. Theoretically, the role of international organisations again connects to Levitsky and Way's (2006) concept of linkage and leverage, but also to the concept of democratic diffusion from neighbouring countries following Gleditsch and Ward (2006). In regard to international organisation's external measures, with the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004, for instance, the EU is prominently following a 'carrot and sticks' logic to project European values, including the promotion of rule of law and respect for human rights, with access to the EU's market and financial support as an attractive carrot (Hilz, 2020, p. 11). Promoting democracy in neighbouring countries is not only connected to the ENP as the EU is also taking up elements of democracy assistance in initiatives such as the Black Sea Synergy Initiative initiated in 2007 "to strengthen statehood in the Southern Caucasus [and] to help those countries to transform domestic structures in accordance with the EU's democratic and legal norms and values" (Minasyan, 2020, p. 36). Furthermore, with the European Commission's Governance Incentive Tranche, which was introduced in 2006, the EU was trying to incentivise governance reforms in countries of the African, Caribbean, Pacific-group (Molenaers & Nijs, 2011). However, as Molenaers and Nijs (2011) derive, hindering factors for

the effectiveness of incentive programmes are also prominently found on the donor side, while pointing to complex political processes, interests, and actors instead of unified and unitary approaches. In regard to the internal dimension of international organisations, membership in a pro-democratic international organisation is discussed as a possible contributing factor to democratic consolidation (Waldner & Lust, 2018, pp. 105-106), but recent findings point out possible unintended consequences of a membership in a pro-democratic international organisation on backsliding (Meyerrose, 2020, 2023). These findings also deviate from earlier conclusions by Levitz and Pop-Eleches (2010), who find that new post-communist EU members remained resistant to democratic backsliding after accession to the EU and thereby after they are no longer exposed to the strong incentive of becoming an EU member in the earlier phase of the current autocratisation wave. More recently, some prominent examples of democratic erosion in the EU showcase, for instance, the EU's inability to take sufficient action against backsliding trajectories in its member states and an increasing coalition formation of contra-democratic forces (Holesch & Kyriazi, 2022) – a consistent finding with Meyerrose's (2020, 2023) results. Closely related to this, with the 'Rule of law conditionality regulation' the EU has recently established an internal sanctioning mechanism for cutting EU budget payments to backsliding member countries (Löprich, 2021, p. 45) with an uncertain outcome so far. At the same time, when looking at international organisations such as the EU, it becomes clear that external measures to prevent autocratisation must not only refer to traditional donor-recipient relations in development policy, but also to interactions between democratic partner countries in joint inter- and transnational organisations as well as to domestic democracy protection efforts in donor countries themselves.[7]

An even more coercive measure to influence political decision-making abroad are the threat and application of sanctions. States can impose varying kinds of sanctions as comparatively 'hard' leverage-instruments to put pressure on a regime, ranging from general trade sanctions to more specific trade sanctions in the military sector or travel/tourist visa restrictions with different stated objectives. Following von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 965-966), 'Democracy and Human Rights' is the most frequently stated objective for a sanction by sanctioning states. This connects to the lack of an existing United Nations (UN) mandate "to address situations of democratic regression, such as *coups d'état*" (Portela, 2022, p. 2) – in contrast to situations affecting international peace and security, where the UN can become active. Furthermore, "[w]arfighting and democratic backsliding are almost invariably accompanied by human rights violations; thus, the protection of human rights features prominently among justifications adduced for sanctions enactment" (ibid.). Following Portela (2022, p. 2), "in the case of democratic regression, the emphasis lies on the breach of human rights that are closely related to the democratic process, such as the freedom of expression, demonstration or association," and which are partly taken up in definitions of democracy (see *Chapter 2.2.1*). Theoretically, democratic sanctions most clearly relate to an active 'punishment' of an external regime and are thereby *intended* to work against a prevalent political trend – i.e. following an underlying rationale to protect democracy and prevent autocratisation (see Leininger, 2022).

[7] In this context, discourses on international and domestic autocracy prevention/democracy protection measures in the donor countries are also intermingled. The German government, for example, recently drafted a law to promote democracy at home. The text of the law explicitly refers to the international dimension of the 'anti-human and anti-democratic' phenomenon that necessitates a supraregional response (Deutsche Bundesregierung, 2023).

The discussions about the general use and effectiveness of sanctions directly relate to the ones about political conditionality outlined before (Faust, 2013; Youngs, 2010). In regard to sanctions, the obstacles to sanctioning regimes (or threatening with them) are comparatively high, as sanctions might trigger unintended outcomes or side effects. More in general, the right timing of sanctions is a big challenge, as sanctioning tends to be reactive vis-à-vis visible short-term developments (e.g. *coups d'état*). It is thus unsurprising that there is a high threshold for democratic countries to sanction other states and especially other democratic countries, a tendency that Portela (2022, p. 5) connects to the "principle of 'democratic peace' whereby democracies typically settle disputes with one another without recourse to coercion." Especially in the case of incremental and less visible democratic erosion in contrast to sudden regime breakdowns, the obstacles to using sanctions (or threats to use sanctions) as a preventive measure from abroad can be considered high. Regarding autocratic contexts, in contrast, Portela (2022, p. 5) emphasises the role of 'targeted sanctions' by the EU against individuals or entities that are more selective than country-wide sanctions and may help target influential elites and thereby autocratic regimes more accurately. When looking at influential large-N studies in the field of democratic sanctions such as Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) or von Soest and Wahman's (2013, 2015) studies, the authors mainly focus on the effects of democratic sanctions on democratisation and regime stability – and not on sanctions' effects on preventing autocratisation. Nevertheless, their studies indicate interesting results pointing to a positive effect of democratic sanctions on democratic development in targeted countries (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015). In addition, Pospieszna and Weber (2017) also take into account the interplay of democratic sanctions and aid, showing that general aid provision can decrease the effectiveness of sanctions, while democracy aid bypassing the government can increase their success in a targeted state.

In-depth qualitative case study results help to shed more light on these results by providing insights on specific events and processes. Nowack (2021), for instance, considers coercive leverage measures such as sanctions following a logic of conditionality in his process-tracing on a third term bid by former Malawian President Bakili Muluzi in 2002 as a concrete autocratisation event. Nowack (2021, p. 311) finds that "the anticipation of a worsening relation with donors through leverage and instruments of the logic of conditionality changed the cost perception of political actors." At the same time, Nowack's case study shows the connection of simultaneous external linkage elements (e.g. civil society support) to the more coercive measures and the complex interplay of domestic and external factors – thereby highlighting how the effectiveness of external democracy promotion measures depends on the local context. In a second comparative case study of the same third term bid with Wade's third term bid in Senegal in 2012, Leininger and Nowack (2022, p. 324) conclude that

> "actions based on a mix of the logic of consequences and the logic of appropriateness can prove successful in political regimes where certain democratic qualities are present and where foreign aid is critical for the state budget. More specifically, conditioning relations with the incumbent government while capacitating pro-democratic opposition turned out to be effective strategies for preserving presidential term limits in Malawi in 2002 and Senegal in 2012."

Accordingly, the findings from these exemplary case studies show the complex interplay between different external influencing factors (and actors) and the domestic context in specific

autocratisation events and, at the same time, the importance of qualitative case studies alongside quantitative findings to better explain the *how* questions and conditionalities.

Going beyond the concept of democracy promotion, there is a very broad range of external factors that can potentially affect regime transformation and contribute to the prevention of autocratisation. Following the different CP theory families developed to explain democratic transition and consolation, external influences might very indirectly affect regime transformation by influencing the state's economy, its social society, political culture, or even its technological development. Diamond (2021, pp. 36-37), for example, relates major global socio-economic trends to regime transformation and current autocratisation processes, including digitalisation, globalisation, the general shift from industrial to post-industrial societies connected to increasing income inequalities as well as the widespread neo-liberal revolution in economy policy – with very different and potentially counteracting effects on political regimes. In a current assessment, Samuels (2023) further reflects on the international context of democratic backsliding pointing to a weakened ideational support of democracy because of substantial changes in international politics. Specific events such as the 2008 financial crisis or the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the 9/11 attacks or (violent) conflict in general as well as their long-term aftermaths are potential influencing factors that can be assigned to the international dimension of autocratisation (see, e.g. Diamond, 2021, pp. 36-37; Pickel, 2016, p. 7; Samuels, 2023). Nevertheless, as Diamond (2021, p. 37) concludes, "[i]t is difficult to disentangle the multiple effects of these glacial changes in the international geopolitical and normative environment." Following on from this assessment, the underlying study (and literature review) does not aim to cover all of these partly diffuse external factors that potentially have an indirect or diffuse impact on regime transformation. Instead, the study specifically focuses on external measures of democracy protection and key pro-democratic international relations covering fields of co-operation (e.g. trade and security cooperation) with democracies that are *not intended* to promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage (see *Chapter 2.2.1* for the underlying definition).

It is thus useful to lastly address the emerging research field of 'autocracy promotion' and the implications of China and Russia 're-entering' the world stage, to better understand in which international context preventive external factors need to be situated. The research field of autocracy promotion is still relatively new as "the role played by outside powers in helping to bring about, or stabilise, non-democratic rule […] has not yet been the subject of extensive research" (Bader et al., 2010, p. 84). While drawing on conceptual ideas and defining characteristics of democracy promotion, scholars such as Tansey (2016) and Bader et al. (2010) have developed independent concepts and theoretical arguments why and how autocracies would promote their political systems abroad (see also Cooley, 2015; Hall & Ambrosio, 2017; Kneuer & Demmelhuber, 2016) in light of a global democratic regression process which is further associated with an autocratic 'pushback' after the post-Cold War period (Cooley, 2015, p. 50). In examining the previously discussed concepts in the context of democracy promotion with a view to their meaningfulness for autocracy promotion, relevant insights are gained about diffusion and autocratic neighbourhoods/gravity centres, international organisations (e.g. the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, SCO), linkage and leverage, authoritarian learning or development aid (Bräutigam, 2011; Cooley, 2015; Diamond, 2021; Gehring, Kaplan, & Wong, 2022; Hall & Ambrosio, 2017; Kneuer & Demmelhuber, 2016).

The central element in regard to all of these concepts is especially the new role of a more active, economically successful China and the Russian Federation re-entering the world stage (ibid.). In the last ten years, in particular, developments around these two actors have rapidly gathered pace. While China has developed from an emerging donor in its immediate vicinity to a global economic superpower that is economically and diplomatically connected to countries all over the world backed with massive funding, e.g. for its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and with wide-reaching geopolitical consequences, Russia's continuing military aggressions are severely eroding the post-Cold War international political order (Diamond, 2021, pp. 37-38). The model of liberal democracy is further explicitly under attack by Russian financing of (mainly right-wing populist) political parties and spreading of disinformation via social media channels to influence democratic elections, sowing distrust and destabilise political systems (ibid.). At the same time, China is more actively promoting its own political model as a "superior, more functional model of governance" (ibid., p. 38) and has recently published a white paper framing China's closed autocratic political system as a 'democracy that works' (Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United States of America, 2021).[8] Besides, following Diamond (2021, p. 38),

> "China has been pumping resources (overtly and covertly) into associations, parties, politicians, media, think tanks and universities in democracies and other societies abroad. The goal is not necessarily to destabilize individual democracies (save for Taiwan), but rather to stifle public criticism of China, preempt foreign and defense policies that could hinder China's rise to global dominance, and so create a world safe for autocracy."

While researchers in the field were still concerned with fundamental questions about the establishment of the research strand about ten years ago, the implications of the political developments and crises of the last years are so far-reaching that there are once again talks of a system rivalry between democratic and autocratic regimes, comparable to the rivalry during the Cold War (e.g. Beckley & Brands, 2023; Kroenig, 2020). It is still open how democracy promotion practitioners and research will react to these on-going changes in the fundamental international context of regime transformation. It is, however, likely that the importance of concepts and measures of autocracy prevention and democracy protection as well as insights from research will further increase (see Beckley & Brands, 2023; Leininger, 2022), which lastly also emphasises the relevance of the research conducted in this study.

2.1.2 Summary of research gaps

Based on this assessment of the state of art of the international dimension of autocratisation and its prevention, I identify five main research gaps to focus on throughout this thesis. In addition, the insights inform the selection of an appropriate theoretical approach and the derivation of hypotheses on the role of external factors in contributing to the prevention of autocratisation in the subsequent chapter.

[8] Interestingly, by referring to the democracy concept, China's white paper is highlighting the still existing global appeal of the 'democracy' label for a regime type – even for autocratic leaderships.

First, there is a broad *empirical* knowledge gap on the relation between autocratisation and external factors ranging on a continuum from rather 'soft' linkage-instruments such as democracy aid to democratic sanctions as comparatively 'hard' leverage-instruments that might contribute to preventing autocratisation in general and especially in the context of the more recent phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven processes of autocratisation.

Second, also *conceptually*, unclear conceptualisations and the imbalance between a focus on autocratisation rather than democratisation in democracy promotion and regime transformation research make it difficult to generalise explanatory approaches and knowledge to autocratisation processes and their prevention from abroad. It is therefore necessary to further draw on and bring together knowledge from recent autocratisation and domestic democracy protection literature with research from different subfields already assessing the role of different *external* factors for regime transformation (e.g. Leininger's (2022) democracy protection conceptualisation).

Third, there are several *theoretical* challenges connected to the complex interplay between domestic and external factors in autocratisation processes that also relate to conditionalities, timing, and the level of analysis. Paying attention to the domestic context and decisions of domestic and external actors, which may also be preceded by more structural long-term changes, is a challenge. Finding the right theoretical angle/approach from the numerous theoretical schools dominated by a democratisation focus that is able to bridge these tensions and helps to shed light on external autocracy prevention is hence key.

Fourth, as a *methodological* challenge connected to the previous points, we lack mixed-method approaches that link quantitative large-N results (for the *whether* and *how strong* questions) with insights on autocratisation processes from qualitative case studies (addressing the *how* questions). Results from mixed-method approaches will help to further elucidate the interplay between different factors, conditionalities, and timing.

Fifth, insights about how different external factors might contribute to the prevention of autocratisation need to be assessable for and related to other research fields – especially for research focusing on domestic democracy protection/autocracy prevention as well as on autocracy promotion and the 'geopolitical role' of autocracy prevention in the context of a growing global system rivalry between democratic and autocratic regimes.

2.2 Theoretical framework: Linking an actor-centred approach with a concept of external autocracy prevention

Based on the previous overview of the current state of the art of the international dimension of autocratisation and its prevention that identified five key research gaps, the following chapter, first, introduces main concepts (*Chapter 2.2.1*), second, outlines my theoretical framework (*Chapters 2.2.2* and *2.2.3*) and, third, derives hypotheses for this study (*Chapter 2.2.4*). My main aim in the first part of this chapter is to derive a concise and applicable concept of external factors contributing to the prevention of autocratisation, which also speaks to the key processes, patterns, and actors of current autocratisation processes. Thus, I focus on external *autocracy*

prevention in this study. In the second and third part of the chapter, I further relate this concept to an actor-centred theoretical approach for explaining autocratisation.

2.2.1 Defining *autocratisation* and external *autocracy prevention*

The aim to define democracy and decide on defining characteristics of democratic systems has been occupying scholars studying the different political regimes[9] across the world for a long time. By now, there is a broad range of definitions that cover 'early' democratic systems of pre-modern times (cf. Stasavage, 2020) and 'modern' ones that range from very 'minimalist' (or procedural) concepts of democracy (e.g. Schumpeter, 1943, p. 269) to more wide-ranging ones such as Dahl's (1971) re-defined 'polyarchy'-concept and 'liberal democracy' (Diamond, 1999, p. 3). Furthermore, definitions aim to capture and categorise a variety of different types of democracy, e.g. consensus or majoritarian systems as well as representative or deliberative systems. In general, there are also many ongoing discussions in regard to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of democracy that, following Lührmann et al. (2018, p. 61), touch upon questions of democracy's multidimensionality, of different understandings of the concept as continuous (following Dahl), dichotomous (following Schumpeter) or polychotomous and connected of democracy's distinction from autocratic and/or hybrid regimes. In order to select a suitable definition for this study, I follow the argumentation of Lührmann et al. (2018, p. 61; see also Collier & Adcock, 1999) that the selection should be guided by the research question and the requirements that the analytical approach implies.

The underlying definition of (electoral) democracy in this study is based upon Dahl's (1971) 'polyarchy' concept, which is a widely used definition among scholars of democracy promotion and democratic/autocratic transition (see, e.g. Gisselquist et al., 2021; Leininger & Richter, 2023; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019). Dahl introduced the polyarchy term to describe the current stage of democratic development in states with democracy being an elusive ideal type. Dahl's polyarchy concept captures the most important characteristics of a democratic political system in light of the later operationalisation of the concept for the quantitative and qualitative analyses of external effects on autocratisation. The definition mainly focuses on the political institution of democratic elections and necessary conditions to enable them. Accordingly, electoral democracy "involves elections that are not only competitive, but also held under genuinely free and fair conditions" (Howard & Roessler, 2006, p. 368). As bundled by Gisselquist et al. (2021, p. 3), Dahl's definition is set up around eight institutional guarantees (also called institutions or characteristics) that entail "freedom to form and join associations, freedom of expression, the right to vote, eligibility for public office, the right of political leaders to compete for support, alternative sources of information, free and fair elections, and institutions that tie government policy to votes and public preferences." Thus, the definition allows for conceptualising hybrid or grey regimes as possible regime forms between democracy and autocracy in a continuous

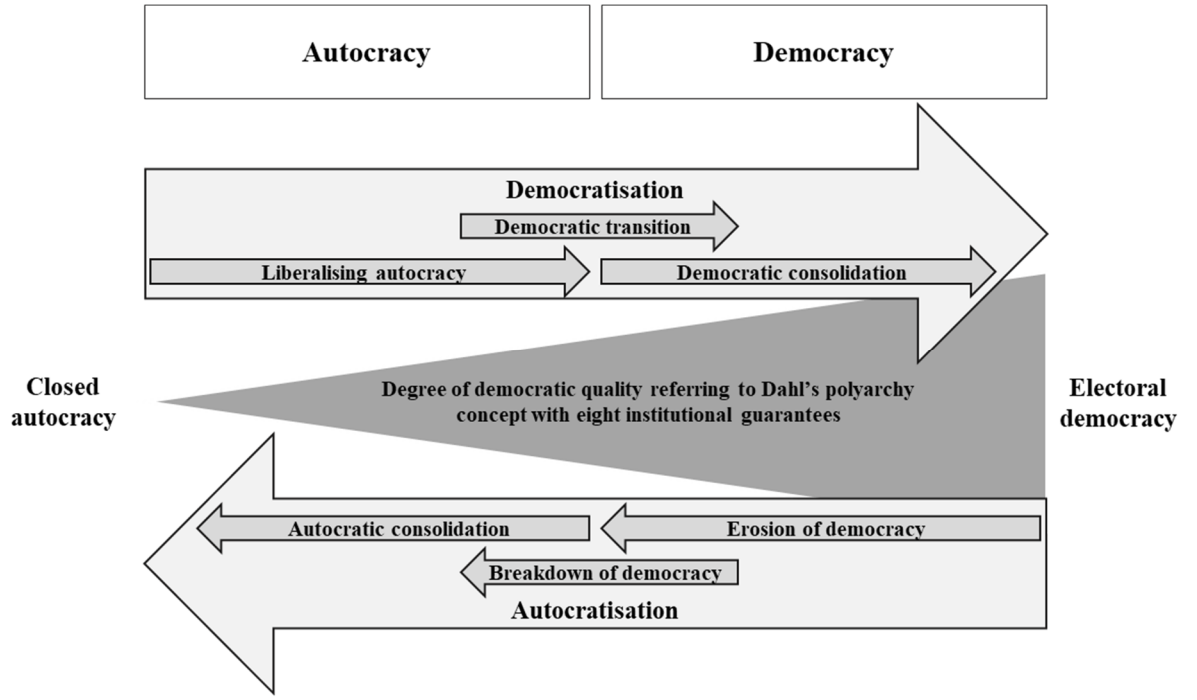
[9] Following Howard and Roessler (2006, p. 366, while reffering to Dahl, 1971), "[p]olitical regimes are the rules and procedures that determine how national, executive leaders are chosen. Thus, the concept of political regimes is an umbrella term that includes both democratic and authoritarian systems in which the two types differ crucially on the degree to which the rules allow for contestation and participation in selection of a government."

understanding of democracy and autocracy where not all eight guarantees are met. The underlying definition can also be contrasted to wider definitions such as liberal democracy that would include additional elements of rule of law, judicial and legislative oversight of the executive, pluralism, and freedom (Howard & Roessler, 2006, pp. 367-368; Lührmann et al., 2018, p. 61). Furthermore, the definition does not take up elements such as the degree of corruption, which is not necessarily a component of a concept of democracy but may be beneficial for democracy's success (Gisselquist et al., 2021, p. 3).

Concepts of autocracy (or authoritarian regimes) are often defined in distinction to the concept of democracy – with continuous, dichotomous, or polychotomous understandings of their relation. The starting point for classifying a political regime in a category (democracy or autocracy) or on a scale between democracy and autocracy is primarily the extent to which democratic institutions are in place/implemented (see Howard & Roessler, 2006, p. 367; Lührmann et al., 2018). Similar to the different concepts of democracy described above, scholars have defined different concepts of autocracy such as 'closed authoritarian' (Howard & Roessler, 2006, p. 367), 'electoral autocracy' (Lührmann et al., 2018, p. 63; Schedler, 2006, 2013), 'dictatorship' (Alvarez, Cheibub, Limongi, & Przeworski, 1996; Cheibub, Gandhi, & Vreeland, 2010), or 'hegemonic authoritarian' (Howard & Roessler, 2006, p. 367) that can be distinguished from each other either by different degrees of established democratic institutions (e.g. Dahl's institutional guarantees) or by different types of autocracy which cannot be put in any order. Closed autocracies can be described as regimes "in which a country's leaders are not selected through national elections, opposition political parties remain banned, political control is maintained through the use of repression, and there is little space for a free media and civil society" (ibid.). These regimes are usually situated at the lower end of the democracy-autocracy continuum. They completely fall short of Dahl's institutional guarantees. In electoral autocracies, in contrast, multiparty elections for the executive and legislature exist. However, these institutions are "*de-facto* undermined such that electoral accountability is evaded" (Lührmann et al., 2018, p. 63) – which also means that Dahl's eight institutional guarantees are not sufficiently fulfilled.

This study is based on a continuous understanding of the relation between democracy and autocracy with possible gradations, as *de-facto* institutional changes of key democratic institutions in political regimes in the direction of autocracy are analysed. Electoral democracy, as previously defined following Dahl's polyarchy concept around eight institutional guarantees, is classified as the ideal-typical form of democracy at the upper end of the continuum, while closed autocracy is defined as the counter-model at the lower end where no institutional guarantees are met (see *Figure 1*). This understanding allows political regimes to be 'positioned' on the continuum between ideal-typical forms of democracy and autocracy for a specific point in time – as, for example, operationalised by V-Dem with the aggregated '*Electoral Democracy Index*' (Lindberg, Coppedge, Gerring, & Teorell, 2014, p. 161) that is later taken up in the course of the quantitative analysis. Following Lührmann et al.'s (2018) widely used application of the '*Electoral Democracy Index*' (values range from zero to one with high values indicating a high democratic quality) to distinguish between democracies and autocracies in a classifying sense, I also consider a cut-off point of 0.5 as logical and orient myself to this classification when referring to democracies and autocracies. At the same time, the underlying understanding does not specify clear end points of possible processes of regime transformation.

Figure 1: Terminology of democratisation and autocratisation



Note: The terminology displayed is primarily based on an understanding following Lührmann et al. (2018), which draws on Dahl's (1971) 'polyarchy' concept. As this study is following a Dahlian approach focusing on 'electoral democracy', the wider liberal democracy concept that would include additional elements of rule of law, judicial and legislative oversight of the executive, pluralism, and freedom (Howard & Roessler, 2006, pp. 367-368; Lührmann et al., 2018, p. 61) is not displayed here, but would also be situated at the upper end of the continuum. *Source*: Author.

Building on this, the set of rules and procedures in political regimes that lay down how executive leaders and the legislative are *de-facto* selected in a state can be changed by governments and legislatures over time. These changes can have implications for the position of the political regime on the continuum between democracy and autocracy – either in the direction of an ideal-typical form of electoral democracy or closed autocracy. The process of transforming/changing political regimes into more democratic ones is understood as *democratisation*, while the process in the direction of autocracy that implies a democratic quality decline at the institutional level is defined as *autocratisation* (see also Leininger, 2022, p. 6; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, pp. 1098-1099). For both processes, the 'starting point' can be anywhere on the continuum.

As mentioned before, CP scholars emphasise different (partly more nuanced) concepts of regime transformation including concepts such as democratic/autocratic breakdown, transition, regression, or consolidation often related to their empirical occurrence (see Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 97) – all of which can be considered either as democratisation or autocratisation processes (as also visualised in *Figure 1*). Some of the different concepts of regime transformation imply different mechanisms of change that can either be related to more sudden/swift changes (such as democratic breakdown or coups) or more gradual/incremental processes (e.g. democratic erosion or backsliding) (see Leininger et al., 2019, pp. 7-8). In regard to autocratisation, a variety of different concepts referring to incremental, within-regime as well as predominantly

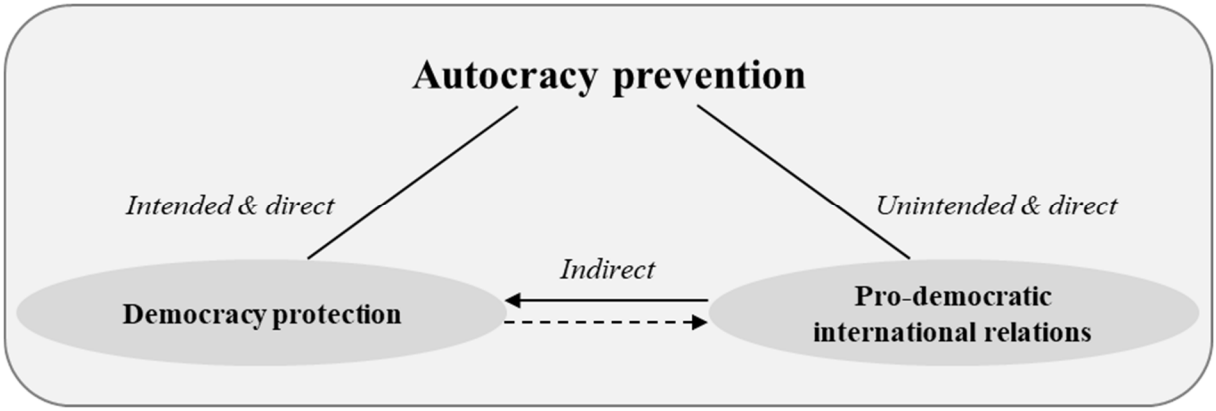
incumbent-driven processes of autocratisation instead of sudden regime breakdowns[10] are increasingly used, thereby trying to capture and describe recent trends of autocratisation (Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019; Tomini & Wagemann, 2018; Waldner & Lust, 2018). Concepts such as democratic erosion, recession, or backsliding mainly describe gradual processes taking place in democratic states, however, with their wording they do not accurately capture and emphasise the conscious actions by the regime to initiate institutional changes and instead implicate a certain uncontrollability (Leininger et al., 2019, p. 7; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, pp. 1099-1100). In addition, the patterns described can likely also occur in autocratic states, which are explicitly excluded in these concepts (Leininger et al., 2019, p. 8). In general, the degree of a clear and consistent conceptualisation and operationalisation of these autocratisation concepts varies among scholars. By focusing on the concept of *autocratisation* as main regime transformation process of interest (dependent variable) that captures democratic quality declines at the institutional level in all forms of political regimes and thereby following scholars such as Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) and Leininger et al. (2019), I aim to cover both incremental and sudden processes of regime change in all regime types. However, it is important to note that incremental autocratisation processes are likely to follow specific sequences of events and processes (Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann, 2021).

As already assessed in the previous state of the art chapter, external factors in the context of regime transformation can theoretically cover a quite broad range of factors and include elements such as global economic interdependence, membership in an international organisation, diffusion effects, violent conflict, etc. (see, e.g. Pickel, 2016, p. 93). With regard to external factors that could contribute to the prevention of autocratisation, not only direct and intentional measures to protect democratic institutions and actors from intentional autocratisation attempts by contra-democratic actors come to mind, but also longer-term, indirect and potentially unintended linking, diffusion, or promoting factors that stabilise a political system and thus contribute to its resilience against autocratisation. Nevertheless, this study does not aim to analyse all external factors that potentially have an indirect or diffuse effect on a state's economy, society, or political culture following the different CP theory families developed to explain democratic transition and consolidation (cf. Waldner & Lust, 2018). Instead, the aim is to derive a concise and applicable concept of external factors contributing to the prevention of autocratisation, which also speaks to the key processes, patterns, and actors of current autocratisation processes. This concept of external *autocracy prevention* is then further related to an actor-centred approach for explaining autocratisation.

Autocracy prevention is understood as a combination of two components: first, of democracy protection as *intended* policies and activities defined along Leininger's (2022) conceptualisation and, second, of pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade, security cooperation) with democracies that are *not intended* to promote or protect democracy (as visualised in *Figure 2*) and determine a state's linkage and leverage.

[10] The 'breakdown of democracy' concept depicts a generally sudden regime change from democracy to autocracy and is closely related to the 'reversal' concept (Leininger et al., 2019, p. 7).

Figure 2: Autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations



Source: Author.

For democracy protection, I explicitly draw on Leininger's (2022) conceptualisation of democracy protection as a subtype of democracy promotion and thus take into account different measures from the democracy promotion toolkit. While democracy promotion is generally specified "as a policy or international activity aiming to bring about sustainable change from an autocratic to a democratic regime" (Leininger & Richter, 2023, p. 478), democracy protection is here also defined as a foreign policy or activity with the more specific rationale to "counter autocratisation" and objective to "[p]rotect pro-democratic actors, counter autocratic forces and prevent institutional reforms" (Leininger, 2022, p. 5), with measures directed against an ongoing trend. In general, the different *direct* and *intentional* democracy protection measures/instruments to prevent autocratisation from abroad range from more cooperative measures or 'soft' linkage-instruments such as democracy aid that can strengthen pro-democratic actors and core democratic institutions and accordingly affect the domestic balance of strength between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic executive to more 'coercive' leverage-measures such as conditionality and democratic sanctions that target the contra-democratic regime in power. Furthermore, following Leininger's (2022, p. 4) conceptualisation of democracy promotion, democracy protection measures only include peaceful means.

As the potential influences of the democracy protection measures can only be determined meaningfully when broadening the view to key international relations of states – and thus by taking into account states' linkage and possible susceptibility to leverage following Levitsky and Way (2006) –, pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade, security cooperation) with democracies that are *not intended* to promote or protect democracy but with potentially positive effects on democracy are considered as the second component of the autocracy prevention concept. Close trade and security relations with democratic states can either act *directly* as influencing factors on autocratisation in their own right[11], or *indirectly* by

[11] Direct influences are here understood as influences that directly affect the balance of power between the contra-democratic executive and the pro-democratic opposition and/or strengthen core democratic political institutions. In this context, an actor relation to a democratic state can have a preventive *direct* influence on autocratisation, e.g. in the form of a concrete perceived fear of conditionality in the case of strong linkage and potential leverage to democratic countries – even if no clear intended action of an external actor is visible. This connects, for instance, to Kersting and Kilby (2014, p. 138), who analysed potential "incentive effect of additional future aid as a reward

determining the strength/effectiveness of leverage-based democracy protection measures (e.g. of democratic sanctions or conditionality). Potential diffuse effects or indirect ones that might, for instance, target favourable domestic conditions for democracy such as economic growth or state capacity are not included in this conceptualisation (see also Leininger, 2022, p. 4).

In general, with the explicit usage of the 'autocracy' wording in the concept name, it is clear against which trend the preventive measures of the external democracy protection policy are directed. Thus, instead of taking the process of democratisation as the entry point for the autocracy prevention concept, the process of autocratisation is chosen. Autocracy prevention does not necessarily be directed against autocratisation processes in democratic settings – just as autocratisation can take place across all regime types, autocracy prevention can also be applied in all states. Although discussed in more detail in the following development of the actor-centred theoretical framework, one important conceptual element should be pointed out already at this stage: as external factors primarily work through domestic factors and relate to domestic explanatory approaches for autocratisation (see Lust & Waldner, 2015, p. 47; Waldner & Lust, 2018, pp. 105-106), external autocracy prevention in general can only be effective in interplay with domestic factors. Influences hence primarily work via affecting the domestic balance of strength between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic executive or by strengthening core democratic institutions, which is why external autocracy prevention can only *contribute* to an actual prevention of autocratisation that highly depends on different domestic and international contextual conditions. The usage of the 'prevention' wording should thus not raise the expectation that external autocracy prevention can work as a single *sufficient condition*, which is important to highlight in light of potential effectiveness or impact measurement discussions around the role of external interventions in autocratisation processes.

Taken together, this means that external *autocracy prevention*

1) contributes to counter autocratisation,

2) must be relatable to an inter- and/or transnational actor,

3) includes intended and unintended political agency,

4) is peaceful/does not contain means of violence,

5) can only be effective in interplay with domestic factors.

In order to theoretically link the concept of autocratisation as the dependent variable (DV) of this study and external autocracy prevention as the independent one (IV), in the following, I outline a theoretical framework based on an actor-centred approach.

for democratization" and especially the "loss of future aid as punishment for democratic reversals." The mechanism of autocracy prevention is thus connected to the existing linkage and the states susceptibility to leverage as well as to the autocratic leader's expectations and perceptions.

2.2.2 An actor-centred approach for explaining autocratisation

To assess possible external influences on autocratisation and to derive a theoretical framework that contributes to addressing the previously formulated conceptual and empirical research gaps, an actor-centred approach that brings the intentional political decisions/actions by a ruling regime based on a cost-benefit assessment to the fore can be categorised as a reasonable starting point. The approach particularly ties in with an essential element of current autocratisation processes – the central role of conscious autocratisation decisions/strategies of political decision-makers (cf. Leininger et al., 2019, p. 7; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, p. 1099; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 95). Although the different autocratisation strategies of political leaders can vary, the promotion of polarisation, division, and mobilisation of supporters using populist rhetoric is a common feature among prominent cases (e.g. Trump in the U.S., Orbán in Hungary, or Bolsonaro in Brazil) (Diamond, 2021, pp. 30-32; McCoy et al., 2018). With a 'discontinuous series of incremental actions' (Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 95), these leaders may introduce intentional reforms using legal democratic institutions that imply gradual *de-facto* power shifts, e.g. by attacking the separation of powers through reducing checks on the executive, limiting the power of the opposition, and replacing personnel in the judicative sector, or through influencing the media and shutting down opposing news sources and criticism (Bermeo, 2016, pp. 10-13). The whole process can result in an intentional erosion of core democratic institutions of accountability, participation, and competitiveness (Bermeo, 2016, pp. 10-13; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 95) – and thus in an autocratisation process along Dahl's eight institutional guarantees (see *Chapter 2.2.1*). As previously established, these processes of incumbent-driven autocratisation do not necessarily have to take place in democratic contexts, but can also occur in autocratic regimes with quite similar patterns (Leininger et al., 2019, p. 8; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 95). Furthermore, recent analyses of autocratisation sequences point to typical stages/processes before contra-democratic leaders assume power – e.g. widespread discontent with domestic democratic actors and institutions as well as polarisation and populist narratives promoted by contra-democratic actors – and eventually begin to erode democratic institutions (Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann, 2021). Analyses further imply that different *domestic* democracy protection institutions, actors, and strategies are key at different stages of autocratisation sequences (Boese et al., 2021; Lührmann, 2021; Tomini et al., 2023; van Lit et al., 2023). With the ruling regimes as the main drivers of change after the onset of an autocratisation episode – which are also taking place in quite consolidated and structurally developed democratic states –, choosing an actor-centred perspective for the underlying theoretical framework to explain autocratisation is suitable.[12]

Furthermore, a prominent explanatory approach why these incremental autocratisation processes have increasingly replaced more open coups, public seizure of power, or election-day fraud also draws on an actor-centred decision-making logic. Following this explanatory approach, keeping a democratic façade in the context of rather strongly anchored international democratic norms is a core objective of political leaders to avoid costly international responses

[12] However, it is important to emphasise that a different approach might be useful to analyse more long-term structural and contextual challenges in typical stages preceding the actual onset of an autocratisation episode, e.g. in regard to widespread discontent with domestic democratic actors and institutions or to cultural transformation (cf. Lührmann, 2021).

that might be related to a more open suppressive course (Bermeo, 2016; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, pp. 1097-1098; Mechkova, Lührmann, & Lindberg, 2017, p. 168; Waldner & Lust, 2018, pp. 107-108). This reasoning further connects to Waldner and Lust's (2018) suggestion in the context of explaining democratic backsliding to follow Dahl's (1971) "axiomatic approach to polyarchy, in which the probability of a democratic transition is positively related to the costs of suppression and inversely related to the costs of toleration" (Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 107) and thus to actor-centred approaches in CP' literature developed to explain democratic transition and consolidation processes. Decisive for the development of actor-centred approaches was the inductive transition study "Transitions from authoritarian rule: Tentative conclusions about uncertain democracies" by O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986), assessing strategic interactions between groups in the authoritarian regime, divided in 'soft-liners' and 'hard-liners', and in the opposition. Moreover, Przeworski (1991), Marks (1992), and Colomer (1995) built on that and introduced deductive approaches that derive hypotheses and interaction models based on a decision-making rationality and game-theoretical considerations to explain transitions to democracy.[13]

To shed light on such a process in an autocratic and potentially democratising setting in more detail, following Marks (1992), the interactions between the ruling elite and the opposition can be depicted as an iterative game, with the ruling elite being separated into two factions that can favour either a toleration or a repression strategy. The main underlying interest of the elite is to stay in power and preserve the status quo, predominantly because of individual benefits in regard to economic, religious, or social means (ibid., p. 50). Especially in cases where elites have chosen a prior strategy of repression, physical integrity and avoidance of punishment can be added as central interests of the ruling elite (ibid., pp. 51-52). The opposition, in contrast, "is made up of N-individuals who must individually decide whether to abide by the rules imposed by the regime or challenge the regime in protest" (ibid., p. 48). In general, the decisions by the elite in power depend on the perceived costs of toleration and suppression. In cases of quite similar costs of both strategies, the response of the opposition "may tip the balance" and "we have to probe the strategic interaction of elite and opposition rather than calculate the relative costs of elite toleration and suppression" (ibid., p. 50). According to Marks (1992, p. 51), the costs of toleration for the ruling elite in the game, on the one hand, can be summarised as "*the costs of losing monopolistic control of the government* multiplied by *the probability of losing that monopoly as a result of liberalizing the regime*" (ibid., p. 51). The costs of suppression, on the other hand, are first and foremost related to direct costs of losing control and being subject to punishment. However, also depending on the strength of the opposition and repressive measures necessary to prevent a toleration course, the use of severe repression can be perceived

[13] Originally introduced in the modern European democratisation literature, 'moments' in which specific decisions and (inter-)actions take place can also be referred to as 'critical junctures' if they interrupt a relatively stable, path-dependent institutional state (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007; Capoccia & Ziblatt, 2010, p. 942). These moments do not necessarily need to be short moments in time in the literal sense, but can last over a longer period of time (ibid.). However, the period should be short in relation to the process triggered as an outcome. During critical junctures, actions and decisions of actors have a strong impact on otherwise rather stable path-dependent structures and future courses of political institutions or entire regimes. They typically include certain 'decision-making points' in which a ruling elite has to decide on the future course in a regime transformation process. Critical junctures can be separated from 'tipping points' that can be understood more as endpoints of gradual, long-term processes and as "a point at which the cumulative cause finally passes a threshold and leads to a rapid change in the outcome" (Capoccia & Kelemen, 2007, p. 351).

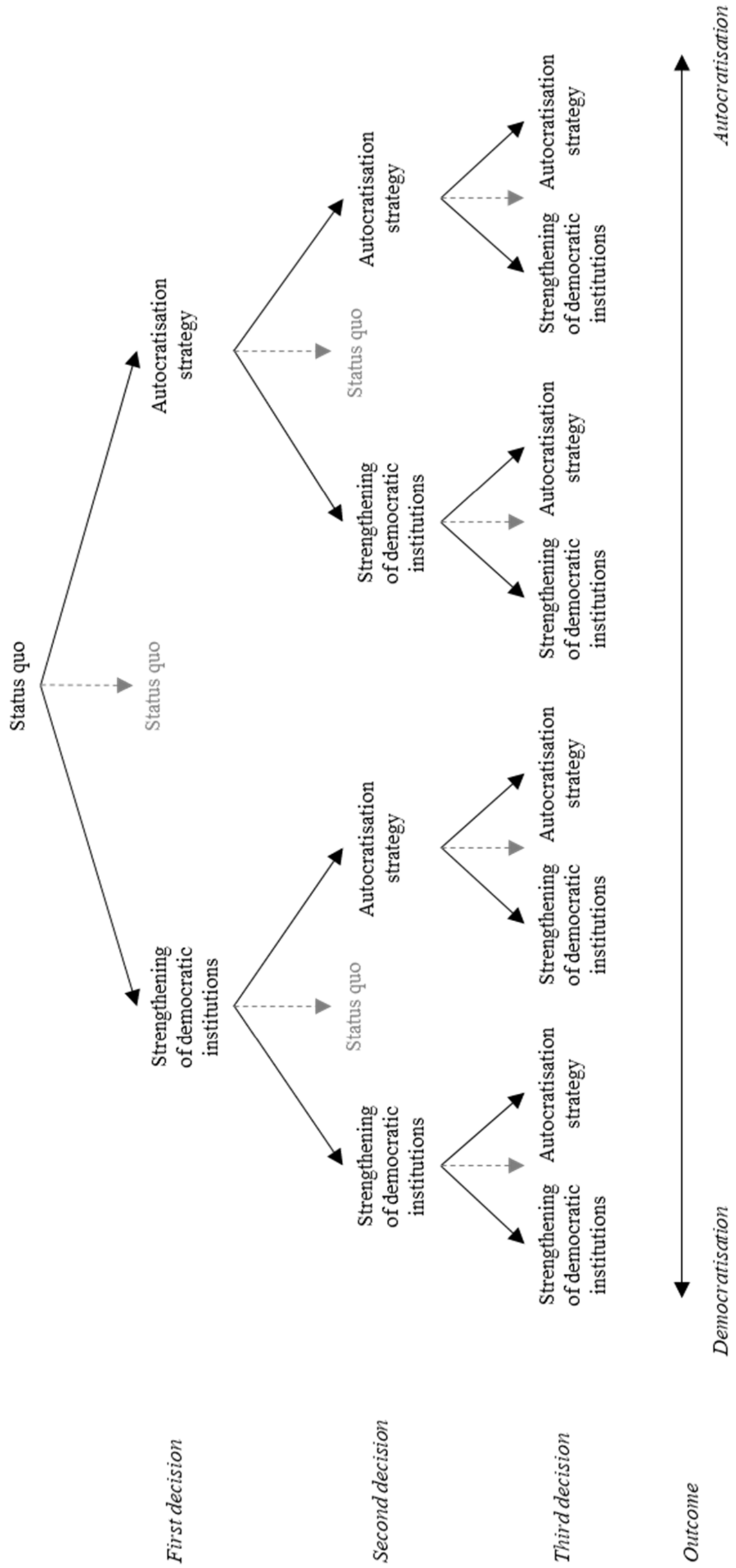
as costly for ruling elites because of normative reasons of conscience as well as due to feared economic disruptions and an increasing risk of violent political conflict (ibid., pp. 51-52).

Building on this model of a strategic interaction between a ruling elite and opposition in an autocratic setting, in the context of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes, a comparable iterative 'game' or sequence of decision-making processes in an autocratisation episode can be outlined. The main actors are the contra-democratic executive (or ruling regime) and the pro-democratic opposition. With regard to the executive, a similar division is again possible into a 'pro-democratic' group and a 'contra-democratic' one that favours reforms/actions to degrade the *de-facto* democratic quality of core political institutions. However, for an incumbent-driven autocratisation process to occur, at least a dominant contra-democratic group or individual heading the executive/ruling regime can be assumed.

To begin with contra-democratic groups and their different strategies: As described before, these contra-democratic groups are often coined by a new generation of populist politicians promoting widespread polarisation and division as well as mobilisation of contra-democratic supporters against a denigrated opposition (Diamond, 2021, pp. 30-32; Lührmann, 2021, pp. 1024-1029; McCoy et al., 2018). In general, in a simplified model-thinking, the contra-democratic executive can choose between three different strategies: 1) autocratisation strategy, 2) strengthening of democratic institutions, or 3) following a status quo pathway. A conceptual decision tree for an incremental process of autocratisation or democratisation initiated by a contra-democratic executive following a sequence of decisions that can either lead to autocratisation or democratisation is stylised in *Figure 3*.

The decision-making process for following a strategy can again be understood as a rational cost-benefit assessment that takes into account different costs and benefits of a course of action/reform process leading to autocratisation. Maximising power and reducing checks and controls on the executive by initiating changes/reforms weakening democratic institutions can be seen as the most inherent interests of the contra-democratic executive, often combined with an underlying normative preference for a non-democratic system and a non-recognition of the value of rights as institutions for the protection of freedoms – e.g. in the case of 'power-seeking presidents' (see Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, p. 1097; Lust & Waldner, 2015, p. 50; Waldner & Lust, 2018, pp. 97-98). Following Pickel (2016, p. 8), a concrete personal benefit may also be a motivating aspect for an incumbent in an autocratisation process (e.g. in regard to clientelism).

Figure 3: Conceptual decision tree in an incremental process of autocratisation initiated by a contra-democratic executive



Note: In this conceptual decision tree, three consecutive decisions of a contra-democratic executive are displayed. At each step, the decision-maker can choose between three different strategies: 1) autocratisation strategy, 2) strengthening of democratic institutions (or democratisation strategy), or 3) following a status quo pathway. As an outcome, the chosen decisions can either lead to the democratisation or autocratisation of a political regime. *Source*: Author.

In contrast to the previously introduced model by Marks (1992), in an autocratisation context in which a democratically elected contra-democratic group/incumbent leads the executive, it is important to emphasise and take into account that a *democratically legitimised* actor initiates actions/reforms to degrade the democratic quality of political institutions in a political system where the separation of powers and other domestic political 'safeguards' might still be in place. Following on from this, as for example described by Bermeo (2016, pp. 10-13) in the context of executive aggrandisements, changes and reforms can be executed legally by using legislative majorities and the very democratic institutions under attack. These changes can be accompanied by (sometimes) illegal actions such as strategic election manipulation where the rules for elections are changed prior to the elections in such a way that they favour incumbents and disadvantage oppositional candidates but do not fit in the category of election-day vote fraud (ibid., pp. 13-14). Of course, contra-democratic executives can also turn to openly illegal and/or repressive measures to, e.g. target and silence opposition politicians, critical journalist, or prevent/quell protest by using the police force and the security apparatus – thereby weakening the *de-facto* democratic quality of political institutions. In contrast to closed autocratic contexts, however, these measures are generally associated with more obstacles, as in more democratic contexts with less control by the contra-democratic group, the risk of a 'costly' pro-democratic backlash is substantially higher. In a democratic setting it is thus a decisive question whether the ruling contra-democratic group heading the executive also has the necessary legislative majority as well as power and control over the judicative and security apparatus to 'legally' adjust the political system and/or abuse its power unlawfully without fear of consequences – and, in turn, how strong the remaining domestic pro-democratic opposition is.

This pro-democratic opposition is now the second main actor group of relevance in an incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation process. In contrast to Mark's (1992) earlier model that focused on interactions in an autocratic setting, it is more likely in a democratic setting that pro-democratic opposition actors are also represented in the legislative (i.e. parliamentary opposition), in the judicative (through the appointment of judges), in the bureaucratic apparatus, and in other political institutions (see Lührmann, 2021, p. 1019; Tomini et al., 2023, pp. 122-123). In addition, the pro-democratic opposition is normally not only made up of N-individuals individually deciding whether to react to an action by the executive by challenging it or not (cf. Marks, 1992, p. 48) – a formal organisation and representation in political parties, coalitions, civil society groups, or less formal in movements is the default case in democratic systems with institutionalised checks and balances and an open civic space. Furthermore, within the wider opposition to the contra-democratic executive, there might also be different attitudes towards a contra-democratic reform process initiated by the contra-democratic group in power. This is why only the *pro-democratic* opposition is categorised as the second main actor group in the strategic interaction in the context of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation.

In order to evaluate the strength of the pro-democratic opposition, which is taken up as a key factor in the contra-democratic executive's cost-benefit assessment, it is necessary to take a closer look at its composition and strategies. In an attempt to categorise the different domestic pro-democratic opposition actors and identify strategies of democratic resistance against autocratisation across different regime types, Tomini et al. (2023, pp. 122-123) divide them into three subgroups of domestic democratic resisters: institutional, political, and social resisters.

Institutional resisters are actors within state institutions, which "are responsible for implementing inter-institutional accountability on the executive power" and "have the power and competencies to ensure compliance with constitutional rules and democratic norms and thus resist autocratization attempts" (ibid., p. 122) related to their positions within the institutions. This category therefore includes, for example, pro-democratic judges or individuals in independent institutions (e.g. anti-corruption government agencies). In the second category of political resisters, pro-democratic oppositional political parties and leaders play the most prominent role. As Tomini et al. (2023, p. 123) point out, "[i]n most cases, opposition parties play this role through a multitude of tactics and strategies: in the context of electoral competition, or in their role of coordination and representation of social groups and interests." In principal, also pro-democratic individuals from the ruling contra-democratic party or coalition (i.e. soft-liners) fall into this category. The third category of social resisters consists of pro-democratic actors from civil society and the private sector and includes civil society organisation, trade unions, religious groups, independent media, or social movements (ibid.). Although their scope of action is closely related to the openness of the civic space, social resisters can play a crucial role in authoritarian contexts in which institutional and political defenders have already been excluded.[14] Taken together, even if I continue to refer primarily to the pro-democratic opposition and not to 'resisters' in this study, I consider the categorisation of pro-democratic oppositional actors into the three presented categories (i.e. institutional, political, and social) following Tomini et al. (2023, pp. 122-123) to be appropriate and therefore also apply it to draw further conclusions about the strength of the opposition in the next step.

In general, initial evidence points to the importance of broad domestic pro-democratic oppositional responses coming from actors of all three categories against contra-democratic executive's autocratisation strategies to be effective (ibid., p. 132). However, the specific roles and room for manoeuvre of these pro-democratic oppositional actors in preventing autocracy is now closely linked to the different stages of autocratisation sequences as well as to the prevalent regime type and thus, in particular, to the institutionalised set of rules and norms (e.g. checks and balances or constitutional term limits). Especially in (liberal) democratic contexts, a strong institutional and political pro-democratic opposition as accountability actors are initially identified as the 'first line of defence' against autocratisation attempts of contra-democratic executives in the domestic democracy protection literature (Haggard & Kaufman, 2016, p. 135; Lührmann, 2021, pp. 129-130; Tomini et al., 2023, pp. 122-123). In addition, these actors are not only the first actors becoming active, but according to Tomini et al. (2023, p. 126), institutional pro-democratic actors are also "often the most effective line of defense against autocratic turn when it unfolds." This also connects to Boese et al.'s (2021) finding that strong judicial constraint on the power of the executive in a political systems can prevent the onset of autocratisation episodes and the actual breakdown of democratic regimes. It is therefore not particularly

[14] Lastly, the military can also be an active actor in the political game, although this depends very much on the national context. With so-called promissory coups, which "frame the ouster of an elected government as a defense of democratic legality and make a public promise to hold elections and restore democracy as soon as possible" (Bermeo, 2016, p. 8), military actors may try to intervene in the political process. However, as Bermeo (2016, p. 10) concludes after an assessment of promissory coups, "[u]nlike other forms of backsliding, promissory coups sometimes raise expectations at home and abroad, but these expectations are nearly always dashed." In Tomini et al.'s (2023, p. 132) categorisation, military actors can fall into the category of institutional or political resisters.

surprising that the contra-democratic executive is often initially trying to dismantle these accountability mechanisms with its autocratisation strategy.

Turning now to incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes in electoral democratic contexts in which potential institutional pro-democratic opposition is often limited and key positions (e.g. judges) are replaced with contra-democratic personnel. As a consequence, the main domestic democracy protection efforts are primarily related to the political and social pro-democratic opposition. In these contexts, democracy protection literature points to the importance of a unified political opposition and contra-incumbent alliances of political actors (Tomini et al., 2023, p. 132). Lastly, in the absence of pro-democratic political parties in even more autocratic contexts, less formalised groups and social movements from the civil society can be categorised as 'last line of defence', e.g. by mobilising public masses and organising protest (Haggard & Kaufman, 2016, p. 135; Tomini et al., 2023, p. 123). For these social pro-democratic opposition actors, these even more autocratic contexts usually also imply severely restricted civic spaces, limited room for manoeuvre, and a high uncertainty regarding the reaction of the contra-democratic executive to actors who challenge it (Tomini et al., 2023, p. 123).

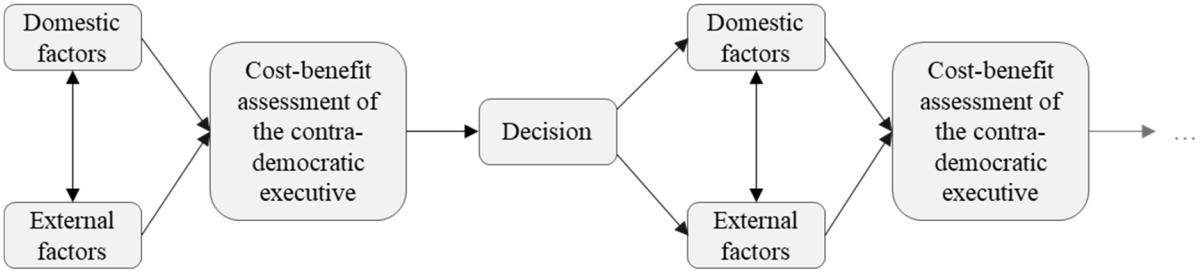
To summarise, the presence of these different domestic pro-democratic opposition actors and their use of democracy protection strategies can now be translated into perceived *costs* in the executive's cost-benefit assessment, as the pro-democratic opposition's strength is decisive for the potential backlash against a contra-democratic reform or action. In general, a strong pro-democratic opposition relies on a broad response from actors from all three opposition categories and a room for manoeuvre. However, these elements are closely linked to the prevalent regime type and different stages of autocratisation sequences – with less democratic contexts as a severely limiting factor for pro-democratic opposition. After this exclusive focus on domestic actors, the next step widens the view to external actors and their influences.

2.2.3 Widening the view to the outside – external factors preventing autocratisation

Another important advantage of the previously conceptualised iterative sequence of decision-making processes in an autocratisation episode following an actor-centred approach, which I have sketched out for the decisions of the contra-democratic executive to weaken the democratic quality of political institutions or not, is its clear connectivity to the concept of external autocracy prevention – the independent variables of this study – and international explanatory approaches. With the underlying definition of external autocracy prevention that combines the concept of international democracy protection in line with Leininger (2022) with key pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade, security cooperation) with democracies that are *not intended* to promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage (see *Chapter 2.2.1*), I can draw on established explanatory approaches around democracy promotion and protection as well as around specific measures, while at the same time incorporating the concepts of linkage and leverage.

In this context, it is again important to point out Lust and Waldner's (2015, p. 47; Waldner & Lust, 2018, pp. 105-106) emphasis that external factors primarily work through domestic factors and connect to domestic explanatory approaches for autocratisation. The main difference is "that the primary agent of the causal intervention is an actor in the international system, not a domestic actor. But the instruments of change are efforts to catalyze cultural, institutional, or economic change, as well as diplomatic efforts to persuade local political leaders to alter their behavior" (Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 105). Following on from this, the main adjustment to the already assessed sequential decision-making processes of the contra-democratic executive to weaken the democratic quality of political institutions or not is that actions from external actors and inter- and/or transnational relations are taken into account as well and that they can directly and/or indirectly influence the executive's cost-benefit assessment (see *Figure 4*).

Figure 4: Stylised overview of the sequence of decisions of the contra-democratic executive during a typical pathway of incremental autocratisation



Source: Author.

This adjustment to the conceptualisation of the sequence of decision-making processes by the contra-democratic executive also directly links to (actor-centred) explanatory approaches from the external democracy promotion and protection literature in the context of autocratisation. With regard to the understanding of the actor setting, democracy promotion scholars (Leininger, 2010; 2022, p. 4; Poppe, Leininger, & Wolff, 2019, pp. 759-760) argue that actors intending to promote/protect democracy should not be specified as external or international as this label might be misleading. The main reasons for this are that democracy promoters become part of the domestic decision-making and that the effectiveness of their measures "often depends on how local actors deal with democracy promoters' offers" (Leininger, 2022, p. 4). In addition, definitional borders may become fluid in regard to transnational cooperation with/between non-state actors (ibid.). Instead of distinguishing between external actors as 'promoters' and domestic actors as 'receiver' of democracy promotion, a division into a 'pro group' and 'contra group' is considered more suitable (Nowack, 2018, pp. 7-8). In principal, this division can be related to the previously described pro-democratic opposition/group and contra-democratic executive/group in the context of the actor-centred approach. A pro-democratic group can thus consist of a combination of external democracy promoting/protecting actors and domestic pro-democratic opposition actors. In some cases, these actors might even be interwoven, e.g. in the case of inter-/transnationally acting Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). A classic contra-democratic group are recalcitrant forces favouring a weakening of democratic institutions, here predominantly the domestic contra-democratic executive assessed in the previous chapter, but

potentially external actors might be taken into account as well (e.g. when looking at external autocracy promotion).

The reasoning that external actors become part of the domestic decision-making and that the effectiveness of external measures depends on the interplay with domestic factors as well as the general attribution of external democracy promotion/protection actors to the pro group is very much shared in this study. In line with this reasoning, on the one hand, it can be pointed out again that external factors cannot work as single *sufficient conditions* for the prevention of autocratisation – they can only be effective in interplay with domestic factors (see also Leininger, 2010; Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 310). On the other hand, a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition (e.g. with a mobilised pro-democratic civil society or a strong institutional opposition) is a *necessary condition* to prevent a gradual autocratisation process. However, as this study explicitly focuses on the role of external autocracy prevention and aims to draw specific conclusions related to influences from the external level on the domestic decision-making process, the formal distinction between 'external' and 'domestic' actors/factors is intentionally kept.

As assessed in the literature review (*Chapter 2.1.1*), international democracy protection is directed against an ongoing trend with the rationale to 'counter autocratisation' and objective to "[p]rotect pro-democratic actors, counter autocratic forces and prevent institutional reforms" (Leininger, 2022, p. 5) – and thereby directly links to critical domestic pro-democratic opposition actors and their strategies in specific stages of autocratisation (cf. Lührmann, 2021; Tomini et al., 2023). International democracy protection measures as a part of autocracy prevention now mainly focus on the stage of the autocratisation sequence in which the sequential decision-making moments of the contra-democratic executive (around the question whether an autocratisation strategy should be pursued or not) take place. Accordingly, the measures also shift from exclusively cooperative measures (as in the case of democracy support) to cooperative and cohesive measures. This shift also connects to a shift in the underlying logic of the measures, from a dominant 'logic of appropriateness' to a 'logic of consequences' (cf. Nowack, 2018, p. 5). While the logic of consequences works via rewards or punishment and mainly draws on conditionality, coercion, and rational decisions by recipients including cost considerations, the logic of appropriateness refers to "socialisation, social learning, and normative persuasion" (ibid.) and includes measures such as condemnation or other statements/requests that aim at influencing decision-making processes based on intrinsic norms. Furthermore, external factors can be categorised according to the degree of their direct or indirect effect on the autocratisation process.[15] While a democracy protection measure may work directly through influencing the (perceived) balance of power between the contra-democratic executive and the pro-democratic opposition or by strengthening core democratic political institutions, the measures' immanent connection to key pro-democratic international relations can be categorised as the more indirect part (see *Chapter 2.2.1*).

[15] The various instruments/measures of democracy promotion are sometimes also separated into direct and indirect measures (Grimm & Leininger, 2012, p. 396; Nowack, 2018, pp. 4-5). While direct measures are often defined as aiming at promoting the democratic quality of core institutions or at strengthening relevant groups, indirect measures try to enhance the general conditions for democratisation, primarily by providing a peaceful, stable, and economically flourishing environment (ibid.). In more recent definitions/conceptualisations of democracy promotion (see, e.g. Leininger, 2022, p. 4), indirect measures that target favourable conditions for democratisation are sometimes excluded.

External factors preventing autocratisation are thus further related to the concepts of linkage and leverage. Originally framed as 'Western leverage' and 'linkage to the West' (Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-386), high leverage and linkage to democratic states can create a strong impetus for democratisation in autocratic states. The Western leverage effect, on the one hand, "refers to incumbent governments' vulnerability to external pressure for democratization" (ibid., p. 382). The size of the influence thus depends on the relative dependence of an autocratic state on 'Western' democratic states in connection with the dependence of Western states on the autocratic one – leverage therefore relates to the size of the economy and state. In a case where Western leverage is high and these states target the autocratic one with sanctions or use conditionality, the costs of autocratic resistance are raised (Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-383; Waldner & Lust, 2018, p. 105). In the given context of incumbent-driven autocratisation, (democratic) leverage mainly refers to the logic of consequences and may show its autocracy preventive effect on the executive's decision-making mainly indirectly and in interaction with other external influencing factors.

Linkage to the West, on the other hand, "can be defined as the density of ties and cross-border flows between a particular country and the U.S., the EU, and western-dominated multilateral institutions" (Levitsky & Way, 2006, p. 383). These ties extend across five dimensions: the economic, geopolitical, social, communication, and transnational civil society dimension (ibid., pp. 383-384). Linkage thus refers to the extent of the connection as well as the proximity to democratic states, primarily creating pressure for democratisation by influencing domestic conditions in autocratic states towards a pro-democratic environment (ibid.). Instead of the mechanisms fitting to the logic of consequences, linkage mainly works "subtle and diffuse" and "influences a range of nonstate actors, generating decentralized forms of pressure that frequently operate below the radar screens of international observers" (ibid., p. 385). As a result, the potential autocracy preventive effects can also be classified as rather diffuse and indirectly working along the different dimensions – mainly in interplay with the domestic level. A more direct but unintended autocracy preventive effect of a combination of high linkage and leverage was already mentioned in the context of the conceptualisation of the autocracy prevention term (see *Chapter 2.2.1*). Close trade and security relations[16] to democratic states connected to the autocratic leader's expectations and perceptions that these relations might be implicitly conditional and accordingly threatened by an autocratisation course could likely function as a direct external lever in its own right and be perceived as costly (for a similar reasoning in regard to aid conditionality see Kersting & Kilby, 2014, pp. 138-139). Therefore, the main focus is placed on close trade and security relations to democratic states, corresponding to the economic and geopolitical dimensions summarised by Levitsky and Way (2006, pp. 383-384).

While drawing on these explanations, the different democracy protection measures to prevent autocratisation from abroad that range from more cooperative measures or 'soft' linkage-instruments such as democracy aid to more 'coercive' leverage-measures such as conditionality and

[16] In the course of this study, I mainly focus on close trade and security relations to democratic states, because the loss of potential economic and security benefits might be most 'costly' for a contra-democratic executive that is already favouring a course of autocratisation, as they likely relate to a loss of individual benefits in regard to economic means and physical integrity. It can also be assumed that elements of the three remaining linkage dimensions, social, communication, and transnational civil society, correspond more to processes of democratisation.

democratic sanctions can now be related to the actor-centred theoretical framework of the sequential decision-making process of the contra-democratic executive to weaken the democratic quality of political institutions or not.

To begin with, democracy aid (also democracy assistance) is the subtype of development aid provided by democracy promoters with the clear intention to influence political developments abroad. However, there are different approaches to democracy aid provision – that also imply different underlying logics/mechanisms. Following Carothers (2009), these approaches can in principal be distributed into two categories, a developmental and a political approach. The political approach understands the process of democratisation as a "process of political struggle in which democrats work to gain the upper hand in society over nondemocrats" (ibid., p. 5) and very much focuses on elections and political liberties, following a rather narrow, Dahlian conceptualisation of democracy. It is mainly promoted by the U.S. with the aim to support elections and specific domestic pro-democratic groups and connects to more direct and actor-centred theoretical approaches to explain democratisation. The developmental approach, in contrast, sees democratisation as an "iterative process of change involving an interrelated set of political and socioeconomic developments" (ibid.) that implies elements of equality and justice and also emphasises "governance and the building of a well-functioning state" (ibid.). This approach, which is more prominent in the democracy promotion agendas of European actors, instead also takes into account contextual/favourable political and socioeconomic factors of democratisation (ibid.). Thus, the "distinction between these two approaches can be linked not only with different donors and conceptions of democracy […], but also with different underlying and implicit (occasionally explicit) theories of democratization" (Gisselquist et al., 2021, p. 6).

Theoretically most clearly linkable to the underlying actor-centred framework and autocracy prevention is the political approach with its understanding of democracy aid as a tool "to help the democrats in a country (that is, the actors perceived as such by external democracy supporters) in their struggle against the nondemocrats" (Carothers, 2009, p. 7). Further, according to Carothers (2009, p. 7),

> "[t]his can be done directly through assistance (whether training, advice, moral support, or funding) to the political actors themselves – political parties or associations, politicians, or politically oriented nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). It can also be done indirectly through support to key institutions – an independent electoral commission, an independent judiciary, or independent media, for example – that help to level the political playing field by securing and guaranteeing fair procedures for the democratic actors and by checking the power of the nondemocratic actors."

With regard to the underlying actor-centred theoretical framework of the sequential decision-making process of the contra-democratic executive, democracy aid should thus work directly as a cooperative linkage-measure drawing on the logic of appropriateness through influencing the balance of power between the contra-democratic executive and the pro-democratic opposition and/or by strengthening core democratic political institutions. By strengthening the pro-democratic opposition and/or core democratic political institutions, the perceivable costs for the contra-democratic executive to weaken the democratic quality of political institutions should be raised in the long-term and accordingly contribute to preventing autocratisation.

In recourse to the summarised findings in the literature review of scholars focusing on the effectiveness of ODA-related democracy aid, the general positive effects of democracy aid on

democracy levels can again be pointed out in support of the hypothesised relation (Gisselquist et al., 2021, pp. 15-16). The additional results about democracy aid's effect on 'downturn' trajectories (Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020, pp. 119-128), its effectiveness along different regime types (ibid., p. 131), and on attempts to circumvent presidential term limits as specific events of autocratisation (Nowack & Leininger, 2022) further strengthen the hypothesised statement.

A second measure that mainly relates to the logic of appropriateness to prevent autocratisation from abroad in the specific critical event of an election are election monitoring missions. Following Hyde (2007, p. 42), "[t]heoretically, observers should increase constraints on these leaders [contra-democratic executives] by increasing the costs of committing election fraud, thus making it marginally less likely that elections will be stolen outright." Nevertheless, it should be noted at this point that election observations take place on the invitation of a domestic government. Hyde's (2007) reasoning easily connects to the underlying actor-centred theoretical framework of the sequential decision-making process of the contra-democratic executive. However, in contrast to the hypothesised effect of democracy aid, election monitoring should even more directly affect the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive by raising the executive's perceived costs and contributing to autocracy prevention in specific critical events. In her study that focuses on the 2003 presidential elections in Armenia, Hyde (2007, p. 63) shows supporting evidence for this hypothesised relation as the presence of international election observers actually reduced the rate of fraud and improved the quality of elections.

Theoretically working in a quite similar way, diplomatic instruments such as pro-democratic condemnation and pledges are also aimed at directly influencing the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive by raising the executive's perceived costs of initiating a change/action that weakens the democratic quality of political institutions. The main underlying logic is again the logic of appropriateness by appealing to the executive's norms, values, and conscience (see Nowack, 2018, p. 5). At the same time, however, they can also be seen as an encouraging signal for the domestic pro-democratic opposition. As long as these public statements are not linked to consequences, they mainly connect to Levitsky and Way's (2006, pp. 383-386) concept of linkage.

However, as soon as the statements of external actors are associated with perceived consequences, the underlying logic of external instruments changes to a logic of consequences with more incentive-based and coercive measures that are also directly aimed at influencing the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive and have to be assessed in close relation to the concept of leverage (ibid., pp. 382-383). Aid conditionality is one prominent example of these more incentive-based measures, although its effectiveness was frequently questioned in the past (see, e.g. Faust, 2013; Montinola, 2010; Youngs, 2010). Through conditioning foreign aid provision on democratic reforms, donor countries can try to impose economic consequences. However, conceptually and empirically, the relation between aid provision and democracy is complex and has to deal with challenges around the right causal timing and linking incentive effects of aid with current or future democracy ratings (Kersting & Kilby, 2014, pp. 127-128). Connected to these challenges, sometimes there might also be no clear intention of the partner country to incentivise future aid – although it is likely that the executive of the autocratising country is taking the potential loss of future aid, trade, and/or Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) from democratic countries into account of their decision-making. Still, there is evidence that there is a substantial incentive effect of aid provision on democracy ratings

while controlling for the recipient countries' geopolitical importance (ibid., p. 139). Furthermore, Kersting and Kilby (2014, p. 138) point out that incentive effect of future aid can also be interpreted as "the loss of future aid as punishment for democratic reversals." It can therefore be assumed that incentive-based support can also contribute to the prevention of autocratisation.

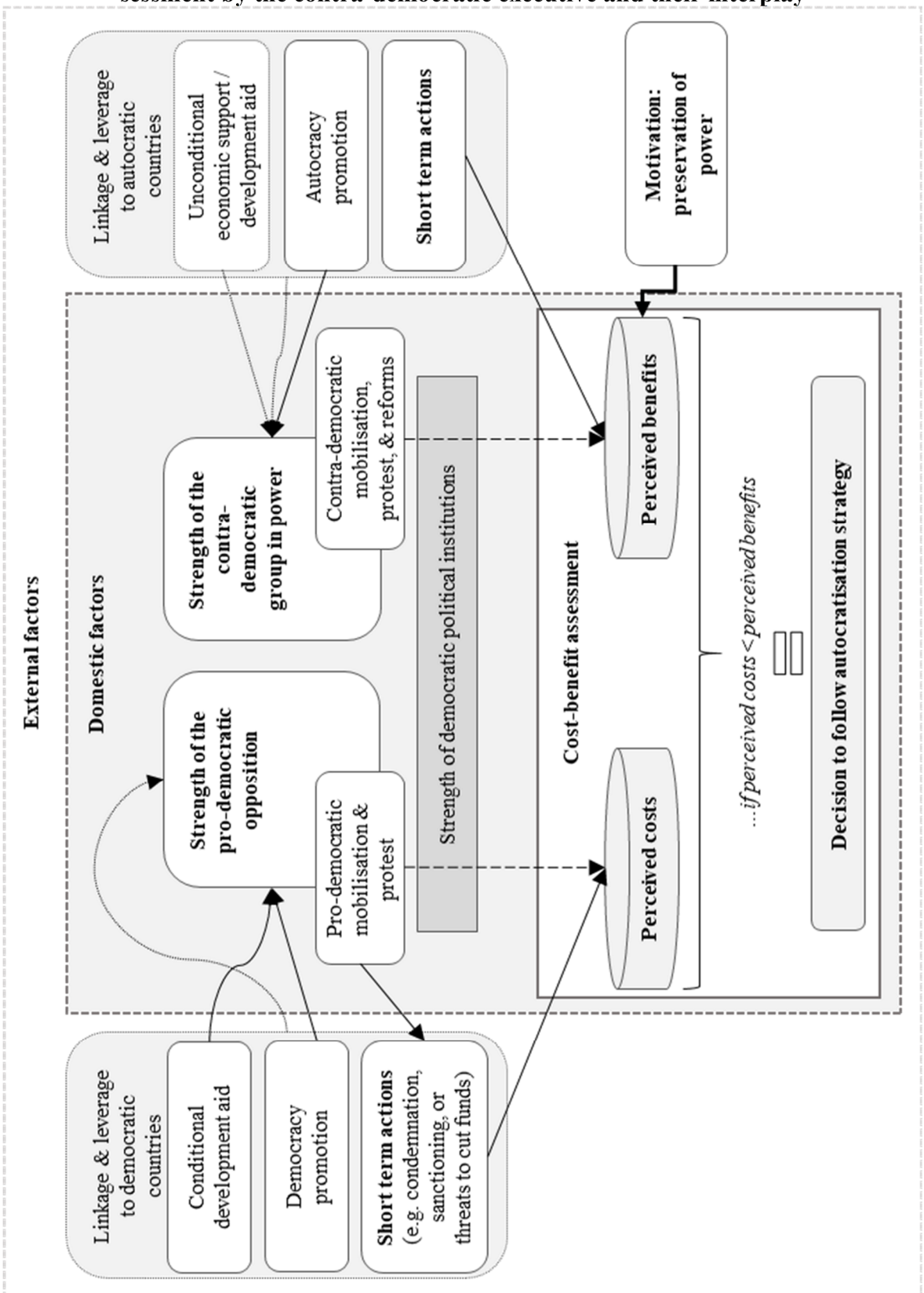
The role of pro-democratic international organisations can also be considered in this context, although there are very diverse effects on autocracy prevention thinkable in regard to relations to and membership in a pro-democratic international organisation. Connected to the theoretical reasoning discussed above for incentive-based aid that draws on the logic of consequence and leverage, especially the EU is prominently following a 'carrot and sticks' logic that works with incentives and aims to project European values in its neighbourhood, including the promotion of rule of law and respect for human rights (Hilz, 2020, p. 11). But also the membership in a pro-democratic international organisation is discussed as an instrument of democracy protection "where regional norms and instruments to protect democracy are strong, such as in the Economic Community of West African States or the Organization of American States" (Leininger, 2022, p. 12). Theoretically, membership can be connected to strong linkage and leverage that includes 'positive conditionality' as well as dense ties in all five linkage dimensions discussed before (Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-386). The membership element is thereby closely related to the concept of democratic diffusion from neighbouring countries following Gleditsch and Ward (2006) and speaks to both logics of consequence and appropriateness, implying different direct and indirect effects on the contra-democratic executive's decision-making in regard to autocratisation. Nevertheless, some evidence is even pointing to potential unintended effects of membership in a pro-democratic international organisations and accession processes on democratic backsliding, as recent studies by Meyerrose (2020, 2023) that focus on the EU suggest. Due to the very diverse field of international organisations with varying degrees of linkage and leverage to democratic countries and substantially varying complex implications for autocracy prevention, no general hypothesis is formulated for this study.

Lastly, democratic sanctions and the threat to use them are the most coercive hard leverage-instruments in this list of democracy protection measures. Theoretically, democratic sanctions most clearly relate to an active punishment of a regime. With an explicit underlying intention to directly influence the executive's cost-benefit assessment to prevent autocratisation from abroad, they connect very well to the concept of leverage (Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-383) and logic of consequences. Following on from this, the costs of democratic sanctions very much depend on the specific form of sanctions that range from trade sanctions in the military sector, financial sanctions, and travel/tourist visa restrictions with different stated objectives. In theory, the costs hence result from economic pressure and the visibility of the signal "that the behaviour of the regime (political and/or military) is unacceptable and should thus be punished" (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, p. 5) – eventually leading to a costly political isolation of the targeted state. As outlined in the literature review, there is no clear consensus in democratic sanctioning research on the effectiveness of democratic sanctions on democratisation and democratic development in targeted countries. Instead, high obstacles for regimes regarding the use of sanctions in form of unintended outcomes or side effects and the challenge of the right timing are emphasised (Portela, 2022, p. 6; Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, pp. 5-6; von Soest & Wahman, 2015, pp. 959-961). Nevertheless, results in recent influential large-N studies point to a positive effect of democratic sanctions on democratic development in targeted countries (Pospieszna &

Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015), with a lack of results regarding autocratisation and autocracy prevention. In addition, case studies by Nowack (2021) and Leininger and Nowack (2022) find effects of sanctions/logic of conditionality on the cost perception of domestic actors in concrete autocratisation events, while emphasising the importance of the domestic context and the potential interplay of factors. Following von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 961-962), using threats of democratic sanctions is only very rarely successful, most often leading to an actual implementation of democratic sanctions after unsuccessfully threatening with it. Taken together, it can therefore be assumed that the actual use of democratic sanctions is related to direct costs for the executive's cost-benefit assessment to weaken the democratic quality of political institutions or not and thus contributes to preventing autocratisation.

In the stylised conceptual overview, *Figure 5* bundles the different previously assessed domestic and external factors that can influence the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive (around the question whether to pursue an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality or not), their causal relations as well as potential interplays in an autocratisation episode. The role of domestic factors around the strength of the contra-democratic executive, the pro-democratic opposition, and democratic political institutions (e.g. freedom of judicative and press) in the centre needs to be emphasised as many external influences can only work through them. Only if the perceived overall benefits exceed the costs does the executive take the decision to follow an autocratisation strategy. This also means that only domestic factors can function as *necessary conditions* to prevent a gradual autocratisation process. In turn, external factors cannot work as *single sufficient conditions* in the prevention of autocratisation – they can only be effective in interplay with domestic factors.

Figure 5: Stylised conceptual overview of the factors considered in the cost-benefit assessment by the contra-democratic executive and their interplay



Note: The overview bundles the different domestic and external factors and their influences (depicted as arrows) on the contra-democratic executive's cost-benefit assessment previously explained in a stylised form. Only if the perceived benefits exceed the costs is the decision made for an autocratisation strategy. In general, external factors can mainly exert an influence in interplay with domestic factors. Further note that external factors which might promote autocratisation are only partly taken into account in the subsequent analysis, due to the focus of the thesis on external factors preventing autocratisation. *Source*: Author.

2.2.4 Hypotheses

Drawing on the previous theoretical explanations of the relationship between autocratisation and external autocracy prevention along an actor-centred theoretical framework that focuses on the decisions of the contra-democratic executive to weaken democratic institutions or not, I derive the following hypotheses for the subsequent analysis:

Hypothesis 1: External democracy protection measures, such as democratic sanctions, condemnation, aid conditionality, election monitoring, and democracy aid, understood as costs in the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive, make a gradual autocratisation in the targeted state less likely *c.p.*

Hypothesis 1_0: External democracy protection measures, such as democratic sanctions, condemnation, aid conditionality, election monitoring, and democracy aid do not influence the likelihood of a gradual autocratisation in the targeted state *c.p.*

Hypothesis 2a: Strong pro-democratic international relations, understood as direct costs in the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive, make a gradual autocratisation less likely *c.p.*

Hypothesis $2a_0$: Strong pro-democratic international relations have no direct influence on the likelihood of a gradual autocratisation *c.p.*

Hypothesis 2b: Strong pro-democratic international relations make a gradual autocratisation less likely by indirectly determining the strength/effectiveness of external democracy protection measures *c.p.*

Hypothesis $2b_0$: Strong pro-democratic international relations have no indirect influence on the likelihood of a gradual autocratisation *c.p.*

3 Methodological approach

The following chapter introduces the methodological approach of the analysis of the underlying research question *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation*. The analysis follows a mixed-methods design approach with a quantitative and a qualitative component that address different sub-questions of the research question. Further, the approach can be used to triangulate the general conclusions drawn on the influence of external autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and key international relations on autocratisation. In the first section of this chapter, I begin with a description of the general mixed-methods design and the presumed causal mechanisms. In the second section, I introduce the quantitative approach and in the third section, subsequently, the qualitative case study approach.

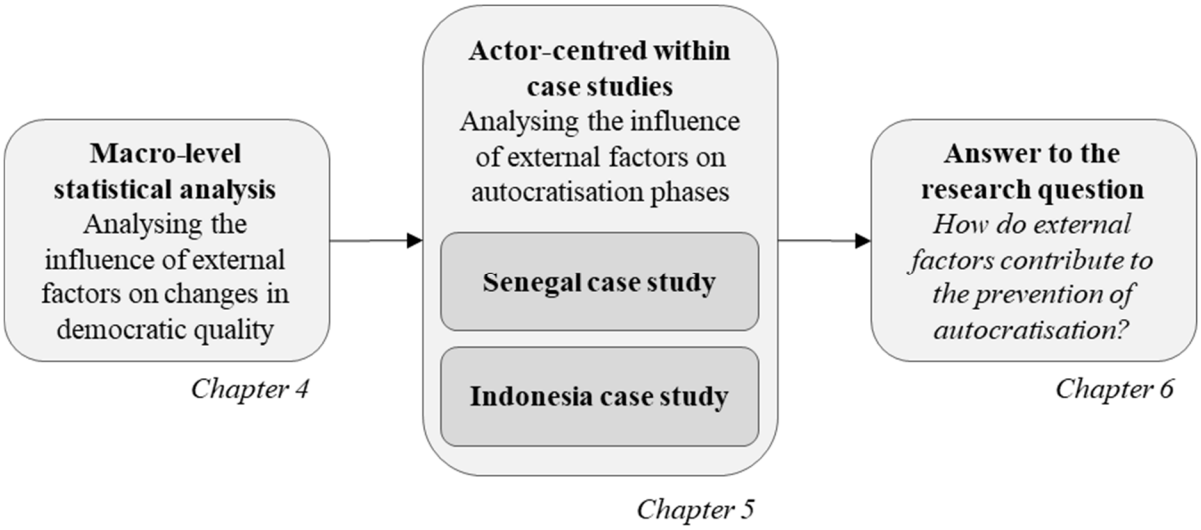
3.1 Mixed-methods design and causal mechanisms

The selected two-pronged mixed-methods design approach combines quantitative statistical and qualitative case study elements (as displayed in *Figure 6*). It mainly follows a sequential design approach, with both elements addressing different sub-questions of the research question. The quantitative statistical analysis, on the one hand, is designed to first gain access to average effects of different external autocracy prevention measures on autocratisation – with two operationalisations of the DV tested, first, operationalised as democratic quality and, second, as changes in the overall democratic quality. The qualitative case studies, on the other hand, contribute to assessing the mechanisms at work behind quantitatively captured influences of external factors on autocratisation and gain more in-depth insights into the *how* question. The quantitative and the qualitative elements are therefore considered as complementary to each other in order to derive different insights into the phenomenon of autocratisation and its prevention from abroad.

This means that I also approach my research question from two different 'causal angles' (cf. Goertz & Mahoney, 2012, p. 41), which determine the selection of the specific methods. In the first quantitative step, the research question is approached with a so-called "'effects-of-causes' approach", where "one starts with a potential cause and then asks about its impact on Y" (ibid.). This approach relates to a more quantitative research culture trying to find "the *average effects* [emphasis in the original text] of particular variables within populations" (ibid.) through a macro-analytical lens. By this, general insights into the average effects of theoretically derived external factors such as arms sanctions, democracy aid, and economic linkage to democratic states as independent variables on the (changes in the overall) democratic quality of states (DV) are aimed for in a large-N fashion. The approach is thereby fitting to address sub-questions of 'whether' a relation/correlation between two or more variables exists, 'which direction' possible effects have and 'to which degree' a variable might influence another (also strength of an effect) (cf. Gnädig & Domenech, 2019, p. 191) – in this case translated to the effects of external factors on democratic quality and on changes in the overall democratic quality. Besides testing the theoretically derived hypotheses, I intend to include exploratory elements in the quantitative

analysis to gain further insights into the relations of interest and to address statistical heterogeneity. These exploratory elements, for instance, cover analyses of different world regions and time periods. The underlying logic follows a variation theory approach with a mainly quantitative conceptualisation of the research subject (ibid.). Furthermore, by selecting a model specification that considers country and year fixed effects (FE), my quantitative statistical approach aims at a high validity of captured external effects on democratic quality and on changes in the overall quality, their strength, and direction *c.p.* In addition, structural domestic explanatory factors that may influence the democratic quality of states are mathematically excluded by the fixed effects model specification. Other possible domestic factors such as economic development, natural resource rents, or conflict are controlled for. Thus, I intend to further develop a broader understanding and identify relevant external variables with regard to autocratisation and its prevention.

Figure 6: Mixed-methods design



Source: Author.

In the second qualitative case study element of the mixed-methods design, specific decisions in two cases are analysed in actor-centred within-case analyses with cross-case elements playing a supporting role[17] (cf. Goertz & Mahoney, 2012, p. 86). This relates to the qualitative research culture, where "scholars are interested in explaining outcomes in individual cases as well as studying the effects of individual causal factors" (ibid., p. 41). The qualitative case studies are thereby following a process theory logic that focuses on processes and structures (Gnädig & Domenech, 2019, p. 191). The central underlying question following the effects-of-causes approach in a qualitative logic can be framed as: "Did X cause Y in one or more specific cases?" (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012, p. 43). Translated to my qualitative case studies, this question can

[17] As I select a *most likely case* to clearly show and analyse the theoretical assumed relations and a *medium likely case* in which external influences are supposed to be weaker and less visible (see *Chapter 3.3.1*), the supporting cross-case element is the contrast of the results to make conditions for the usage and effectiveness of external factors clearer.

therefore be adjusted to: did *different external factors* (X) contribute to the prevention of *autocratisation* (Y) by influencing the cost-benefit assessment of a contra-democratic executive in specific decision-making moments in Senegal and Indonesia. Different kinds of external influences can be measures of democracy protection such as sanctions, receiving democracy aid, and condemnation, or refer to strong pro-democratic international relations as general economic linkage to democratic countries – some of these measures are also covered in the statistical analysis. This implies that instead of trying to identify average effects as in the quantitative approach, "causal effects are analyzed by asking whether factors are necessary or jointly sufficient for specific outcomes in particular cases" (ibid., p. 42). Connected to this, as already highlighted in the course of the theoretical chapter, external autocracy prevention and explicit democracy protection measures are here understood as primarily working in interplay with domestic factors and can thus not function as single sufficient conditions for the prevention of autocratisation (see also Leininger, 2010; Leininger & Nowack, 2022).

My qualitative approach focuses on decision-making moments of contra-democratic groups in power. These moments are assessed by analysing prevalent perceived costs and benefits of whether to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality or not. As external factors primarily work via domestic factors – here by influencing the domestic balance of strength between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic executive or the strength of democratic political institutions – the analyses cover both domestic and external factors that might influence the decisions of the regimes as well as structural (e.g. the party system) and more direct factors (such as short-term international reactions). External factors such as different measures of democracy protection (e.g. democratic sanctions, democracy aid, or condemnation), or the strength of pro-democratic international economic/security relations (framed around linkage and leverage) are included as costs or benefits in the cost-benefit-assessment. Furthermore, this approach allows for a closer analysis of the interplay of domestic and external factors. The case studies close with overall accounts in which the role of different external factors are assessed as potential additional necessary conditions – jointly with the domestic factors – to prevent decisions of regimes to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality.

In both elements of the mixed-methods design approach, I consider the same object of study – the relationship between autocratisation as the main regime transformation process of interest that captures democratic quality declines in all forms of political regimes and external autocracy prevention. The population of cases to which my results can in principle be generalised, however, varies, due to the different approaches. In the quantitative analysis, all countries are part of my population. In my final constructed dataset, I consider a sample that includes 174 countries[18] in the period 1971-2017 (see *Chapter 3.2.3*). For the case study component, I explicitly narrow the population down to country-cases where incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes are taking place. In principle, there is no need to assume a different underlying time period for the population than in the quantitative study. However, since the phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation is seen more as a phenomenon of the third wave of autocratisation, it is reasonable to focus on autocratisation processes after 1994 for the

[18] The difference between the number of countries included in the sample and the total number of countries in the population results from limited data availability in the datasets considered (especially regarding trade data taken from the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) dataset (2020) SITC4 rev. 2 (1962 - 2017)).

case selection (thereby following Lührmann and Lindberg's (2019) classification of the beginning of the third wave of autocratisation). The qualitative analysis focusses on four selected observation periods in two country cases (Senegal and Indonesia). Thus, the main results of my thesis can be referred to country-cases with incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes taking place.

Summing up, the described two-pronged mixed-methods design approach combines the strengths of quantitative statistical and qualitative case study elements to address the underlying research question. While the quantitative statistical analysis is well suited to identify average effects of external factors over a large number of states allowing more generalisation, the qualitative case studies complement the analysis by focusing on specific events and providing insights into the role of different external factors in interplay with domestic ones. The overall approach also corresponds well with the underlying theoretical framework that emphasises the importance of a (deductive) actor-centred approach and key decisions of contra-democratic executives to explain autocratisation and its prevention and thus contributes to gaining knowledge in light of the previously identified research gaps. In the discussion, I further reflect on advantages and limitations of the chosen approach (*Chapter 6.2*).

3.2 Quantitative statistical analysis – operationalisation, dataset, and selection of the regression model

The longitudinal statistical analysis is the first element of the two-pronged mixed-methods design approach. It seeks to further develop a broader understanding of the relation of external factors such as arms sanctions, democracy aid, FDI, and trade relations on changes in democratic quality. Through a macro-analytical lens, I aim to identify average effects of these external factors in a sample of 174 countries in the period 1971-2017. In this sub-chapter, first, I operationalise the relevant variables and their presumed relations, second, describe the datasets used and, third, assess potential statistical approaches to select the main regression model for the statistical analysis in *Chapter 4*.

3.2.1 Democratic quality and autocratisation

With recourse to my definition of democracy and autocratisation (see *Chapter 2.2.1*), my understanding of the relation between democracy and autocracy in this study is based on a continuous understanding with possible gradations. While I define electoral democracy following Dahl's (1971) polyarchy concept around eight institutional guarantees as the ideal-typical form of democracy at the upper end of the democracy-autocracy continuum, I understand autocracy as the counter-model at the lower end in which no institutional guarantees are met. I thus identify V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* (v2x_polyarchy), which captures "[t]o what extent […] the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense [is] achieved" (Coppedge, Gerring,

Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Altman, et al., 2021, p. 43), as a well-suited indicator for the dependent variable operationalised as the democratic quality ($DQ_{n,t}$) in a country (n) in a given year (t). The version used is taken from the V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Data] Dataset Version 11 (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Alizada, et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021). As an index variable that focuses on the political institution of democratic elections and necessary conditions to enable them as a minimal concept of democracy, it quantifies the democratic quality of the core democratic institution in regard to the overall democratic quality of a country (cf. Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 160) – and therefore fits very well to Dahl's (1971) polyarchy concept. It ranges from 0 to 1, with low values standing for a low democratic quality of the political regime and high values for a high quality.

Furthermore, as the process of autocratisation is defined as a democratic quality decline at the institutional level with a potential starting point anywhere on the democracy-autocracy continuum, any decline in the level of the *Electoral Democracy Index* can in principle be operationalised as such. These declines are measured in two ways in this study:

First, by testing for the relations between external factors *in the previous year* and the *Electoral Democracy Index* level of the base year. A negative relation indicates that the occurrence of an external factor *in the previous year* is associated on average with a lower level of democratic quality in the following year, in contrast to the case of an absence of the external factor in the previous year (see also the FE model specification and interpretation of Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020) in their appendix III, pp. 7-8). This means that the external factor can be interpreted as contributing to autocratisation rather than having a preventive effect. If, on the other hand, a positive relation between an external factor in the previous year and the *Electoral Democracy Index* level in the base year stands out, a preventive effect can be assumed.

Instead of using untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* values, the index values are transformed following Niño-Zarazúa et al.'s (2020) approach for a log-log specification of their model. For this transformation, the values are multiplied by one hundred, a one is added (to prevent negative values), and then the values are logarithmised ($\ln DQ_{n,t}$). When interpreting the results, it must therefore be noted that with a log-linear specification of the model, a percentage change in the *Electoral Democracy Index* is calculated when the independent variable changes by one unit – which means that in a log-linear specification the relationship between the DV and the IV is not assumed to be linear. The advantage of this transformation is that the distribution of the index values are compressed and problems of normal distribution can be avoided. In the case of log-log specifications, however, we have the advantage that coefficients can be interpreted as elasticities (i.e. a percentage change leads to a percentage change). The specific interpretations of the individual results are provided in the respective results chapter (*Chapter 4*). To derive reasonable variable transformations, I followed Stoetzer's (2017, pp. 78-80) approach and compared the R^2-values for different model specifications (see also *Chapter 3.2.4*).

Second, I also test for the effects of external factors in the previous year on actual changes in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* as the dependent variable in *Chapter 4.2.4*. In these cases, the actual changes in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* can be interpreted right away as 'upshifts' and 'downshifts' of democratic quality – and thus as *autocratisation* and *democratisation* processes. The 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' variable

($\Delta DQ_{n,t}$) therefore shows the changes in the (untransformed) *Electoral Democracy Index* compared to the previous year and ranges from -0.505 to 0.641. This approach is orientated towards an approach by Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020, appendix III, p. 12) to capture 'upturns' and 'downturns' of democratic quality. In contrast to Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020, appendix III, p. 12), I consider one combined variable for the changes in the *Electoral Democracy Index*, as I categorise the strengthening of democratic quality (or upshifts) as a preventive measure. Advantages and limitations of this approach will be further elaborated in the analysis and discussion chapter.

3.2.2 External factors

The analysis focuses on six main independent variables as the main external factors that are considered to influence democratic quality: 1) arms sanctions imposed by democracies; 2) arms sanctions imposed by autocracies; 3) democracy aid (commitment data); 4) FDI net inflows; 5) economic ties to democracies; 6) economic ties to autocracies.[19]

Arms sanctions (countries imposing sanctions are separated in democratic and autocratic countries): Sanctions in general are a comparatively 'hard' leverage-instrument to influence the behaviour of another state in a conflict situation, as they induce costs and indicate a higher escalation level than, for instance, open communication of criticism (or condemnation) (cf. Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, p. 5). The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB) Version 2 is a database that captures various types of sanctions – trade, financial, arms, military assistance as well as 'other types' of sanctions – on a sanction-event level (Felbermayr, Kirilakha, Syropoulos, Yalcin, & Yotov, 2020a, 2020b). In addition to the sanction type, the GSDB also includes variables that identify the targeted and imposing countries as well as an objective variable that contains information about the official goal/intention of the country imposing the sanction. These objectives can range from a rather unspecific 'policy change'-objective to 'end war' or combat 'terrorism' (Felbermayr et al., 2020a). Two of these objective categories – 'democracy' and 'human rights' – fit very well to my underlying research interest, as these sanction objectives capture sanctions that are meant to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations (cf. ibid., pp. 18-19). The sanction variables used in this analysis therefore only take into account sanctions with the objectives 'democracy' and/or 'human rights'. In regard to the various sanction types included in the GSDB, arms sanctions that relate to specific trade sanctions in the armaments sector (ibid., p. 14) are considered as the most promising sanction type to focus on. Trade and financial sanctions are comparatively less suitable as they may conceptually and in terms of their relation to the DV overlap with the trade and FDI variables that are included as independent variables in the underlying analysis. However, trade sanctions

[19] Some additional external factors/controls such as 'Regional diffusion effects', 'Trade sanctions', and other forms of sanctions were considered and tested in the course of the selection of the regression model but dropped out of the final models. Furthermore, variations of the independent variables regarding the subdivision by regime type were tested – using the four Regimes of the World-sub-groups (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Alizada, et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021): liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral autocracies, and closed autocracy as well as the deviation from the democratic value of the sanctioning country/trade partner. For more detailed explanations, see the description in the appendix.

and other types of sanctions were also tested in the course of the selection of the right model specification and showed no clear effects.[20]

Further, for the construction of the variables, sums of sanctions are calculated for each (targeted) country-year. These sums are calculated separately for the regime types (democracy and autocracy) of the countries that are imposing the sanctions. This subdivision can provide relevant insights, as in the case of sanctioning by autocratic countries, the self-assigned objective of 'democracy' of the sanction can be called into question and should be separated from sanctions imposed by democratic countries. In the case that no sanction was registered in a country-year, the value is set to zero. For the identification of the regime type the Regimes of the World (RoW)-measure by V-Dem is used (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Alizada, et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021). In the RoW-measure, countries are classified into four regime type-groups: liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral autocracies, and closed autocracy. For the sanctions indicators, the democratic country group consists of liberal and electoral democracies, while the autocratic country group consists of electoral and closed autocracies. The resulting 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' ($ASD_{n,t}$) and 'Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries' variables ($ASA_{n,t}$) are thus count variables, counting the sum of sanctions imposed against a targeted country per year. The values of the variables can in principle range from zero to the total number of democratic (or autocratic) countries in my sample as a maximum per country-year. In the case of democratic countries, these are between 0 and 95 possible sanctions per country-year (in the year with a peak in the number of democratic countries); in the case of autocratic countries, between 0 and 99 possible sanctions per country-year (in the year with a peak in the number of autocratic countries).

Democracy aid (commitment data): ODA-based democracy aid is a key linkage-instrument of democracy promotion and protection. In contrast to broader development aid, democracy aid "is only intended to support democratization and thus could be more precisely evaluated and traced" (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, p. 7). In the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Creditor Reporting System (CRS) (2021), project-specific development aid data with information on the donor, receiver, sector, flow, and channel type is provided. The database hence allows to distinct between different aid sectors. In order to capture a broad range of democracy aid measures, all aid projects with the sector code 151 ('Government & Civil Society-general') are classified as democracy aid. Furthermore, only aid data under the flow categories ODA grants, ODA loans, and Other Official Flows (non Export Credit) are considered, following Niño-Zarazúa et al.'s (2020) approach. In regard to the question, whether commitment or disbursement data is more suitable for the analysis of democracy aid, I again follow Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020, pp. 82-83), who show that disbursement and commitment data are strongly correlated and conclude that commitment data can be used as a reasonable proxy for democracy aid with a broader data coverage than disbursement data. Still, the temporal data availability is comparatively limited in contrast to the other external factors with democracy aid commitment data available from 1995 to 2019. Therefore, the democracy aid variable is only included in the analyses in *Chapter 4.2.3* and *4.2.4*. The final 'Democracy aid' variable ($DA_{n,t}$) ranges from \$0 to \$3 billion and is coded in current million US\$. In the case

[20] Note that more complex relations/interactions between different kinds of sanctions, trade, and FDI are possible, but were not tested for in this analysis.

that no democracy aid was reported for a (receiving) country-year, the value is set to zero. In addition to the standard 'Democracy aid' variable, a 'Democracy aid per capita' variable that draws on population data from the World Bank's World Development Indicators database (2020) is used and tested for in *Chapter 4.2.3* as well. Besides, in the course of the selection of the regression model, I have also tested for the interaction between democracy aid and democratic arms sanctions, but no significant results became evident – which is why the interaction is not considered in more detail in *Chapter 4*.

FDI variable: FDI net inflows are considered to be a good indicator to capture the general economic linkage of a country to the world market (cf. Levitsky & Way, 2010, pp. 30-31; von Soest & Wahman, 2015, p. 966). The 'Foreign Direct Investment net inflows (Balance of Payments (BoP), current billion US$)' variable ($FDI_{n,t}$) is taken from the World Bank database (2020). As the FDI-data does not cover information about the countries of origin of specific FDI-flows, a separation by regime type in regard to the origin is not possible. Missing values are still treated as missing. The FDI variable ranges from -$37.3 billion to $734 billion per year.

Economic ties (to democracies and autocracies): 'Trade with democratic countries' and 'Trade with autocratic countries' are two variables that, on the one hand, can also capture the general economic linkage of a country to the world market (cf. Levitsky & Way, 2010, pp. 30-31; von Soest & Wahman, 2015, p. 966), but, on the other hand, display the economic linkage to specific regime type-groups. For a country that is highly economically linked to democratic countries, institutional reforms that lead to autocratisation might be perceived as costly because of the potential risk of trade relations being negatively affected. For the trade data, the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) dataset (2020) SITC4 rev. 2 (1962 - 2017)[21] is used and sums for the country-country trade relations per year are calculated. If no trade was registered in a country-year, the value is set to zero. The 'Trade with democratic countries' ($TD_{n,t}$) variable ranges from $0 to $2.71 trillion, the 'Trade with autocratic countries' variable ($TA_{n,t}$) from $0 to $1.45 trillion (variables are coded in current billion US$). The RoW-measure by V-Dem is again used for the calculation of the sums for the trade with democratic and with autocratic countries for each country-year.

3.2.3 Controls

The selection of different control variables for the analysis is highly relevant and is orientated towards common selection criteria in research as well as data availability. Chosen indicators are: 1) population (ln); 2) gross domestic product (GDP growth annual %); 3) total natural resources rents (% of GDP); 4) violent conflict.

[21] Although there are more recent data versions available, the data version used was the last free version available.

Table 1: Raw data

Dataset	Indicators	Time period covered	Source
V-Dem [Country–Year/Country–Date] Dataset v11	*Electoral Democracy Index* (v2x_polyarchy) Regimes of the World (RoW) measure (coverage from 1900-2020)	1789-2020	Coppedge et al. (2021) and Pemstein et al. (2021)
The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB) Version 2	Bilateral arms sanctions, indicator variable equal to 1 for arms sanction.	1950-2019	Felbermayr et al. (2020a, 2020b)
World Bank – World Development Indicators database	Foreign direct investment (FDI) net inflows (BoP, current US$) (BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD) Population (SP.POP.TOTL) GDP growth (annual %) (NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG) Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) (NY.GDP.TOTL.RT.ZS)	1960-2019 accessed[22], but varying for indicators	World Bank – World Development Indicators database (2020)
The Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC) dataset SITC4 rev. 2 (1962 - 2017)	Product Trade between Origin and Destination Country by Year (bilateral)	1962-2017	OEC (2020)
UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global Version 20.1	Battle-related deaths – most likely estimate of fatalities from conflict events ('best_est')	1989-2019	Sundberg and Melander (2013) and Pettersson and Öberg (2020)
OECD's Creditor Reporting System (CRS)	US$ Commitment data (own calculations for sectorcode 151, considering ODA grants, ODA loans, and Other Official Flows (non Export Credit))	1995-2019	OECD's CRS (2021)

Different kinds of population variables are frequently used as control variables in relation to developments in democratic political institutions (see, e.g. Leininger et al., 2019, p. 13; Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020). In the underlying analysis, the logarithmised total population ($C_{1_{n,t}}$) is seen as a reasonable control following Leininger et al. (2019, p. 13). The untransformed population variable is taken from the World Bank – World Development Indicators database (2020) and ranges from 44,042 to 1.39 billion inhabitants. Considering the economic performance of a given state is another common control in relation to democratic political institutions (cf. Leininger et al., 2019, p. 13; Meyerrose, 2020, pp. 1563-1564; Svolik, 2008). In the analysis, I consider the 'GDP growth (annual %)' ($C_{2_{n,t}}$) also taken by the World Bank database (2020) as a reasonable proxy with a value range from -64% to 150%. In regard to economic dependencies, considering natural resource rents – for instance, the share of the annual oil income of the GDP – is another common control (cf. Meyerrose, 2020, p. 1564; Ross, 2015). In the underlying

[22] World Bank data was accessed via the **wbopendata** STATA-tool (Azevedo, 2011).

analysis, I have therefore included the 'Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)' variable ($C_{3_{n,t}}$) – also taken from the World Bank database (2020) that ranges from zero to 89%. An additional control, 'Battle related deaths', is taken from the Uppsala Conflict Data Program UCDP Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) Global Version 20.1 (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020; Sundberg & Melander, 2013) as a proxy for violent conflict ($C_{4_{n,t}}$). Due to temporal data limitations, this control is only considered in the FE regression model in *Chapter 4.2.3*.

The final constructed dataset is a panel dataset that contains a set of varying indicators for 174 countries in the period 1971-2017 with a total of 7,711 country-years – also the total number of observations (for more information about the data used see *Table 1*).[23] It is, however, important to note that for the preparation of the descriptive statistics I was able to take into account partially updated datasets (e.g. V-Dem's v13 or the GSDB v3) that were not yet available at the time the main regression analyses were conducted.

3.2.4 The selection of the regression model

In general, a set of different estimation methods with different underlying assumptions and different strengths and weaknesses are eligible for the analysis: 1) pooled ordinary least square (pooled OLS), 2) fixed effects (FE) models, 3) first-difference models, 4) random effects (RE) models, 5) structural equation models (SEM), 6) economic estimators for dynamic models using the generalised method of moments (GMM) such as the Arellano-Bond estimator.

In pooled OLS models, the time structure of the dataset is generally ignored as every country-year observation is treated as a singular observation that is not related to the other observations of the same country. Because of the exclusion of the valuable time information, a pooled OLS model can be categorised as generally not suitable for the underlying research question. To cross-check, however, the results with a pooled OLS model can be identified as a good control and comparison of the results of a better fitting model.

Concerning FE models, different estimation methods that exclude the case-specific heterogeneity by transforming the underlying equation are used. The most common one is the 'Within regression-estimator' that excludes unobserved effects by subtracting unit-level averages from the unit-specific values. Additional time fixed effects are considered by including dummy variables for all time points. A main assumption of the FE model in contrast to the random effects model is that individual unit-specific effects are correlated with the independent variables. An alternative approach that arrives at the same results as the standard fixed effects model is the OLS dummy variable (OLSDV or LSDV) estimator that includes dummy variables for all time-points and units (countries).

First-Difference models can also be categorised as fixed effect models, where deviations – so the subtraction of the previous value from the later value – are included in the estimation. By that, unobserved effects are also excluded. The First-Difference approach, however, has some

[23] For the year-specific data coverage for all relevant indicators after the data preparation see *Figure A1* in the appendix.

weaknesses, as the calculations rely on comparatively small changes – particularly in regard to rather stable dependent variables. In addition, missing values have a big impact as the approach is based upon derivations of two consecutive observations. Still, the results of the First-Difference model can also be cross-checked with the results of the final model.[24]

In random effects models, no fixed effects or fixed coefficients that can describe systematic differences between the observations are considered – instead random varying differences are assumed (Stoetzer, 2020, p. 244). To use random effects, an additional assumption in contrast to the FE models must be met: the unobserved effects and independent variables have to be uncorrelated. To decide between a FE or RE model specification, a Hausmann test is usually performed.

SEM models seem very promising for the underlying research subject at first glance. With SEM approaches, varying model assumptions can be relaxed and endogeneity problems be addressed by including a time-lagged dependent variable in the estimation. A SEM approach is, however, rather unsuitable for panels with large time periods (large-T) as in the underlying dataset and therefore not further pursued.

The last group of possible regression models are instrumental and dynamic econometric models such as the Arellano-Bond estimator using instrument variables and GMM estimators. The approaches differ quite strongly to the previously discussed methods, but they allow for the consideration of time-lagged dependent variables. Furthermore, endogenous variables can be considered as so-called 'instruments'. However, the estimator is primarily designed for dynamic small-T and large-N panels (Roodman, 2009, p. 100). Due to the underlying large-T panel structure of the dataset, the Arellano-Bond estimator cannot be classified as the most suitable approach.

The longitudinal (large-T) form of the panel dataset with repeated observations for the same unit (country n) over time (year t) allows for the usage of estimation methods, which can deal with unobserved heterogeneity and improve the derivation of causal inferences. In order to identify external influences on democratic quality in the underlying regression models, it is necessary to control for time-invariant country-specific effects as well as temporal shocks. By that, it is possible to control for structural explanatory factors of autocratisation such as country specific cultural backgrounds, geographical conditions, or characteristic of the political systems and instead assess the possible influences of arms sanctions, democracy aid, FDI, and trade relations more clearly. Standard fixed effects models can therefore be identified as most suited for this analysis, as the models are calculated with time-invariant country fixed effects a_n as well as time fixed effects b_t and the approach can deal with a large-T panel structure (see, e.g. Leininger et al., 2019, p. 13; Meyerrose, 2020, pp. 1564-1565; Stoetzer, 2020, pp. 240-244). Furthermore, in order to address potential endogeneity problems, all independent variables are time-lagged by one year. The underlying equation for the presumed interrelations can be noted as follows:

[24] Furthermore, Difference-in-Difference (DiD) approaches for quasi-experimental designs with treatments and control groups are worth mentioning (cf. Legewie, 2012, pp. 135-136).

$$\ln DQ_{n,t} = \alpha ASD_{n,t-1} + \beta ASD^2_{n,t-1} + \gamma ASA_{n,t-1} + \delta ASA^2_{n,t-1} + \theta DA_{n,t-1} + \vartheta FDI_{n,t-1} + \kappa TD_{n,t-1} + \nu TD^2_{n,t-1} + \varrho TA_{n,t-1} + \varphi TA^2_{n,t-1} + \omega_1 C_{1_{n,t}} + \ \dots\ \omega_4 C_{4_{n,t}} + a_n + b_t + \epsilon_{n,t}$$

It needs to be highlighted that this equation already includes the Democracy aid and Battle related death variables that are tested for in the comprehensive model in *Chapter 4.2.3* for a shorter time period. In *Chapter 4.2.4*, the model is further calculated for the previously described 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'-variable ($\Delta DQ_{n,t}$). *Chapter 4.2.2* eventually considers potential regional and temporal patterns.

Several statistical tests were conducted in order to derive/confirm the right model specification for the regression analyses in *Chapter 4.2*. This included a (significant) Hausman test to decide between a FE and RE model, a (significant) Wald/testparm test to test whether year fixed effects should be included as well as a (significant) modified Wald test to test for group-wise heteroscedasticity in FE regression models. As a result, the use of the FE approach was confirmed as well as the necessity to include year fixed effects and consider robust standard errors.[25] Additional model specifications especially regarding reasonable variable transformations were derived following Stoetzer (2017, pp. 78-80). An additional visual inspection of the main variables' relation to the DV is conducted in the course of the descriptive analysis (see *Chapter 4.1*).

Moreover, *Table A1* in the appendix compares the results for five different models: 1) pooled OLS model; 2) OLS model with year and country dummies; 3) standard fixed effects model (without robust standard errors); 4) standard fixed effects model with robust standard errors; 5) First-Difference analysis. The DV for Model 1 to 4 is the transformed *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) as previously described, for Model 5 the DV is the 'Change of the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln)'. The results of the different approaches are very similar, which reinforces the robustness and general validity of inferences about the relationship between democratic quality and external factors. All calculations were carried out with Stata. World maps were created with the **rworldmap** R-tool by South (2011).

3.3 Qualitative case studies

The qualitative within-case studies of Senegal and Indonesia are the second element of the two-pronged mixed-methods design approach. The case studies focus on influences on decision-making moments of the contra-democratic executives and thus on the decision of a regime to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality (i.e. autocratisation) or not. By using a cost-benefit assessment approach, the role of different intended and direct democracy protection measures are assessed such as sanctions, receiving democracy aid, or condemnation as well as pro-democratic international relations covering fields of cooperation (e.g. trade

[25] The *xtreg* Stata command with the *fe* and *robust* option is used that is based upon a 'Within regression-estimator' as default. Additional time fixed effects are considered in the regression.

and security cooperation) with democracies that are not intended to promote or protect democracy and determine a state's linkage and leverage. This sub-chapter, first, introduces the case selection and, second, describes the qualitative within-case study research design.

3.3.1 Case selection

Since the main aim of this study is to generate insights into the effects of autocracy prevention on autocratisation, the decisive initial criterion for the definition of my population and my case selection is the presence of the phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation (DV). As incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes do not solely take place in democratic states, autocratic states are principally not excluded from the population (see *Chapter 2.2.1*). In addition, it is reasonable to focus on autocratisation processes after 1994 for the case selection (following Lührmann and Lindberg's (2019) classification of the beginning of the third wave of autocratisation) as incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes are primarily seen as a phenomenon of the third wave of autocratisation.

Two contrasting cases are selected for this thesis: To clearly show and analyse the theoretically assumed relations, first, a *most likely case* is considered most promising, where external autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection measures and pro-democratic international relations is expected to exert a strong potential influence on the decisions of regimes. An additional *medium likely case*, where external influences might be weaker and less visible, e.g. due to lower linkage and leverage, is considered helpful for contrasting the results of the most likely case and make possible conditions for the effectiveness of external democracy protection measures clearer. As the general context of autocratisation processes may differ highly in different world regions, the case selection of the most and medium likely case further follows a 'most different system design' approach (cf. Sartori, 1991, p. 250). Still, it is assumed that the cases do not differ in regard to the presence of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation (DV).

The final case selection was guided by first statistical observations (see *Chapter 4.1*), the consideration of relevant autocratisation and case-specific literature, and the exchange with experts. Based on this, the cases of Senegal and Indonesia were identified as fitting cases for this study. Both cases and the specific observation periods are presented in more detail at the beginning of the respective case study chapters. In addition, dedicated timelines of the main events during the observation periods are included in the appendix (see *Figures A4, A5,* and *A6*). In the following, I briefly describe the decisive criteria for the selection.

Senegal is a (economically) rather small and politically stable country in Western Africa. Due to early successful changes of government through elections, early experiences with democratic principles, and an active civil society, Senegal is often referred to as a regional democratic role model (Wienkoop, 2020, p. 71). In addition, Senegal is frequently labelled a 'donor darling' "because of its high need of capacity and institutional support coupled with a seemingly benign environment" (Fiedler, Grävingholt, Leininger, & Mross, 2020, p. 61). However, there have also been frequent ups and downs in Senegal's democratic development, especially concerning

attempts to repeal the presidential third term limit by President Wade and unclear third term ambitions by President Sall, controversial election reforms, and election postponements as well as misuses of the judicative system (cf. Heyl & Llanos, 2020; Kanté, 2021; Toupane, Kanté, & Faye, 2019). Because of existing high economic and donor dependencies, the relevance of Senegal's colonial history, postcolonial structures, and still prevailing close relations with France as the former colonial power, Senegal can be categorised as a *most likely case* for the underlying analysis as external democracy protection measures are expected to have a strong potential influence on domestic politics. Furthermore, the literature also points to the influential role of external actors in the context of Wade's third term bid (Callimachi, 2012, February 2; Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 69).

Indonesia is considered to be a democratic showcase country in Southeast Asia, very similar to Senegal in the Western African context (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 14; Power, 2018, p. 308). Today's Republic of Indonesia already underwent a first phase of democratisation after its independence from colonial rule, which was, however, interrupted by a longer period of military regimes. In regard to Indonesia's recent democratic development, the usage of increasingly repressive measures against civil society groups, large-scale protests, and a reform-process that includes an overhaul of the criminal code and the limitation of the independence of an influential anti-corruption institution under the current Jokowi government cause worries among pro-democratic observers (cf. Jaffrey, 2019, September 30; Jaffrey & Warburton, 2023). Very much in contrast to Senegal though, Indonesia as the fourth most populous country in the world is economically and politically substantially more powerful than Senegal – indicating a lower leverage context, which presumably leads to greater restraint in international pro-democratic interventions in an autocratisation process and reduced effectiveness. Still, external actors such as the European Parliament prominently reacted to the initiated reform-process by issuing a resolution urging Jokowi's administration to take back the controversial reform. Summing up, Indonesia can thus be categorised as a *medium likely case*, where domestic factors are predominant, but can still interact with external ones.

3.3.2 Qualitative case study research design

As introduced before, the main inferential strategy of the case studies is a within-case analysis design with cross-case elements playing a supporting role (cf. Goertz & Mahoney, 2012, p. 86). The within-case analyses are guided by a cost-benefit assessment approach leading to overall accounts being drawn up (cf. *Chapter 2.2* and *2.3*). As the main data source for the qualitative case studies, secondary as well as primary and selected grey literature is used. For the analysis of the Senegal case, additional semi-structured expert interviews were conducted during a field research period in Dakar in November 2022. The interviews were mainly used for validation

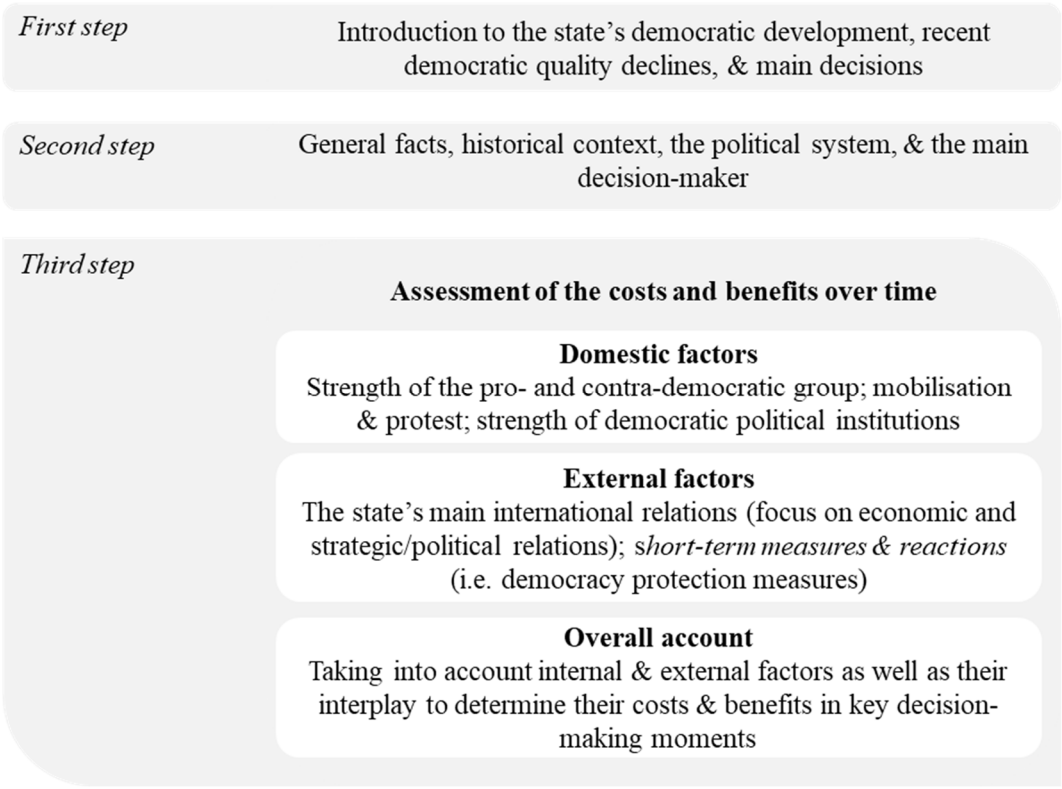
and complementary data collection for recent political developments that were not yet considered in the literature.[26] The questionnaire used and an overview of the interviews (see *Table A2*) are included in the appendix. The qualitative data is complemented by quantitative data to assess, for instance, trade relations, voting behaviour, and political attitudes in both cases.

The case studies are structured in three parts (as also visualised in *Figure 7*). They first introduce the states' democratic development and recent changes of democratic quality declines. In this part, the process of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation as a decisive criterion is brought to the fore and the observation periods with main decision-making moments for the analyses are identified. The introduction is followed by a contextualisation chapter of general facts, the historical context, the state's political system, and the main contra-democratic decision-makers. Following the underlying theoretical framework, the main decision-maker is the essential actor in an incumbent-driven autocratisation process, who can initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality. This actor does not necessarily have to be a single person, but can also be defined as an executive in power. In the third part of the case studies, the main analysis of the decision-maker's prevalent cost-benefit assessment of whether to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality or not is conducted following a cost-benefit logic.

The main analysis is again divided into three subsections. First, an assessment of the *domestic* factors is carried out, second, of the *external* factors, and third, the *overall account* is drawn up. As already outlined in the theory chapter, regarding the domestic dimension, the balance of power between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic group in power as well as the strength of democratic institutions are key (see, e.g. again *Figure 5* for the stylised conceptual overview). I analyse this balance of power in the observation periods over the course of time, while taking into account different context-specific factors such as the existing political structure and party landscape, elite agency, election results, public attitudes and embeddedness of democratic norms, economic factors, as well as pro-democratic mobilisation and protest. The strength of democratic political institutions with control functions over the executive (e.g. the freedom of the judicative and press, or institutionalised checks and balances of the legislative opposition) – which are often the very same institutions under attack by attempts to weaken the democratic quality of a regime – frequently become visible in the moments they become active to prevent an action by the contra-democratic executive.

[26] In the development phase of the thesis, field research was initially envisioned for both case studies. However, due to the travel restrictions and additional difficulties imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic between 2021 and 2022, field research could only be conducted to a limited and delayed extent.

Figure 7: Case study approach



Source: Author.

Following again the explanations of the theory chapter, Senegal's and Indonesia's main international relations – with a focus on economic (trade and donor cooperation) and strategic/political relations (especially security cooperation) – as well as more short-term international measures and reactions to prevent autocratisation from abroad are considered that range from more cooperative measures or 'soft' linkage-instruments such as democracy aid to more 'coercive' leverage-measures such as conditionality and democratic sanctions in the specific observation periods. In the analysis chapter, after a brief introduction to Senegal's and Indonesia's general political and economic foreign policy, I analyse the most important foreign policy relations of the states one after another, each ending with an assessment of short-term measures and reactions (i.e. democracy protection measures) related to the specific decision-making moments. The selection of Senegal's and Indonesia's most important foreign policy relations is guided by first insights drawn from the contextualisation and the literature.

In the third subsection, the case studies close with overall accounts for each observation period in which the role of the previously examined external factors are assessed in interplay with the domestic factors to determine their individual and/or combined costs on the contra-democratic decision-maker's cost-benefit assessments. This approach allows to make the process of interplay between the different influencing factors visible and to draw conclusions about the hypotheses and – to a certain extent – about the previously formulated necessary and sufficient conditions.

4 Statistical analysis

The following chapter assesses the influence of external factors on democratic quality through a macro-analytical lens and presents the results of the longitudinal statistical analysis. This quantitative approach is used to further develop a broader understanding of the relation between democratic quality and external factors such as arms sanctions, democracy aid, FDI, and trade relations. It is one of two parts of the underlying mixed-methods design approach and is complemented by the subsequent qualitative case studies on Senegal and Indonesia in *Chapter 5*. The results of both approaches can be used to triangulate the general conclusions about the influence of external factors on autocratisation and its prevention from abroad. In the first section of this chapter, descriptive statistics introduce the current 'state of democracy' and the main external factors (arms sanctions, democracy aid, FDI, and trade relations) quantitatively.[27] In the second section of the chapter, I present the results of my main regression analysis.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

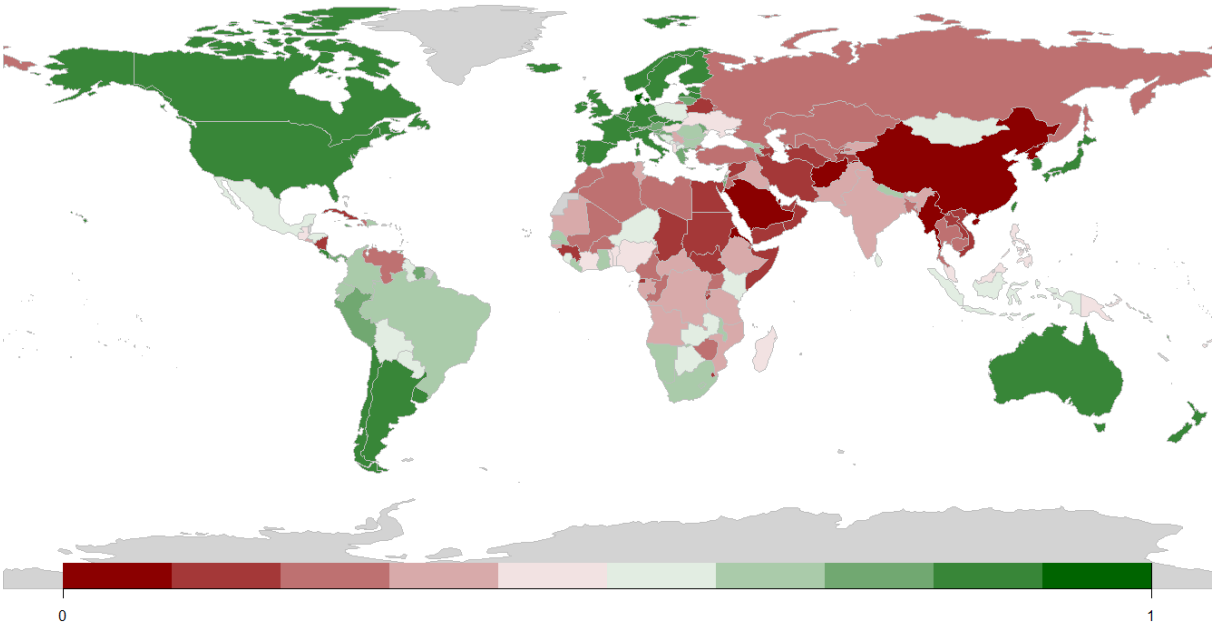
The current state of democracy

As already described, the *Electoral Democracy Index* focuses on the core political institutions of democratic elections and further necessary conditions to enable free and fair elections as a minimal concept of democracy (cf. Lindberg et al., 2014, p. 160). *Figure 8* illustrates that the world in 2022 is still divided following known patterns.[28] Major autocratic regimes in Asia and the Arabian Peninsula such as China (0.08) and Saudi Arabia (0.02) can be located at the bottom end of the electoral democracy scale. At the upper end, Europe with countries like Sweden (0.9) or Denmark (0.92), North America with Canada (0.85) or the U.S. (0.82), major parts of South America with, for example, Argentina (0.82), Oceania with Australia (0.86) or New Zealand (0.89) as well as Japan (0.83) stand out. Still, strong divisions are apparent in Africa (e.g. South Africa and Senegal with 0.69 in contrast to Somalia with 0.16 or Sudan with 0.17), Southeast Asia (e.g. Indonesia with 0.57 and Thailand with 0.21), and partly in Oceania (Papua New Guinea with 0.46 in contrast to Australia or New Zealand) and South America (e.g. Venezuela with 0.21 in contrast to Argentina). Noteworthy is the current 2022 classification of India, which is classified as an electoral autocracy and no longer as an electoral democracy following the RoW-measure – a circumstance that is also visible in India's *Electoral Democracy Index* value that has dropped to 0.4. Connected to this shift, more than half of the world's population currently lives in closed and electoral autocratic systems.

[27] It is important to note again that for the preparation of the descriptive statistics I was able to take into account partially updated data sets (e.g. V-Dem's v13 and the GSDB v3) that were not yet available at the time the regression analyses were conducted (see also *Chapter 3.2*).

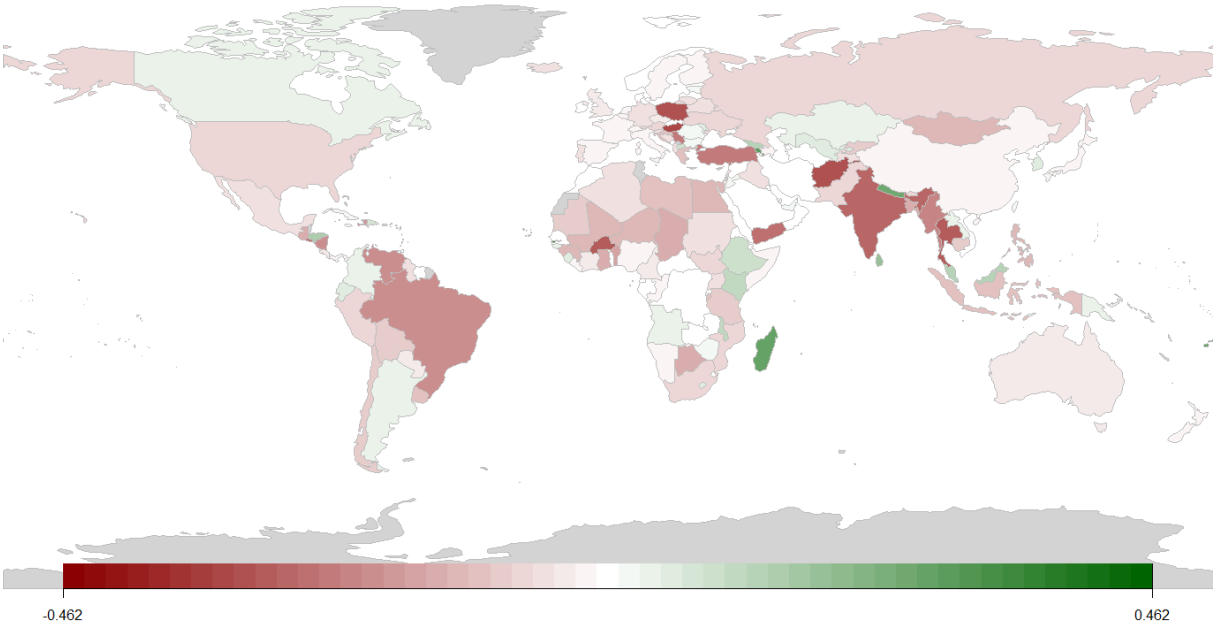
[28] For a more detailed description of the current state of democracy according to V-Dem data see V-Dem's latest 'Democracy Reports' (e.g. Alizada et al., 2021; Papada et al., 2023).

Figure 8: Worldwide democratic quality in 2022



Note: Displayed are untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* values for 2022. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with low values standing for a low democratic quality of the political regime and high values for a high quality. *Source*: V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Data] Dataset v13 (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023): v2x_polyarchy.

Figure 9: Democratic quality shifts between 2012 and 2022



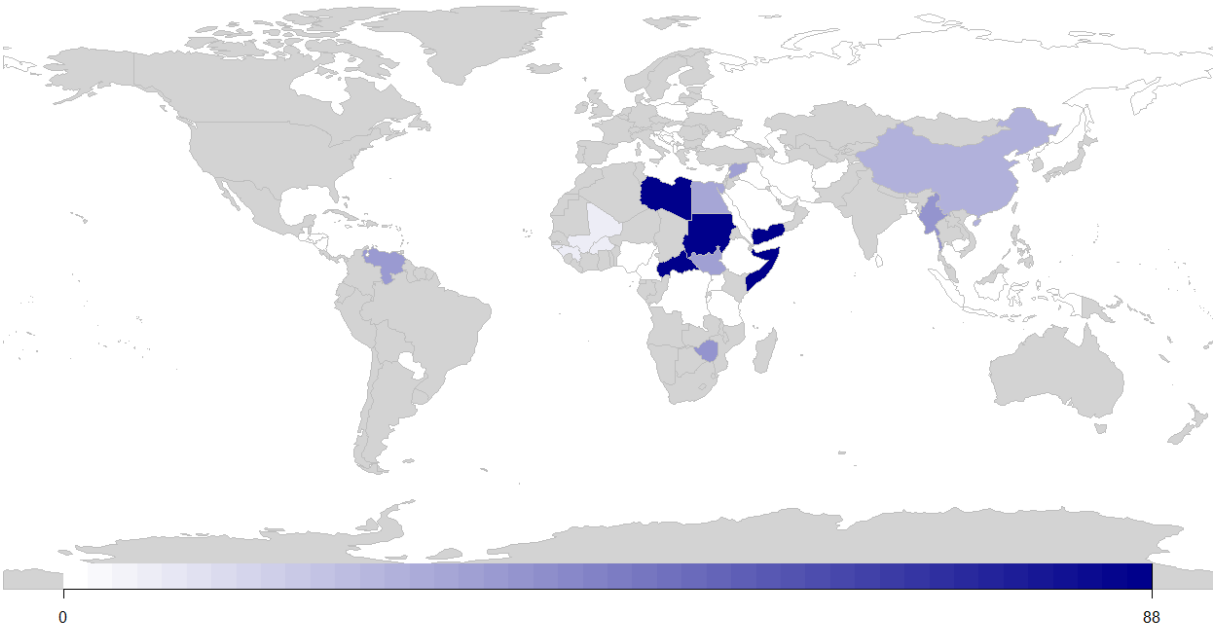
Note: Displayed are changes in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* values between 2012 and 2022. The index ranges from 0 to 1, with low values standing for a low democratic quality of the political regime and high values for a high quality. *Source*: V-Dem [Country-Year/Country-Data] Dataset v13 (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023): v2x_polyarchy.

Regarding shifts in the overall democratic quality around the world over the last ten years (2012-2022), a general decline is visible (*Figure 9*). The recent drop in India's democratic quality was already mentioned (-0.28), but also countries across South America such as Brazil (-0.19) or Venezuela (-0.2), in Europe with Hungary (-0.33) or Poland (-0.32), and countries as Turkey (-0.24) or Thailand (-0.3) are experiencing substantial declines. Comparatively small but especially noticeable in the incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation context are the declines in consolidated democracies like the U.S. (-0.08) or Australia (-0.04). On the 'democratising' side, only some countries like Gambia (0.38), Armenia (0.29), the Seychelles (0.28), or Madagascar (0.27) stand out. Furthermore, recent military coups in Myanmar (2021) and Niger (2023) drastically highlight the fragility of countries that were still admit transitioning to democracy. These descriptive results also fit very well to the described trends by CP scholars of democratic transition and autocratisation literature and the notion of a general democratic recession following the 'Third Wave' of democratisation mentioned at the beginning of this thesis (cf. Diamond, 2021; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019; Papada et al., 2023).

Arms sanctioning

The use of sanctions to influence the behaviour of a state or its regime is classified as a comparatively 'hard' leverage-instrument in this study (cf. Pospieszna & Weber, 2017, p. 5). Most arms sanctions by democratic countries in 2022 with the official objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations that are captured by the GSDB Version 3 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b; Syropoulos, Felbermayr, Kirilakha, Yalcin, & Yotov, 2024) are imposed on African states (see *Figure 10*). The African countries with the most democratic states imposing arms sanctions on them in 2022 are the Central African Republic (targeted by sanctions of 87 democratic countries), Libya (87 sanctioning democracies), Sudan (87 sanctioning democracies), and Somalia (87 sanctioning democracies). Only North Yemen as a state outside of Africa is also sanctioned by 87 democratic states. These five states are further strongly targeted by arms sanctions imposed by autocratic countries (all by 83 sanctioning autocracies) – notably also with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations (see *Figure 11*). In contrast, there are countries such as Venezuela (36 sanctioning democracies), China (28 sanctioning democracies), and Egypt (32 sanctioning democracies) that are targeted with sanctions only by a smaller number of democratic states and by almost no autocratic one (1-3 sanctioning autocracies).

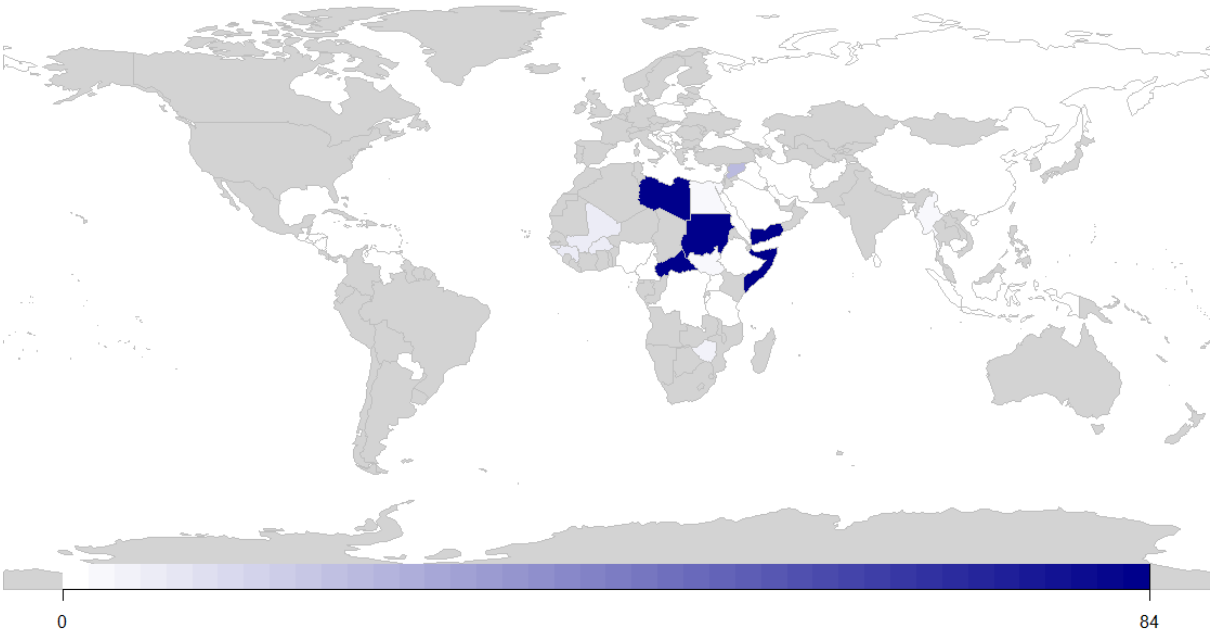
Figure 10: Worldwide democratic arms sanctioning by democratic countries in 2022



Note: The arms sanctioning of targeted countries by democratic countries with the objectives of 'democracy' and 'human rights' in 2022 is depicted. Further note that recent sanctions against Russia mainly stated the objectives 'policy change', 'end war', and 'prevent war'. *Source*: GSDB V3 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b; Syropoulos et al., 2024).

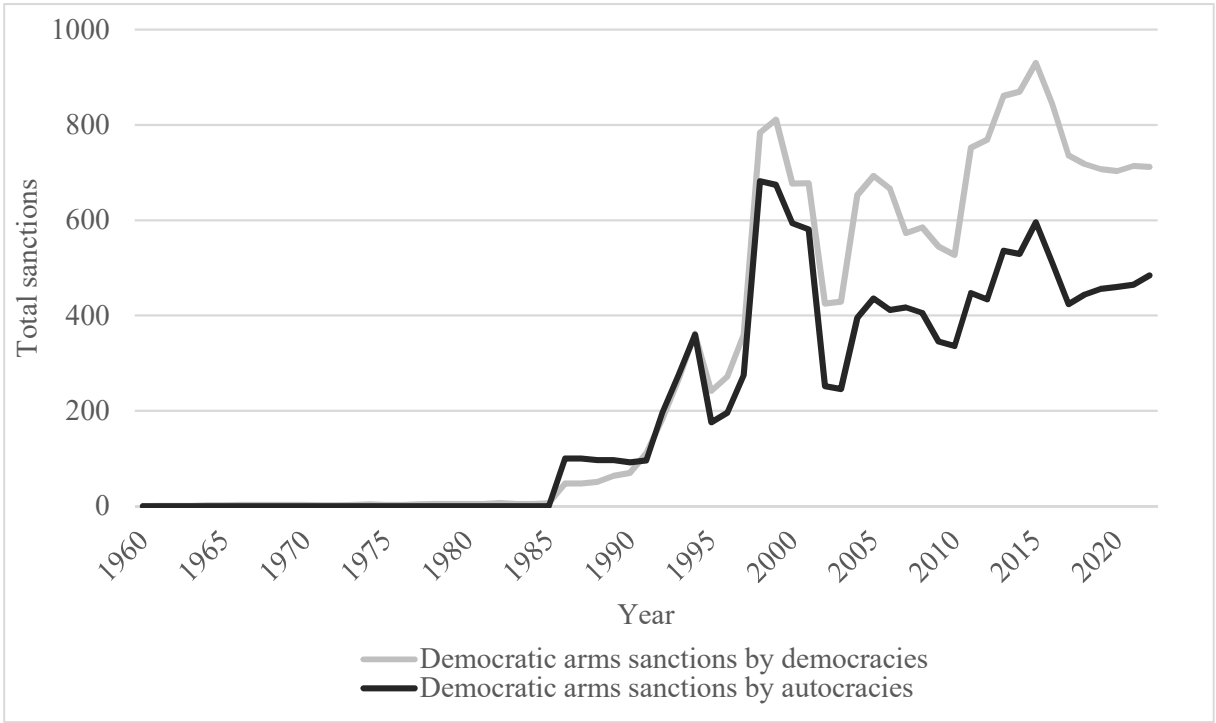
The overall usage of official arms sanctions with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations captured by the GSDB Version 3 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b; Syropoulos et al., 2024) substantially increased in the time period from 1962 to 2022 (see *Figure 12*). In 2015, arms sanctions by democratic as well as autocratic states reached an all-time high with a total amount of 930 sanctions by democratic and 596 by autocratic states. Before the end of the Cold War, official arms sanctions with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations were not a very commonly used (diplomatic) tool (see also von Soest & Wahman, 2015, p. 958). After the Cold War, however, the usage increased considerably. The general patterns for arms sanctions imposed by autocratic and democratic countries are relatively similar, but this applies mainly to heavily sanctioned states. Furthermore, the slow shift since the early 2000s towards more democracies using sanctions should also be related to the growing absolute number of democratic states.

Figure 11: Worldwide democratic arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in 2022



Note: The arms sanctioning of targeted countries by autocratic countries with the objectives of 'democracy' and 'human rights' in 2022 is depicted. *Source*: GSDB V3 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b; Syropoulos et al., 2024).

Figure 12: Worldwide arms sanctioning by democratic and autocratic countries between 1960 and 2022



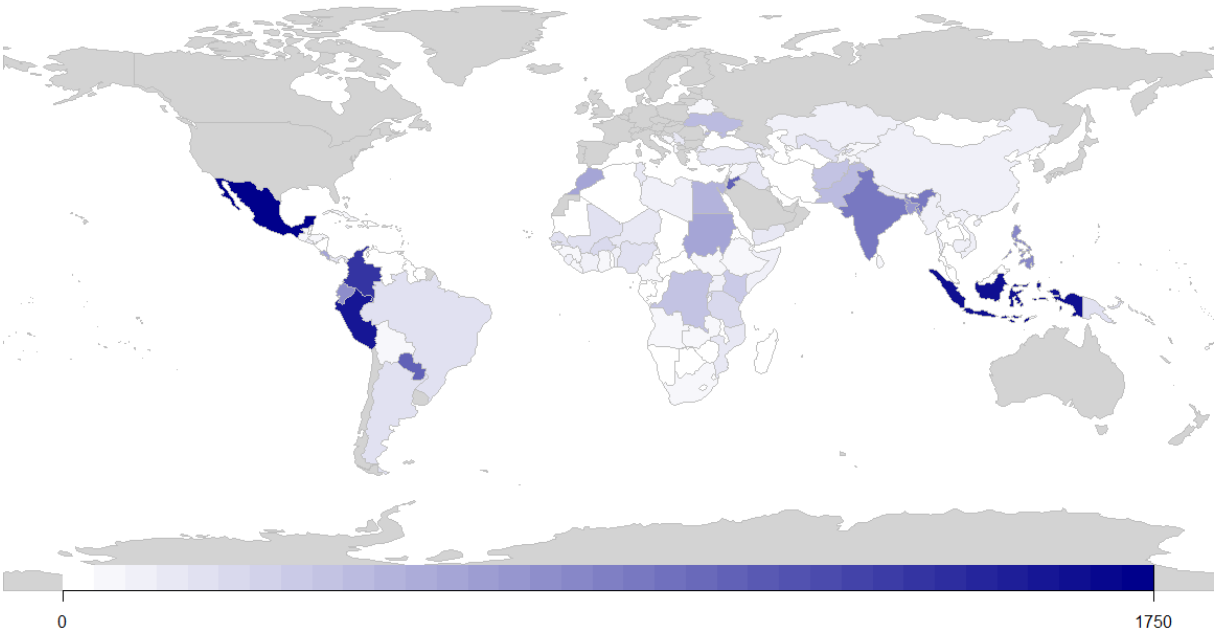
Note: Displayed are the total amounts of arms sanctions by democratic and autocratic countries with the objectives of 'democracy' and 'human rights' for all states between 1960 and 2022. *Source*: GSDB V3 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b; Syropoulos et al., 2024).

Democracy aid

In contrast to sanctioning, ODA-based democracy aid is as a cooperative linkage-instrument. In 2021, democracy aid is received by at least 167 countries around the world (see *Figure 13*). In general, substantial democracy aid is committed to countries in the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Mexico is the main single country recipient with $1.74 billion committed to it in 2021, followed by Indonesia with $1.61 billion, Peru with $1.55 billion, Colombia with $1.35 billion, and Jordan with $1.07 billion (all in US$ current).

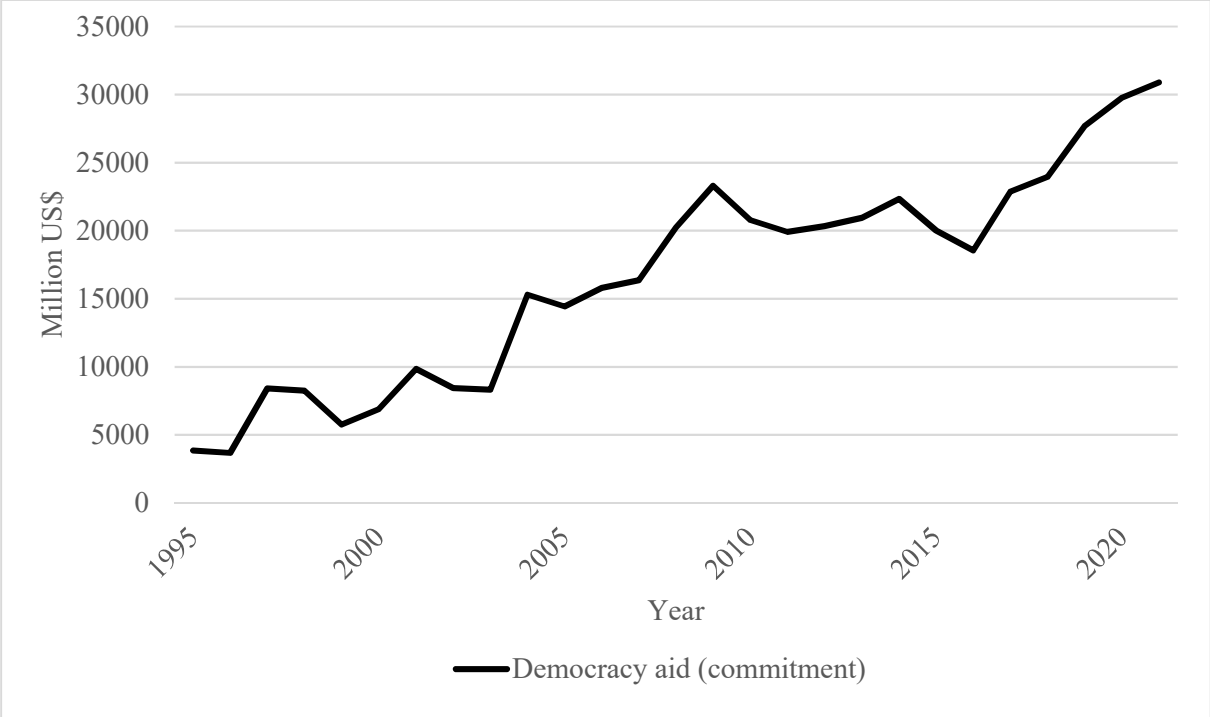
Looking at the development of the worldwide democracy aid commitments since 1995, *Figure 14* shows a considerable increase in donor commitments. In 2000, the worldwide democracy aid commitment values amounted to around $6.9 billion; by 2021, this figure had already risen to around $30.9 billion. To put this amount in perspective, the total development aid commitments worldwide reported in the OECD's CRS (2023) by all official OECD donors in 2021 amounted to around $382 billion (US$ current). The share of ODA-based democracy aid in total development aid commitments was thus around 8.1 percent.

Figure 13: Worldwide democracy aid recipients in 2021



Note: Displayed are the democracy aid commitment values in million US$ (current) for the recipient states in 2021 as the last year with largely complete data availability. Although the database already covers data for 2022, entries of donor states for 2022 were still incomplete. *Source*: OECD's CRS (2023).

Figure 14: Worldwide democracy aid commitments between 1995 and 2021

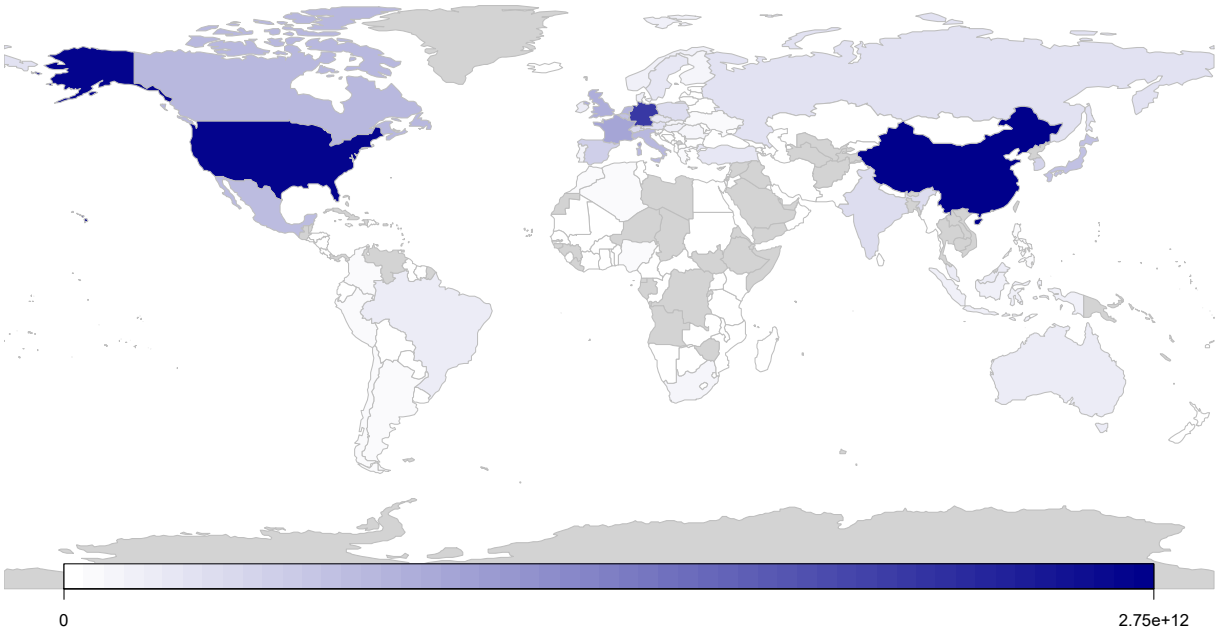


Note: Displayed are the total amounts of democracy aid commitment values in million US$ (current) for all recipient states between 1995 and 2021. The values for 2022 are not included as the entries of donor states in the database for 2022 were still incomplete. *Source*: OECD's CRS (2023).

Trade relations

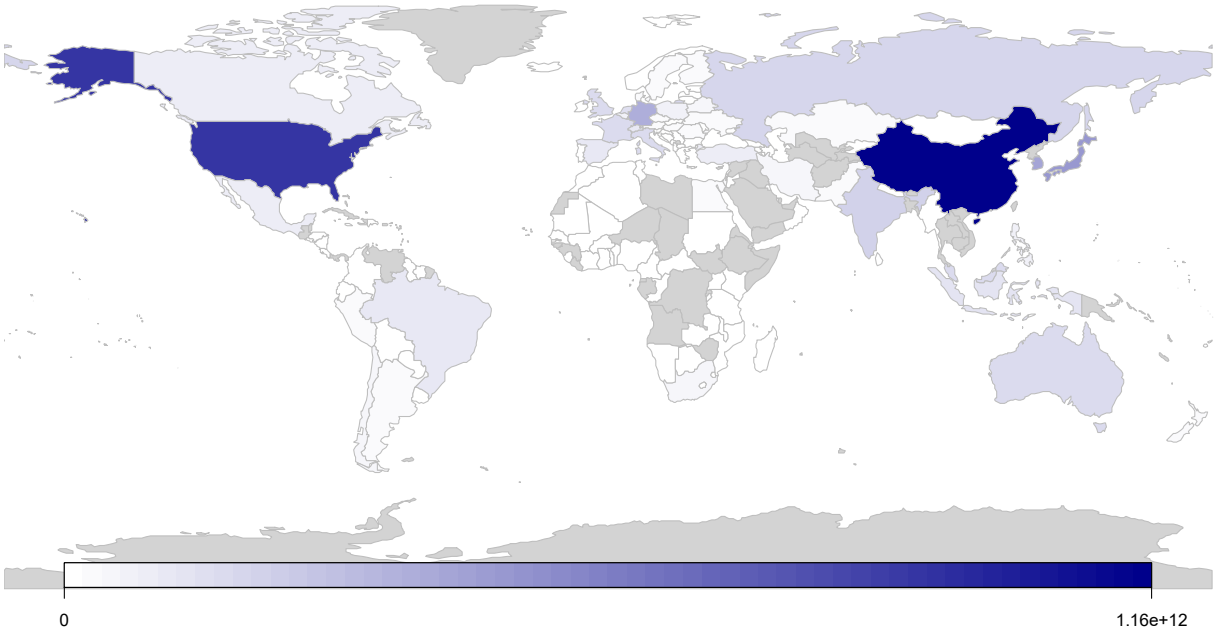
In order to assess the economic linkage of states to specific regime type-groups, trade relations with democracies and autocracies are considered. The bilateral trade data drawn from the OEC (2020) dataset SITC4 rev. 2 (1962 - 2017) highlights the current importance of China, the U.S., and Europe as trade partners for democratic as well as autocratic countries (see *Figures 15 & 16*). The remaining BRICS states, but also states like Mexico and Australia follow with comparatively smaller levels of international trade volumes (the sum of export and import). China's trade volume (all in US$ current) with democratic countries, for instance, reached around $2.71 trillion in 2017, while China's trade with autocratic countries amounted to around $1.15 trillion in the same year (total: $3.85 trillion). The trade volume of the U.S. was comparatively lower with a trade volume of $2.67 trillion with democratic countries and $0.9 trillion with autocratic countries (total: $3.57 trillion). To compare, in 2010, the trade volumes of China and the U.S. were still very similar. China's trade volume with democratic countries amounted to $1.94 trillion and with autocratic countries to $0.88 trillion (total: $2.82 trillion), while the U.S. had a trade volume with democratic countries of $1.93 trillion and with autocratic countries of $0.86 trillion (total: $2.79 trillion). In general, the growth of both trade volumes show quite similar patterns. However, China's trade volume with autocratic states is growing comparatively faster, which over time can also lead to greater dependence of autocratic countries on China and fewer economic ties with democratic partners.

Figure 15: Worldwide trade with democratic countries in 2017



Note: Displayed are the trade volumes for states covered in the OEC database with democratic trade partners in 2017 in current US$. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Figure 16: Worldwide trade with autocratic countries in 2017

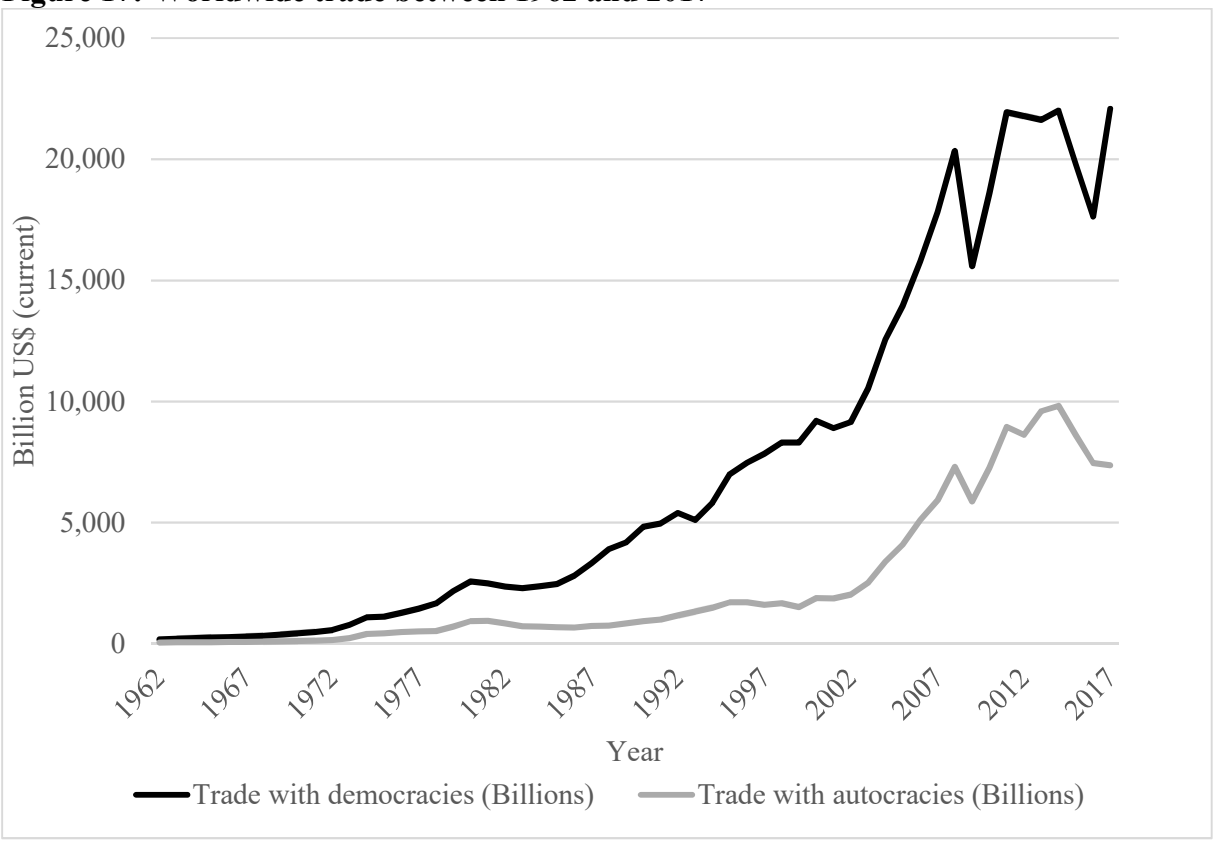


Note: Displayed are the trade volumes for states covered in the OEC database with autocratic trade partners in 2017 in current US$. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Turning to the development of world trade volumes since the 1960s, *Figure 17* displays a strong increase with a clear visibility of the impact of the economic and financial crisis of 2008/9. Furthermore, although there is still a strong dominance of democratic states in worldwide trade,

autocratic states are catching up. It is worth mentioning that trade data for 2017 and recent years, especially for some relevant states in Africa in regard to sanctioning and autocratisation patterns, are partly missing. These missings might also explain the declines in trade volumes in recent years. I have therefore included figures for worldwide trade with democratic and autocratic countries in 2010 with better data coverage in the appendix (see *Figures A2 & A3*). These figures generally show comparatively low trade volumes in the African regions mentioned before.

Figure 17: Worldwide trade between 1962 and 2017

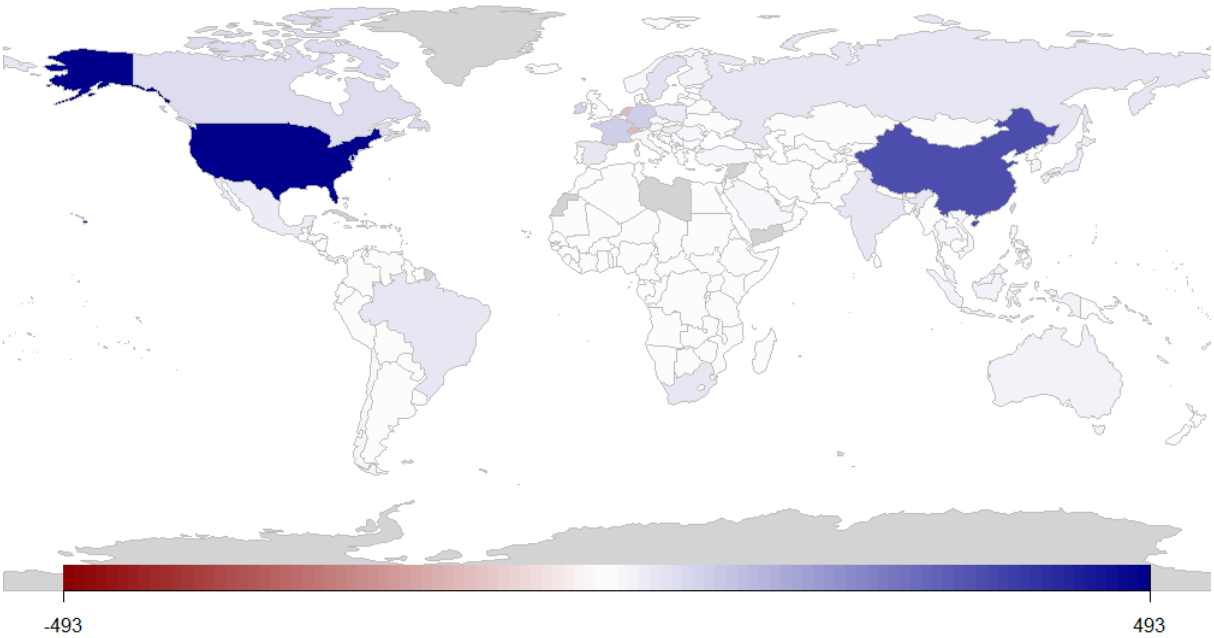


Note: Displayed are the total amounts of trade volumes for states covered in the OEC database with democratic and autocratic countries (in billion US$ current) between 1962 and 2017. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

The 'Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current US$)' variable that is taken from the World Bank database (2023) captures quite similar patterns as the previous trade variables. The U.S. and China are the main FDI recipients, followed by European countries and the remaining BRICS states (see *Figure 18*). In contrast to the trade volumes, the U.S. is still the largest FDI recipient with around $493 billion in 2021 (22.4 percent of global FDI). China received around $344 billion in the same year (15.7 percent of global FDI), while the European Union member states received $461 billion (21 percent of global FDI).

Figure 18: Worldwide FDI in 2021

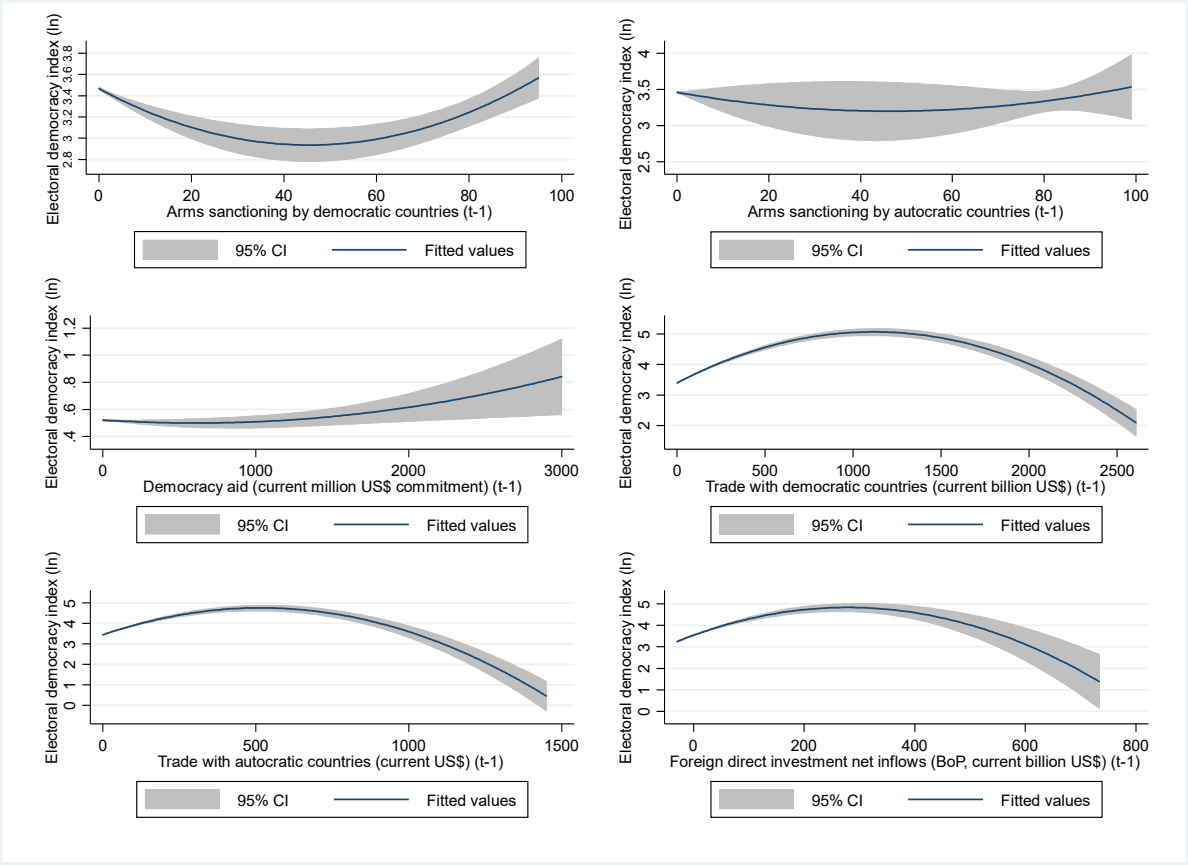


Note: Displayed are the Foreign Direct Investment net inflows (BoP, in billion current US$) for states in 2021.
Source: World Bank database (2023).

Descriptive assessment of relations between democratic quality and the IVs

After this first descriptive glance at the main variables considered in this study, *Figure 19* already displays interesting descriptive patterns in regard to the predicted relations between democratic quality and individual IVs. In the diagram, the respective relations are predicted only on the basis of the distributions of the DV and the respective IV. Especially the predicted relation plots of the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable, the trade variables, and FDI indicate potential quadratic relations (U-shaped curves) between democratic quality and these IVs (see *Figure 19*). This visual inspection of the relations was further taken into account for the selection of the right regression model following Stoetzer (2017, pp. 78-80), where quadratic variable transformations were derived as most suitable for the arms sanctioning and the trade variables (see also *Chapter 3.2.4*).

Figure 19: Combined qfit diagram of predicted relations between democratic quality and the main independent variables



Note: Displayed are the predicted relations between the DV *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described in *Chapter 3.2.1* and the main IVs with the grey areas showing the 95% confidence intervals.

4.2 Results of the regression analysis

This chapter presents the results of my statistical analysis in four steps: First, I outline the results of the standard FE models with one year time-lagged independent variables. Second, I calculate the models for different world regions and time periods in order to assess potential regional and temporal patterns that might drive the results of the main model. In the third section, I then calculate the combined model from the first step with the additional democracy aid and conflict variables for the narrow time frame from 1995 to 2017. In the last section of the chapter, I present the results of an additional attempt to capture the effects of external factors on *autocratisation* and *democratisation* more clearly by using the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' as the dependent variable.

4.2.1 Standard FE models for the effects of democratic sanctions, FDI, and trade relations on democratic quality between 1971 and 2017

In *Table 2*, the results for four standard FE models with robust standard errors exploring the external effects on democratic quality are displayed. In all model specifications, V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described in the operationalisation section before is the dependent variable. In the first model specification of the standard FE model, the single effects of arms sanctioning by democratic and by autocratic countries (with the objectives democracy and/or human rights) on democratic quality are calculated. In the second model specification, the relation of FDI net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) with the DV is displayed. The third model focuses on trade with democratic and autocratic countries (current billion US$). The fourth model specification is the combined model that includes all independent variables. It is important to point out again that democracy aid is not considered in this first step, as democracy aid data is only available for a limited time period from the year 1995 onwards. The dedicated analysis of democracy aid follows in *Chapter 4.2.3*. All independent variables in the standard FE models in *Table 2* are time-lagged by one year in order to address potential endogeneity problems. The time-lagged models thereby take into account that effects might unfold over time.[29] This is especially important regarding the use of democratic arms sanctions as "[s]anctions are often implemented as a result of drastic democratic decline, such as unfair elections or coup d'états. Therefore, the democratic development in the first year of a sanction episode is often more a cause than a consequence of the sanction" (von Soest & Wahman, 2015, p. 967). Furthermore, I tested for an even longer time lag by two years in order to consider potential longer periods between influences and causes as well. The results of this model specification with two year time-lagged independent variables that were quite similar to the one year time-lagged model version are displayed in the appendix (see *Table A3*).[30]

In the combined model, we can observe the best overall model performance with an adjusted R^2-value of 0.413. Model 3 that considers the trade variables has a slightly worse performance with a value of 0.409, model 1 follows with 0.396, and the FDI model has a comparable performance with an adjusted R^2-value of 0.393. For the interpretation of the coefficients, following Hill et al. (2020, p. 365), "[t]wo-way fixed-effects coefficients can be interpreted as the average difference in intra-unit changes in the dependent variable at time point t for each one-unit intra-unit increase in the explanatory variable at time point t, averaged across time points." In other words, this means that the coefficients in the following FE models only relate to average *within-unit variations* that are also averaged *across time points* (Hill et al., 2020, p. 365; see also Mummolo & Peterson, 2018). Furthermore, in regard to the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable (and comparably to the arms sanctioning by autocratic countries as

[29] Although the inclusion of a time-lagged dependent variable can be considered as an interesting addition to the model, standard FE models do not allow for this adjustment as a major model assumption regarding the independence of standard errors would be violated.

[30] The overall results of the two year time-lagged model remain quite similar in comparison to the one year time-lagged model versions, however, the significance of the correlations decreases (see *Table A3*). This further strengthens the overall results in regard to the assumed exogeneity and directions of effects. For future research, it is possible to further explore even larger time lags. However, an analysis with larger time lags could also be confronted with a contestable blurring, as cause and effect are further apart in time.

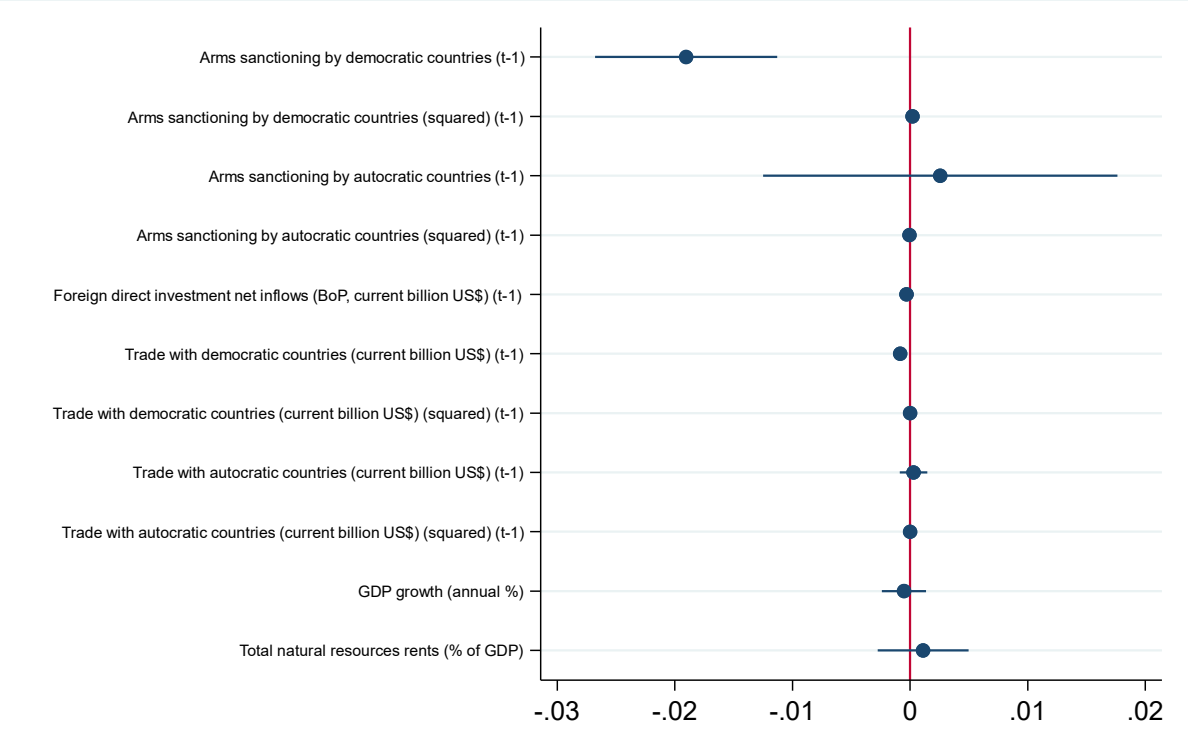
well as the trade variables), both coefficients together – the coefficients of the untransformed and the squared variable – represent a quadratic relationship to the dependent variable.

Table 2: The influence of external factors on democratic quality (FE model)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	-0.0138***			-0.0163***
	(0.00388)			(0.00390)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.000176***			0.000182***
	(0.0000516)			(0.0000345)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	0.00738			0.00146
	(0.0107)			(0.00906)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year	-0.000123			-0.0000414
	(0.000107)			(0.0000889)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year		-0.00127***		-0.000271
		(0.000301)		(0.000205)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year			-0.000994***	-0.000903**
			(0.000291)	(0.000296)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year			0.000000306**	0.000000279*
			(0.000000107)	(0.000000108)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year			0.000380	0.000343
			(0.000603)	(0.000589)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year			-0.000000303	-0.000000181
			(0.000000407)	(0.000000399)
Population (ln)	0.501***	0.482***	0.381**	0.418**
	(0.117)	(0.121)	(0.130)	(0.135)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.000594	0.000973	-0.000528	-0.000307
	(0.00101)	(0.000944)	(0.00101)	(0.000970)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.00115	0.000590	0.00115	0.00123
	(0.00200)	(0.00215)	(0.00200)	(0.00202)
Constant	-4.553*	-4.230*	-2.734	-3.248
	(1.804)	(1.865)	(2.014)	(2.089)
N	6747	6430	6307	6098
Years	1971-2017	1972-2017	1971-2017	1972-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.396	0.393	0.409	0.413

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for all four models is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. All IVs are time-lagged by one year. The variables FDI and Total natural resources rents are the variables that limit the time period due to data availability.

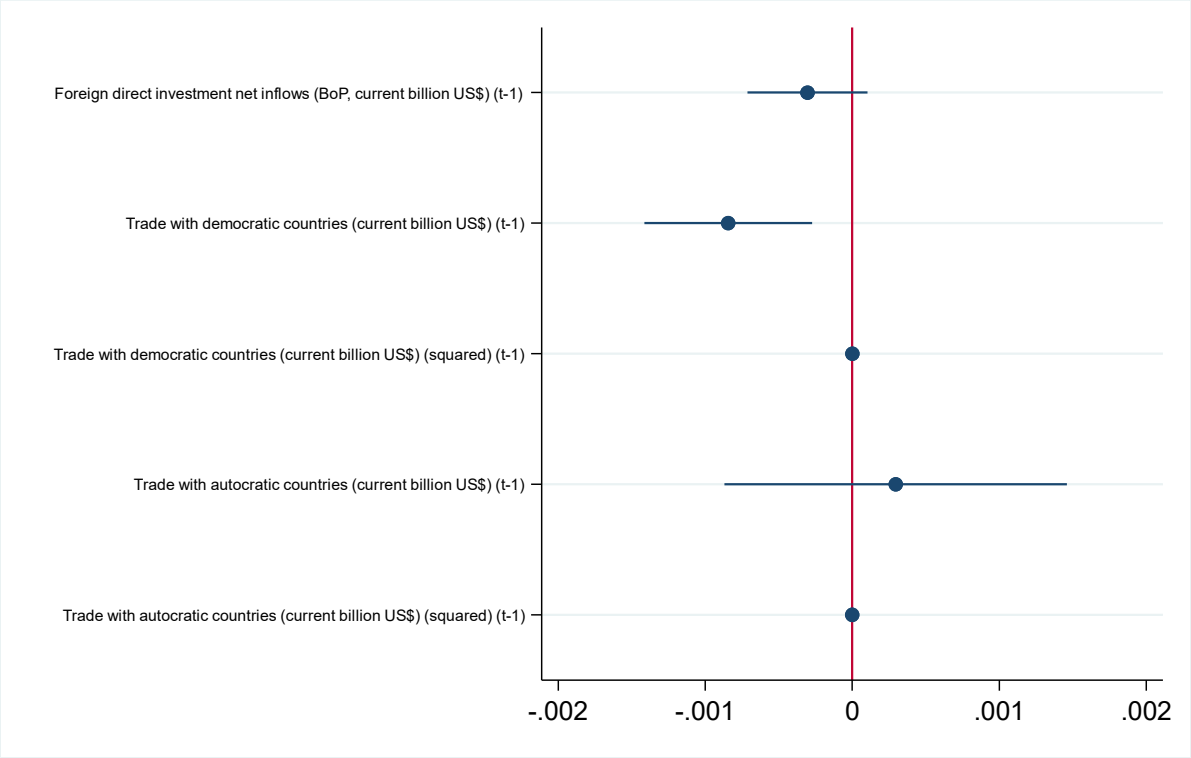
Figure 20: Coefficient plot of the point estimates for the full FE model



Note: Displayed are the coefficients for the full FE model with the lines showing the 95% confidence intervals – for the precise values see *Table 2*. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. Population (ln) and the constant are excluded in the plot for better visualisation of the other coefficients.

The correlations of arms sanctioning by democratic countries with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations with the DV are now all very highly significant on a $p < 0.001$ significance level in the single and combined model (see *Table 2 & Figure 20*). The average marginal effects of 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' on democratic quality that are based on the calculations of the combined model 4 are displayed in *Figure 22*, while also showing the confidence intervals (CI) at a 90 percent level with dotted lines. The upward slope indicates that arms sanctioning by democratic countries initially has a negative effect on democratic quality for weakly/partially sanctioned countries (i.e. by fewer democratic countries) and that the effect changes to a positive one when a larger number of democratic states sanction a given state. The turning point at 44.8 sanctioning states is visualised in *Figure 22* with a red line. In the data range where the confidence intervals overlap the zero line (so between 33 and 57 sanctioning states), the graph indicates that the effect is not significant. The steadily decreasing negative effect is therefore, on the one hand, only significant for weakly/partially sanctioned countries that are sanctioned by 0 to 32 democratic countries. The steadily increasing positive effect on democratic quality, on the other hand, is significant for heavily sanctioned countries (58 to 95 sanctioning democracies).

Figure 21: Coefficient plot of the point estimates for the full FE model (*reduced*)



Note: See the previous description for an explanation. All coefficients but the ones for the effects of trade and FDI are excluded in the plot for better visualisation of the remaining coefficients.

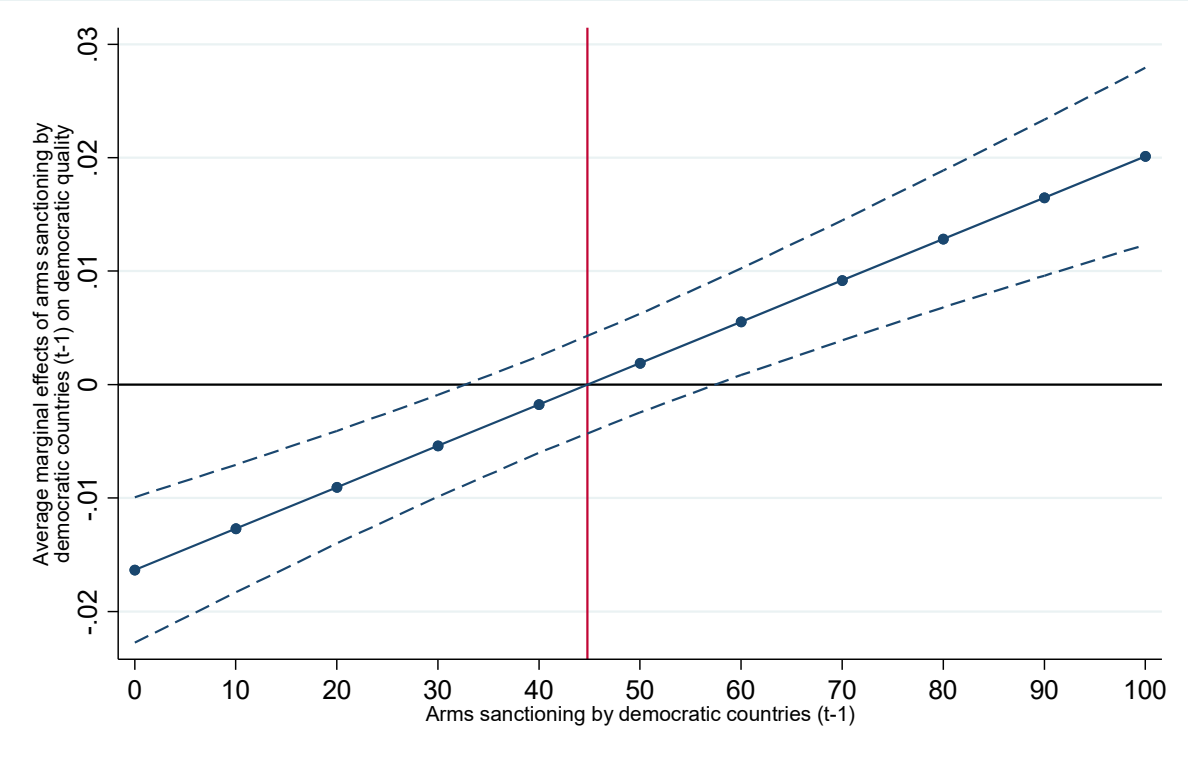
To illustrate the potential strength of the quadratic effect of arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year on the (transformed) dependent variable for different values in the data range of the arms sanctioning variable: the average marginal effect within a country averaged among time at the zero arms sanctions point is -0.0163 *c.p.* At the 50th sanction, the average marginal effect amounts to 0.0019 *c.p.* and at the 80th sanction to 0.0128 *c.p.*[31] Only with the 90th sanction the cumulative effect becomes positive. However, it is important to note the relatively large confidence intervals and associated uncertainty. Still, this relation also corresponds well to the observed curve in the descriptive statistics chapter (see *Figure 19*).

Due to the log-transformation of the dependent variable, the average absolute effect of a change in the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable from, for instance, zero to 50 sanctioning states against a country averaged among time on the original untransformed dependent variable (with the original data range from zero to one) is not easily accessible. A calculation based on predictions for an exponential model specification at specific values for the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable for the comprehensive model leads to the following results that need to be interpreted with caution:[32] 50 democratic countries imposing arms sanctions on a given state in contrast to zero sanctions imposed on the same state averaged among time would be associated with an average -0.149-point change in the *untransformed* DV in the

[31] The calculation of the average marginal effects of the independent variables on the DV is based on the first derivation of the model equation (see also the explanation in the appendix).
[32] In Stata the *margins* command was used, while specifying the *at* and *expression* options (see also Huber, 2019).

following year *c.p.* With 30 sanctioning democracies opposed to zero, the change in the *untransformed* DV in the following year would be on average -0.137-points *c.p.*, for 90 sanctioning democracies on average 0.003-points *c.p* and for 95 sanctioning democracies on average 0.048-points *c.p.*

Figure 22: Average marginal effects of 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' on democratic quality



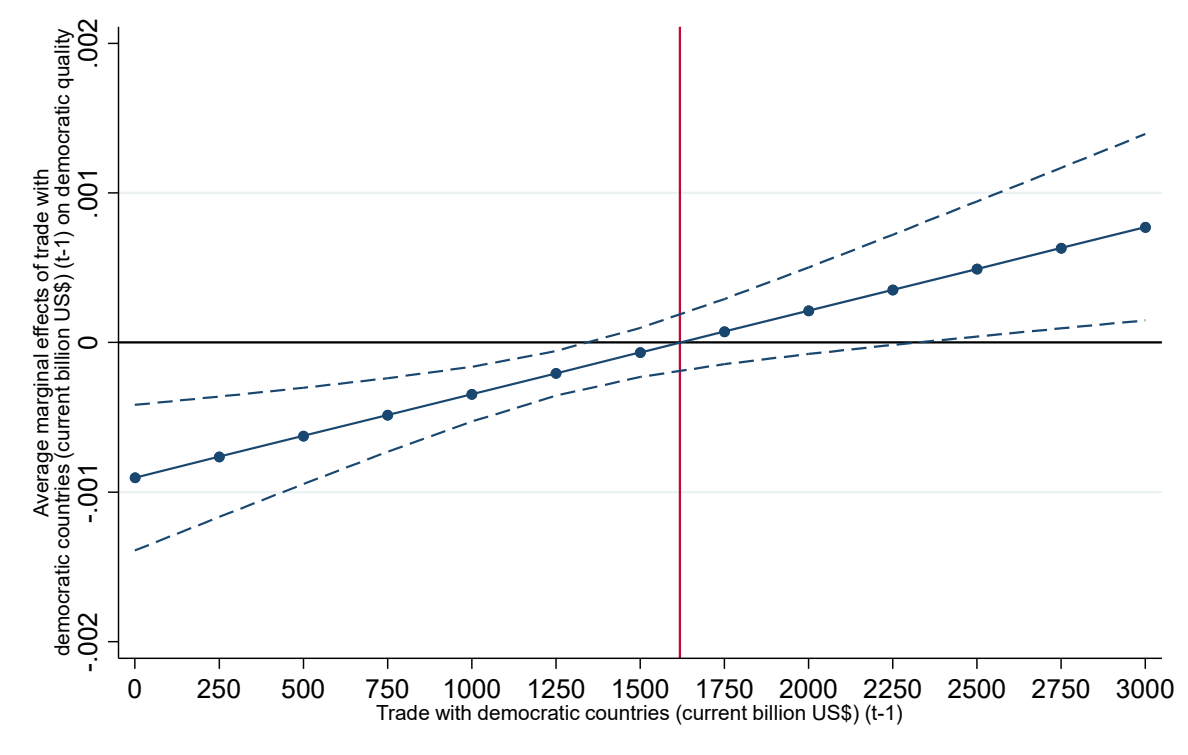
Note: Displayed are the average marginal effects of arms sanctioning by democratic countries (t-1) on the DV that is based on the calculations of the combined Model 4 with the dotted lines showing the 90% confidence intervals. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. The red line marks the turning point (44.78) at which the direction of the effect of sanctions on democratic quality reverses. Data ranges from 0 to 95 sanctioning states.

The effect of arms sanctioning by autocratic countries with the official objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations are – as expected – not significant (see *Table 2*). In regard to trade relations, *Table 2* (see also *Figure 21*) shows a highly significant quadratic relationship between the trade with democratic countries and the DV in the single model 3 (significance levels of $p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.01$) and a reasonably significant effect in the combined model 4 (significance levels of $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$). The coefficients of the trade with autocratic countries variables are, however, insignificant in the single and the full model.

Taking a closer look at the quadratic relation of trade with democratic countries in the combined model, the effect is negative until the turning point at 1.618 trillion US$, where the effect changes to a positive one (see *Figure 23*). The confidence intervals show that the effect is not significant between 1,400 and 2,300 billion US$, because the confidence intervals overlap with the zero line. A calculation of the absolute effects based on the predictions for an exponential

model specification at specific values of the independent variable as described before leads to the following results: for an increase of the trade volume with democratic countries from zero to $100 billion within a country averaged among time, an averaged -0.044-point decrease in the *untransformed* DV in the following year *c.p.* can be derived. Furthermore, a five times larger increase of the trade volume from zero to $500 billion within a country averaged among time is associated with an average -0.167-point decrease in the DV in the following year *c.p.*, an increase from zero to $1 trillion with an average -0.244-point decrease *c.p.* An increase of the trade volume by $2.5 trillion with an average -0.212-point decrease *c.p.*

Figure 23: Average marginal effects of 'Trade with democratic countries' on democratic quality



Note: Displayed are the average marginal effects of trade with democratic countries on the DV that is based on the calculations of the combined model 4 with the dotted lines showing the 90% confidence intervals. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. The red line marks the turning point at 1.618 trillion US$ at which the direction of the effect of trade with democratic countries reverses. Data ranges from 0 to 2.705 trillion US$.

The coefficient of FDI, eventually, is only highly significant in the single model 2, but insignificant in the full model. It is quite likely that the effect is compensated by the additional trade variable. However, in the single model 2, an increase of the FDI value by $100 billion within a country averaged among time can be associated with an -12.7 percent decrease in the *untransformed* DV *c.p.,* while an increase of the FDI value by $500 billion within a country averaged among time can be associated with a -64 percent decrease *c.p.*[33]

[33] Calculations for the real effect in the log-linear-model-specification following Stoetzer (2017, p. 78).

From the control variables, only the correlation of the DV with the population size (ln) stands out as highly significant (significance levels of $p < 0.001$ and $p < 0.01$) in all four model specifications. Due to the log-log-specification, the coefficients can be interpreted as elasticities,[34] which means that in model 4 a 1 percent increase in the population variable within a country averaged among time leads to a 0.4 percent increase in the untransformed democratic quality variable in the following year and a 10 percent increase in the population variable within a country averaged among time further leading to a 4.18 percent increase in the untransformed DV in the following year.

The FE models show clear indications for quadratic influences of one year time-lagged arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries as well as trade relations with democratic countries on democratic quality. The initial significant negative effect of arms sanctions imposed by only a few democratic countries jointly might be a consequence of an overall inconsistent approach of democratic countries or the general state community and sufficient possibilities to circumvent the sanctions, while additionally bringing about greater disengagement/distancing from the sanctioned regime. Only when a larger number of democratic countries impose sanctions at the same time does this negative effect decrease (so after the turning point at 44.8 sanctioning democracies). This could be related to the circumstance that countries affected by a larger number of arms sanctions imposed against them by democratic countries become more clearly internationally distanced. The overall effect of arms sanctions by democratic countries, however, only becomes positive with the 90th sanctioning democracy, which indicates that a joint and comprehensive sanctioning approach by democratic countries is important. However, the effect and interpretation will become clearer in the following part of the analysis, which focuses on regional and temporal patterns (*Chapter 4.2.2*).

These results regarding democratic sanctions are important additions to previous results by von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 967-969) as well as Pospieszna and Weber (2017, pp. 13-14), who have not yet performed a test for quadratic effects but showed overall positive linear influences of democratic sanctions on the change in democratic quality. In general, the operationalisations of the sanction variables differ substantially, as von Soest and Wahman's (2015)[35] use of a dummy variable for the sanctioning of a given state does not capture the strength of joint sanctioning by multiple states, and Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) use of the dyadic dataset of sanctioning by EU countries also captures less information about joint sanctioning by many democratic countries. Furthermore, both studies did not exclusively focus on democratic arms sanctioning. However, the comparison of my results to von Soest and Wahman's (2015) as well as to Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) results will be more accessible using the results from *Chapter 4.2.4*, as the operationalisation of the DV as a change variable used in *Chapter 4.2.4* is more similar to the operationalisations in the previous studies.

Another interesting result is that trade with democratic countries in the previous year is significantly negatively related for trade volumes between zero and 1.618 trillion US$. After this turning point, the effect changes to a positive one, although the overall effect of trade with

[34] Calculations for the real effect in the log-log-model-specification following Stoetzer (2017, p. 78).
[35] In addition, von Soest and Wahman's (2015) only take into account a period from 1990 to 2010, while Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) consider a period from 1989 to 2015.

democratic countries on democratic quality remains negative in the whole data range. It therefore seems that trade is not a measure by democratic countries to unintentionally incentivise pro-democratic reforms. Still, the upward slope of the average marginal effects indicates that very strong economic relations with high trade volumes to democratic countries have a smaller overall negative effect on democratic quality than economic relations with low trade volumes. In addition, the FDI result in the limited model specification with no other external factors indicates a negative relation between FDI and democratic quality – which, however, can only be interpreted to a limited extent. Lastly, the direction of the effect of the population variable on the democratic quality indicates that sanctioned countries with growing populations tend to also become more democratic.

In order to reinforce the robustness of the results, I have excluded China from the sample as a robustness test (not reported). The results were quite stable. As another robustness test, I have estimated a jackknife model that controls for potential overly influential observations that might drive the results. No particular irregularities were found. In addition, temporal and regional patterns are assessed in *Chapter 4.2.2* that help to further identify driving regions and time periods, where the effects can be seen more clearly. Furthermore, an assessment is given in the fourth section of this chapter of an adjusted DV as a change variable that aims to capture the effects of external factors on *autocratisation* and *democratisation* by only focusing on actual changes in the DV. Additional limitations to the interpretation of the results, for instance, in regard to potential interactions of external factors with domestic ones, are taken up again in the discussion chapter.

4.2.2 Exploration of regional and temporal patterns of external influences on democratic quality

After the assessment of external factors on democratic quality on the global level and for the entire duration of the time frame,[36] this section considers potential regional and temporal patterns. The objective is to identify regions and/or time periods where the assumed external effects on democratic quality are most evident. In addition, the chapter aims to discuss the homogeneity/heterogeneity of the results of the different models.

Temporal patterns of external influences on democratic quality

As already illustrated in the introductory and theory chapters, the phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation instead of more sudden regime breakdowns is often related to the most recent autocratisation period and general shifts in the international environment after the end of the Cold War (cf. Bermeo, 2016, p. 15; Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019, p. 1097). In

[36] Note that the regression models in *Chapter 4.2.3* also consider a limited time frame from 1995 to 2017 due to the limited data availability of the democracy aid variable.

this context, reoriented post-Cold War foreign policies by democratic actors, who apply different diplomatic tools to promote democracy abroad, and a generally more pro-democratic international environment are new characteristics of this time period. It can therefore be assumed that the effects of external factors on democratic quality differ in varying time periods and – in regard to diplomatic tools to promote democracy abroad – should be visible more clearly in the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, the post-Cold War time frame was also focused on by von Soest and Wahman (2015) and Pospieszna and Weber (2017), which makes it easier to compare the results.

Table 3: The influence of external factors on democratic quality (FE model) in the periods 1972-1989 and 1990-2017

	Model 1	Model 2
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	-0.680^{+}	-0.00977***
	(0.351)	(0.00230)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.0954	0.000202***
	(0.0847)	(0.0000354)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	-11.64	-0.0127
	(10.83)	(0.00988)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.102	0.0000416
	(0.0942)	(0.0000956)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00595	-0.000120
	(0.00531)	(0.0000855)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.000329	-0.000140
	(0.00166)	(0.000156)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-0.00000175	6.22e-08
	(0.00000258)	(4.73e-08)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00256	-0.000248
	(0.00476)	(0.000323)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-0.0000122	7.88e-08
	(0.0000234)	(0.000000214)
Population (ln)	0.0802	0.512***
	(0.321)	(0.104)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.00250^{+}	0.000208
	(0.00137)	(0.00113)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.00225	-0.000835
	(0.00262)	(0.00218)
Constant	1.990	-4.479**
	(5.016)	(1.655)
N	1993	3985
Years	1972-1989	1990-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.127	0.160

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

In *Table 3*, the results of two FE models for two different time periods are displayed: model 1 focuses on the Cold War era drawing on data from 1972 to 1989 and model 2 on the post-Cold

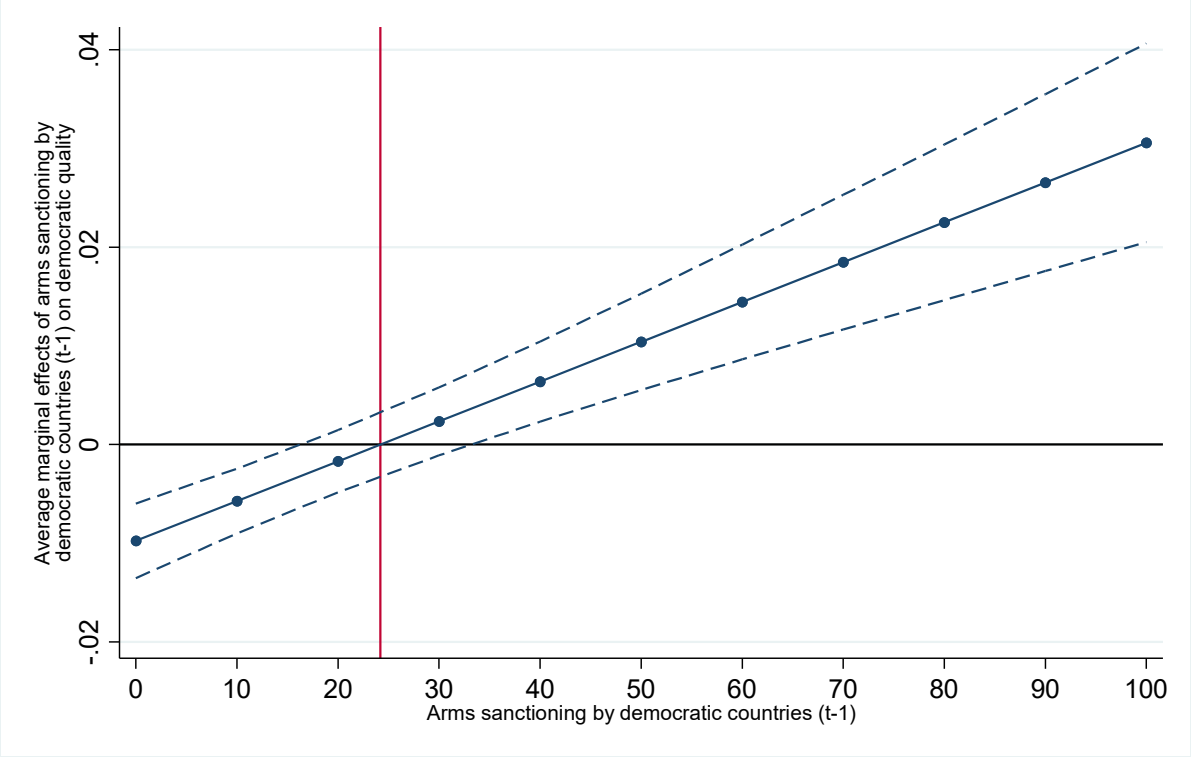
War era from 1990 to 2017. In the first period, the overall model performance is comparatively weak with an adjusted R^2-value of 0.127 and only very limited significant results are visible that can be further interpreted. The clearly less visible effect of the arms sanctions (only arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year on a $p < 0.1$ significance level) with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations can be related to the pattern that official arms sanctions were not a very commonly used (diplomatic) tool before the end of the Cold War. From the control variables, GDP growth (annual %) shows a very weak significant negative effect – again on a $p < 0.1$ significance level –, which only has a limited explanatory value.

In the second model specification, there are highly significant results (on a $p < 0.001$ significance level) for the squared effect of arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year on democratic quality. The average marginal effects are displayed in *Figure 24,* with a turning point at 24.2 sanctioning democracies, while also visualising the confidence intervals (CI) at a 90 percent level with dotted lines. The graph also shows an upward slope that indicates that arms sanctioning by democratic countries initially has a negative effect on democratic quality for weakly/partially sanctioned countries and that the effect changes to a positive one when a larger number of democratic states sanction a given state. In contrast to the effects in the standard model without time restrictions (see *Figure 22*), the data range where the confidence intervals overlap the zero line (so between 17 and 33 sanctioning democracies) – and the graph therefore indicates that the marginal effects are not significant – already occurs with less joint sanctioning. As a result, the data range with significant positive effects is considerably bigger (34 to 95 sanctioning democracies) and the overall effect already turns positive with the 49th sanction.

To illustrate again the strength of the quadratic effect: the average marginal effect within a country averaged among time at the zero arms sanctions point is -0.0098 *c.p.* At the 50th sanctioning democracies point, the average marginal effect amounts to 0.0104 *c.p.* and at the 80th sanctioning democracies point to 0.0226 *c.p.* To quantify again the absolute effect of a change in the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable from zero to 50 sanctioning democracies within a country averaged among time: 50 democratic countries imposing arms sanctions on a given state in contrast to zero sanctions imposed on the same state are associated with an average 0.01-point increase in the untransformed DV *c.p.* With 30 sanctioning democracies opposed to zero, the change in the untransformed DV is on average -0.069-points *c.p.* and for 90 sanctioning democracies on average 0.739-points *c.p.*[37]

[37] Note that the predictions can show values that are higher than the data range from 0 to 1 since the dependent variable in the Stata model is assumed to be a metric variable without a maximum value.

Figure 24: Average marginal effects of 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' on democratic quality in the post-Cold War period



Note: Displayed are the average marginal effects of arms sanctioning by democratic countries on the DV that is based on the calculations of the model for the second time period from 1990-2017 with the dotted lines showing the 90% confidence intervals. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. Data range from 0 to 95 arms sanctions by democratic countries per year. The red line marks the turning point (24.2) at which the direction of the effect of sanctions on democratic quality reverses.

In addition, the log-transformed population control is highly significant, indicating a positive relation. As the coefficient can again be interpreted as an elasticity, a 1 percent increase in the population variable within a country averaged among time corresponds to a 0.51 increase in the untransformed democratic quality variable and a 10 percent increase would further lead to a 5.12 percent increase in the DV. Other external factors such as the trade with democratic countries that was significant in the comprehensive model in *Chapter 4.2.1* are not significant in the analysis of the samples with smaller time frames.

It can be concluded that the initial assumption holds true that effects of external factors on democratic quality differ in varying time periods and – in regard to diplomatic tools to promote democracy abroad – are visible more clearly in the post-Cold War era. The post-Cold War model shows a strong positive effect between arms sanctioning by democratic countries and democratic quality when a large number of democratic countries apply arms sanctions against a country simultaneously. With the overall effect turning positive with the 49th sanctioning democracy in the post-Cold War era, this result also corresponds better to previous results by von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 967-969) and Pospieszna and Weber (2017, pp. 13-14), while shedding light on the complex role of joint sanctioning by democratic states.

Regional patterns of external influences on democratic quality in the post-Cold War period

Table 4: Total arms sanctions by democratic countries in the post-Cold War period in different world regions

Region name	Region code	Observations (country-years)	Observations with arms sanctions by democratic countries	Total arms sanctions by democratic countries 1990-2017
Sub-Saharan Africa	SSF	1,323	198	10,191
Europe and Central Asia	ECS	1,329	54	2,275
Middle East and North Africa	MENA	560	71	1,612
East Asia and Pacific	EAS	616	102	1,452
South Asia	SAS	224	10	362
Latin America and the Caribbean	LCN	700	31	248
North America	NAC	56	0	0

Source: GSDB V2 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b).

Besides the temporal variance, it can be assumed that the influence of external factors on democratic quality also follows regional patterns as (colonial) path dependencies, spatial proximity, and historical power relations are very likely to still shape foreign policy agendas and international relations. For the regional grouping, the regional classification of the World Bank database (2020) is used that groups countries into the following seven regions: Sub-Saharan Africa (SSF), Europe and Central Asia (ECS), Middle East and North Africa (MENA), East Asia and Pacific (EAS), South Asia (SAS), Latin America and the Caribbean (LCN), and North America (NAC). Already when looking descriptively at the regional distribution of arms sanctions imposed on states by democratic countries with the objectives 'democracy' and 'human rights' after the Cold War (1990-2017), the strong sanctioning of Sub-Saharan African states with 10,191 sanctions in 198 country-years is noticeable (see *Table 4*). Comparatively less sanctions were imposed on states in the second most sanctioned region, Europe and Central Asia (2,275 sanctions in 54 country-years), although the total amount of observations (country-years) in the dataset is comparable. In the Middle East and North Africa (71 observations with sanctions) as well as in East Asia and Pacific (102 observations with sanctions) the amount of country-years with democratic arms sanctions in place is higher than in Europe and Central Asia (54 observations with sanction), while the total amounts of sanctions are comparatively lower with 1,612 (MENA) and 1,452 (EAS) sanctions. Less sanctions were imposed on countries in South Asia (362 sanctions in 10 country-years) as well as Latin America and the Caribbean (248 sanctions in 31 country-years) and no sanctions on states in North America.

In *Table 5*, the results for the standard FE model in different world regions after the Cold War are displayed. Due to the division into regions, the number of cases in the regional models is considerably smaller than in the full model, which accordingly leads to less significant results and can be seen as a general limitation. The overall model performances also vary, with the best model performances for the MENA (adj. R^2: 0.324) and SSF (adj. R^2: 0.308) regions, lower model performances for the SAS (adj. R^2: 0.207), LCN (adj. R^2: 0.172), and ECS (adj. R^2: 0.154) regions and a poor model performance for the EAS (adj. R^2: 0.064) region.

Table 5: The influence of external factors on democratic quality (FE model) in the post-Cold War period in different regions

	LCN	SSF	SAS
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	0.0719*	-0.0138**	-0.168
	(0.0258)	(0.00439)	(0.169)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.00209***	0.000208***	0.0115
	(0.000257)	(0.0000372)	(0.0488)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	-0.365***	0.000277	-1.000
	(0.0651)	(0.00959)	(4.871)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.00193***	-0.0000770	0
	(0.000494)	(0.0000956)	(.)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00286	-0.00435	0.00468
	(0.00394)	(0.00978)	(0.0188)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.000807	0.000231	-0.0100
	(0.00135)	(0.00427)	(0.0219)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-0.000000121	0.0000132	0.0000221
	(0.00000158)	(0.0000212)	(0.0000444)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.00136	0.00940	0.00129
	(0.00398)	(0.0118)	(0.0164)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-0.0000130	-0.000183	-0.00000460
	(0.0000288)	(0.000133)	(0.0000274)
Population (ln)	-0.844+	-0.0498	0.694
	(0.442)	(0.232)	(0.807)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.0000947	0.00218	-0.000683
	(0.00204)	(0.00134)	(0.00493)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.000925	0.000163	-0.0515
	(0.00467)	(0.00224)	(0.0420)
Constant	17.26*	3.996	-8.111
	(6.913)	(3.572)	(13.70)
N	623	1056	182
Years	1990-2017	1990-2017	1990-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.172	0.308	0.207

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. North America is excluded due to the non-presence of arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, a significant relation of arms sanctions imposed on states by democratic countries with the objectives 'democracy' and 'human rights' on democratic quality is visible (see *Figure 25*) that corresponds well with the relation shown in the standard FE model in *Figure 22* and before in *Figure 24*. In comparison to the post-Cold War model discussed before, there are, however, more overlaps of the confidence intervals with the zero line (between 20 and 44 sanctioning democracies). The graph in *Figure 25* has a slightly higher turning point at 33.2 and, on the one hand, indicates significant positive effects without overlapping confidence intervals when a large number of democratic countries (more than 45) impose arms sanctions against a country simultaneously. On the other hand, a significant negative effect that has no

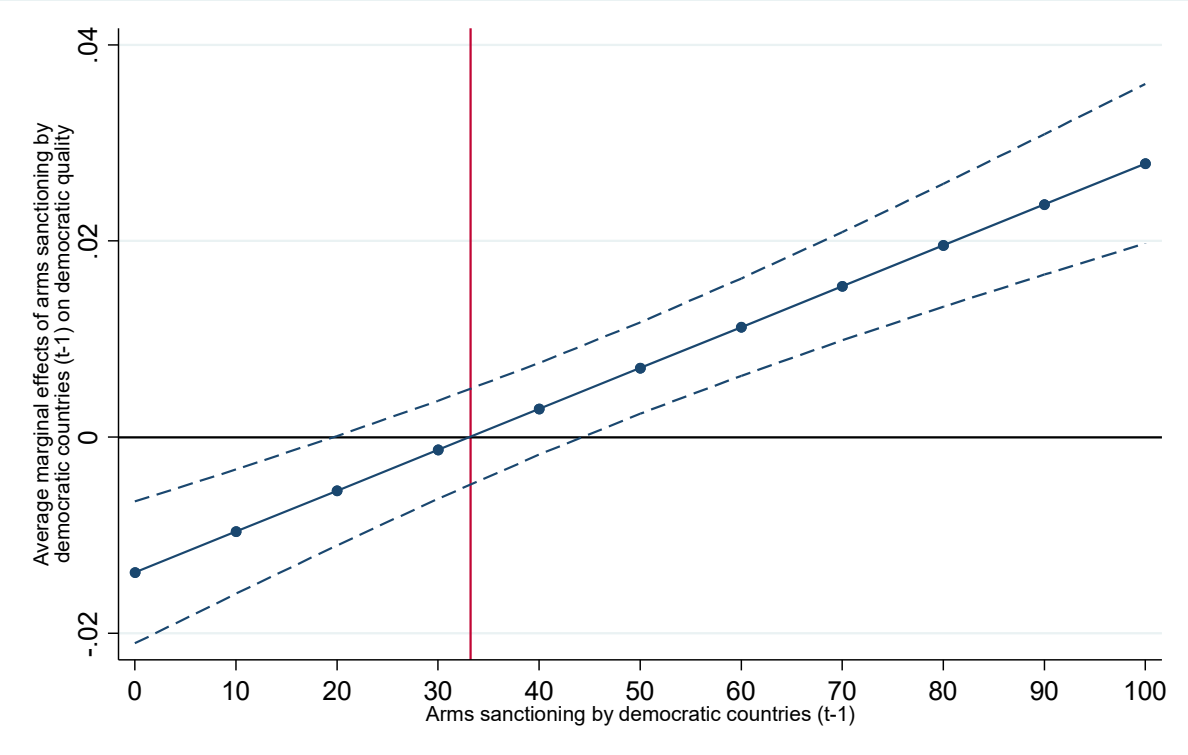
overlapping confidence intervals with the zero line can be seen for countries that are only sanctioned by a low number of democratic countries (0 to 19 sanctioning democracies).

Table 5: The influence of external factors on democratic quality (FE model) in the post-Cold War period in different regions (*cont.*)

	ECS	MENA	EAS
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	0.00232	0.0103	-0.00788
	(0.00696)	(0.0870)	(0.0221)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year	-0.0000271	-0.000760	0.00101^{+}
	(0.000214)	(0.00228)	(0.000566)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	-0.0194	0.0939	-1.359***
	(0.0144)	(0.189)	(0.0656)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.000233	-0.000513	0.284***
	(0.000187)	(0.00395)	(0.0139)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	0.0000221	-0.0106	-0.000720
	(0.0000701)	(0.00662)	(0.000916)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.000458	-0.00495	-0.000844
	(0.000368)	(0.00692)	(0.000613)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-5.77e-08	0.00000948	0.000000195
	(0.000000145)	(0.0000138)	(0.000000243)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.00315*	0.00286	0.00148
	(0.00124)	(0.0140)	(0.00111)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	0.00000402^{+}	0.0000138	-0.000000794
	(0.00000224)	(0.0000482)	(0.000000790)
Population (ln)	0.137	0.538^{+}	0.818
	(0.204)	(0.298)	(0.606)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.000766	-0.00350	0.00114
	(0.00164)	(0.00451)	(0.00428)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.00870**	0.00528	0.00500
	(0.00279)	(0.00566)	(0.00378)
Constant	1.970	-5.613	-9.805
	(3.246)	(4.601)	(9.958)
N	1140	435	502
Years	1990-2017	1990-2017	1990-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.154	0.324	0.064

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses. $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. North America is excluded due to the non-presence of arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries.

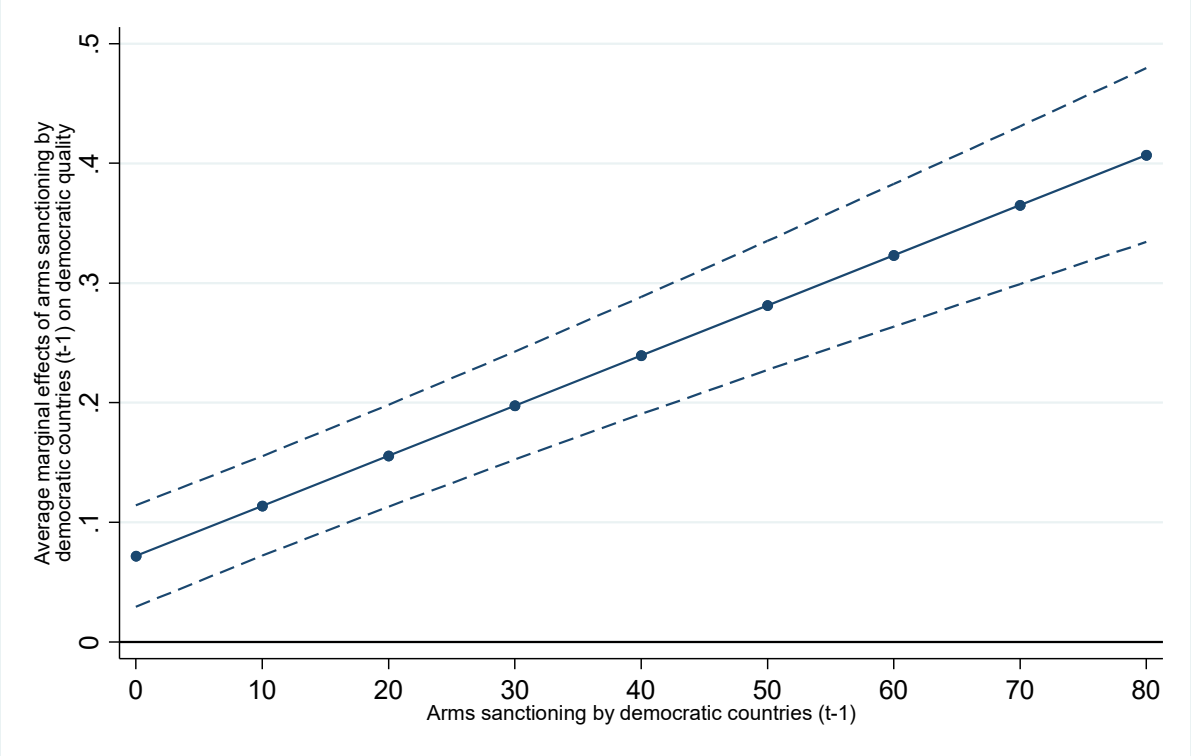
Figure 25: Average marginal effects of 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' on democratic quality in the post-Cold War period in Sub-Saharan Africa



Note: Displayed are the average marginal effects of arms sanctioning by democratic countries on the DV that is based on the calculations of the model for SSF in the time period 1990-2017 with the dotted lines showing the 90% confidence intervals. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. Data range from 0 to 95 arms sanctions by democratic countries per year. The red line marks the turning point (33.2) at which the direction of the effect of sanctions on democratic quality reverses.

The average marginal effects are comparable to the previously discussed values of the post-Cold War model. At the zero arms sanctions point, the average marginal effect within a country averaged among time is -0.0138 *c.p.* At the 50th sanctioning democracies point, the average marginal effect amounts to 0.007 *c.p.* and at the 80th sanctioning democracies point to 0.0195 *c.p.* The overall effect turns positive with the 67th sanctioning democracy. To visualise the consequences of a change in the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variable from zero to 50 sanctioning democracies within a country averaged among time: 50 democratic countries imposing arms sanctions on a given state in contrast to zero sanctions imposed on the same state are associated with an average 0.059-point decrease in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index c.p.* With 30 sanctioning democracies opposed to zero, the change in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* is on average -0.077-points *c.p.* and for 90 sanctioning democracies on average 0.214-points *c.p.* A collective sanctioning by 95 democratic countries opposed to zero would eventually lead to an average 0.293-point increase in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index c.p.*

Figure 26: Average marginal effects of 'Arms sanctioning by democratic countries' on democratic quality in the post-Cold War period in Latin America and the Caribbean



Note: Displayed are the average marginal effects of arms sanctioning by democratic countries on the DV that is based on the calculations of the model for LCN in the time period 1990-2017 with the dotted lines showing the 90% confidence intervals. The DV for the model is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. Data range from 0 to 75 arms sanctions by democratic countries per year.

Latin America and the Caribbean is the other world region where a significant positive quadratic relation between arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries on democratic quality stands out (on a $p < 0.05$ and $p < 0.001$ significance level) (see *Figure 26*). In contrast to Sub-Saharan Africa, the direction of the effect here is positive in the whole data range and there are no overlapping confidence intervals with the zero line that would indicate an insignificant marginal effect. The effect sizes are, however, considerably too high, what can be related to the very low number of cases where democracies impose arms sanctions against countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Only in six cases, more than one sanction was imposed by a democratic country on a state in the region. In 25 cases, only one democratic country imposed arms sanctions. The coefficients can therefore not be interpreted in a meaningful way.

Interestingly, contrary significant quadratic effects of arms sanctioning by autocratic countries with the objectives 'democracy' and 'human rights' on democratic quality are visible in the LCN and EAS regions. While the relation in the LCN region is negative in the whole data range, the relation in the EAS region is U-shaped. They can, however, also be related to very limited

observations with arms sanctions imposed on a country by autocratic countries in the sub-samples and are therefore not further explored.[38] Furthermore, in the ECS region, a significant negative effect (on a $p < 0.01$ significance level) of the Total natural resources rents (% of GDP) variable on the democratic quality is mentionable. In addition, there is a weakly significant quadratic effect of the trade with autocratic countries in the previous year variable on democratic quality that is rather inconclusive due to high and overlapping confidence intervals.

Summing up, the analysis clearly shows regional and temporal patterns. The examined external factors' relation to democratic quality are only visible in the post-Cold War era – in this case mainly arms sanctions by democratic countries with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations. In contrast to the comprehensive standard FE model in *Chapter 4.2.1*, the turning point where the initial negative effect turns positive can already be detected at 24.2 sanctions. In addition, the overall effect on the democratic quality already turns positive with the 49th sanction, which points to a clearly increasing positive effect the more democratic countries impose arms sanctions against a given country.

Furthermore, the effect of arms sanctions by democratic countries on democratic quality seems to be mainly driven by observations in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in the post-Cold War era. This result makes sense in view of the overall use of democratic arms sanctions throughout history, of a comparatively low level of democracy in the overall region, and of a linkage and leverage context in which states in Sub-Saharan Africa are depicted as states with a comparatively high external vulnerability (Levitsky & Way, 2006, pp. 382-383). The results indicate an overall positive relation when a large number of democratic countries (more than 67) impose arms sanctions against a country simultaneously and a slightly negative significant effect between 0 to 19 countries imposing sanctions (turning point at 33.2 sanctioning democracies). The strength of the effect on the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index* for 90 sanctioning democracies opposed to zero would be on average 0.214-points *c.p.*, which can generally be seen as the most realistic value compared to the other model specifications that took into account broader time frames and more/other world regions. Thus, in Latin America and the Caribbean, a significant positive effect of arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries can, however, only be interpreted to a limited extent due to the small number of cases where arms sanctions are imposed by democratic countries.

4.2.3 Standard FE model for the effect of democracy aid on democratic quality

After having presented the standard fixed effects models in the previous chapters, I calculate the combined model from the first step with the additional democracy aid variables for the even narrower time frame from 1995 to 2017. Democracy aid is a key linkage-instrument of democracy promotion/protection and overall results of a large number of studies showed positive influences of democracy aid on democratic quality (see Gisselquist et al., 2021). In this analysis,

[38] Note that in the EAS region only in 22 observations (country-years) of the sample (N=616) arms sanctions by autocratic countries were imposed. The maximum amount of arms sanctions imposed on a country in a year by autocratic countries was five. In the LCN region only in 5 observations of the sample (N=700) arms sanctions by autocratic countries were imposed and the maximum amount of arms sanctions by autocratic countries was 92.

as already assessed in the methods chapter, the temporal data availability is comparatively limited with democracy aid commitment data only being available from 1995 to 2019 in the OECD's CRS (2021).

Three model specifications are tested for in the analysis of the influence of democracy aid on democratic quality (see *Table 6*). Model 1 includes the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable, while in model 2 democracy aid is time-lagged by two years, in order to capture a potential impact of democracy aid that unfolds in the course of two years. Model 3 includes a per capita version of the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable (in current US$ per capita) drawing on population data from the World Bank database (2020). As an additional robustness test, I have also tested model 1 by world regions (see *Table A4* in the appendix). Furthermore, battle related deaths taken from the UCDP GED Global Version 20.1 (Pettersson & Öberg, 2020; Sundberg & Melander, 2013) are included as a control for violent conflict in all three models, whose usage is also constraint by limited data availability (data available from 1989 to 2019).

The overall model performances for the three model specifications are very similar with an adjusted R^2-value of 0.114 for model 1, 0.113 for model 3, and 0.112 for model 2. The slight variation in the adjusted R^2-values can also be related to the lower *N* in the second model that is due to the two year time lag. As expected, the analysis shows a significant positive relation (significance level of $p < 0.01$) between (time-lagged) democracy aid and democratic quality in the first two models. The coefficient is even slightly higher in the second model that considers the two year time-lagged democracy aid variable, indicating that impacts of democracy aid unfold in the course of time. The democracy aid per capita variable that is included in model 3 is in contrast only weakly significant (significance level of $p < 0.1$). To further illustrate the strength of the effects, in model 1, a $100 million increase of the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable within a country averaged among time can be associated with an average 0.8 percent increase in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index c.p.*, while an increase of the democracy aid value by $500 million within a country averaged among time can be associated with an average 4.2 percent increase *c.p.* and a $1 billion increase with an average 8.4 percent increase *c.p.* Even higher increases can be derived from the second model, where a $100 million increase of the two year time-lagged democracy aid variable within a country averaged among time can be associated with an average 0.9 percent increase in the untransformed DV *c.p.*, while an increase of the democracy aid value by $500 million within a country averaged among time can be associated with an average 4.6 percent increase *c.p.* and a $1 billion increase with an average 9.2 percent increase in the untransformed DV *c.p.* In regard to the democracy aid per-capita variable, one US$ per capita more within a country averaged among time can be associated with an average 0.06 percent increase in the untransformed *Electoral Democracy Index c.p.* and a $5 increase with an average 0.28 percent increase *c.p.*

The other results of the models are largely consistent with the results of the previous two subchapters, especially compared to the post-Cold War model, only with slightly less significant coefficients for the arms sanctioning by democratic countries variables and also insignificant coefficients for the trade with democratic countries variables. The conflict control variable is not showing any significant effect. Furthermore, in the course of the selection of the regression model, I have also tested for potential interaction effects between democracy aid and democratic arms sanctions, but no significant results became evident.

Table 6: The influence of external factors on democratic quality including democracy aid (FE model) in the period 1995-2017

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)	0.0000840**		
	(0.0000270)		
Democracy aid (current million US$) (two year time lag)		0.0000926**	
		(0.0000293)	
Democracy aid per capita (current US$) (one year time lag)			0.00056081*
			(0.0002829)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (one year time lag)	-0.00809**	-0.00727*	-0.00835**
	(0.00290)	(0.00292)	(0.00292)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	0.000161**	0.000154**	0.000164**
	(0.0000511)	(0.0000544)	(0.0000512)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (one year time lag)	-0.0109	-0.0127	-0.0109
	(0.00899)	(0.00968)	(0.00906)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	0.0000415	0.0000607	0.0000414
	(0.0000946)	(0.000104)	(0.0000950)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) (one year time lag)	-0.0000498	-0.0000422	-0.0000440
	(0.0000697)	(0.0000694)	(0.0000654)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	-0.000149	-0.000161	-0.000134
	(0.000122)	(0.000118)	(0.000122)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	6.77e-08+	7.18e-08*	6.37e-08+
	(3.66e-08)	(3.50e-08)	(3.64e-08)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	-0.000256	-0.000255	-0.000252
	(0.000276)	(0.000269)	(0.000278)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	7.59e-08	7.36e-08	6.80e-08
	(0.000000175)	(0.000000170)	(0.000000175)
Population (ln)	0.504***	0.501***	0.509***
	(0.111)	(0.113)	(0.110)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.00137	0.00130	0.00125
	(0.00116)	(0.00119)	(0.00117)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.000840	-0.000767	-0.000884
	(0.00209)	(0.00203)	(0.00207)
Battle related deaths	-0.000000559	-0.000000762	-0.000000477
	(0.00000348)	(0.00000427)	(0.00000345)
Constant	-4.227*	-4.161*	-4.298*
	(1.767)	(1.801)	(1.746)
N	3336	3187	3336
Years	1995-2017	1995-2017	1995-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.114	0.112	0.113

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for all three models is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln).

In my additional robustness test in which I have tested model 1 by world regions (see *Table A4* in the appendix), I find that positive significant effects of democracy aid mainly stand out in the LCN and the SSF regions – and very weakly significant in the ECS and EAS regions. In

general, however, the results must be interpreted with some caution in view of the smaller number of cases in the different regions with the limited time frame (1995-2017). Nevertheless, it can be concluded that the positive effect of democracy aid spans across regions. My other results regarding the strongly significant quadratic effect of democratic arms sanctioning by democratic countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, which drives the overall results of democratic arms sanctioning by democratic countries, and the strongly significant quadratic effect of sanctioning by autocratic countries in the EAS region, which can only be interpreted to a limited extent due to the very limited observations with arms sanctions imposed by autocratic countries in the subsample, relate very well to the previously presented results in *Chapter 4.2.2*.

The results show, as theoretically derived, clear indications of a positive effect of democracy aid on democratic quality that spans over regions. They further indicate that impacts of democracy aid can unfold in the course of time as the coefficient of the two year time-lagged democracy aid variable is higher than the one year lagged one. These results also correspond well with the results of the previous regression model for the post-Cold War era in *Chapter 4.2.2*.

4.2.4 Standard FE model for the effects of external factors on the change in democratic quality

To capture the effects of external factors on actual changes of democratic quality, in the last section of this analysis, I calculate three FE regression model specifications for the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' (for the operationalisation see the description in *Chapter 3.2.1*) as the dependent variable (see *Table 7*). Moreover, all independent variables are time-lagged by one year. The first model specification displays the results for the FE model without quadratically transformed independent variables for the entire time frame. Model 2 additionally includes the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable (as introduced in *Chapter 4.2.3*) and focuses on the period from 1995 to 2017. In addition, *Table A5* in the appendix shows the results of model 2 by world regions. In the third model specification, the model specification as in model 1 is calculated with quadratically transformed independent variables for the entire time frame.

All general model performances are weaker than before with adjusted R^2-values of 0.020 (model 1 and 3) and 0.010 (model 2) (see *Table 7*). These lower values, however, fit to the R^2-values in von Soest and Wahman's (2015, pp. 967-969) analysis of changes in democracy levels as the DV. Overall, positive significant effects of the untransformed arms sanctioning by democratic countries and the democracy aid variable stand out. The untransformed arms sanctioning by autocratic countries variable is only moderately significant in the second model. In the first model, the effect of arms sanctions by democratic countries is linear and positive (coefficient of 0.000501). This would mean that with each additional sanctioning democracy the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' within a targeted country averaged among time would very slightly increase by on average 0.000501-points *c.p.*, for 90 sanctioning democracies by on average 0.0451-points *c.p.* respectively. Model 3 that additionally includes the quadratically transformed independent variables shows similar results, which means that in regard to the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' no squared effects are evident and that the first

model specification should be preferred for the analysis of the entire time frame. The effect of democracy aid in the second model specification is also linear and positive (coefficient of 0.0000113). This means that an $100 million increase of the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable within a country averaged among time can be associated with a very small 0.00113-points increase in the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' *c.p.* All other coefficients of the independent and control variables are statistically insignificant.

Table 7: External effects on the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	0.000501**	0.000702*	0.000822**
	(0.000188)	(0.000273)	(0.000300)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year			-0.00000650
			(0.00000494)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	-0.000240	-0.000544+	0.000295
	(0.000201)	(0.000306)	(0.00164)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year			-0.00000371
			(0.0000167)
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)		0.0000113**	
		(0.00000417)	
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00000380	-0.00000246	0.00000462
	(0.0000161)	(0.0000152)	(0.0000191)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00000128	0.00000225	-0.00000991
	(0.00000457)	(0.00000639)	(0.0000111)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year			5.99e-09
			(4.26e-09)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.00000770	-0.0000139	-0.00000918
	(0.00000966)	(0.0000132)	(0.0000195)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year			-2.89e-09
			(1.40e-08)
Population (ln)	0.00365	-0.00791	0.00256
	(0.00424)	(0.00669)	(0.00443)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.000186	0.000129	0.000183
	(0.000144)	(0.000198)	(0.000144)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.0000722	0.000165	0.0000651
	(0.0000942)	(0.000193)	(0.0000940)
Constant	-0.0543	0.125	-0.0374
	(0.0658)	(0.107)	(0.0688)
N	6097	3336	6097
Years	1972-2017	1995-2017	1972-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.020	0.010	0.020

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for the model is the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'. Model 1: full FE model with time-lagged independent variables but without quadratic variable transformations; model 2: FE model with the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable and the limited time frame from 1995-2017; model 3: full FE model with time-lagged independent variables and including quadratically transformed independent variables.

It can be concluded that influences of external factors are less visible with the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' as a dependent variable instead of the transformed *Electoral Democracy Index*, although the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' as a dependent variable intuitively fits very well to the concept of *autocratisation.* However, by exclusively considering changes in the *Electoral Democracy Index* and additionally taking into account time and year fixed effects, substantially less computable information/deviations are included in the calculations – the general level of the index value is automatically excluded by the deviation-approach and the fixed effects further subtract unit- and year-level averages of the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' from the values. Overall, only minor remaining deviations in the *Electoral Democracy Index* occur, on which the calculations presented before are based on. This also explains why the previously identified quadratic effect of arms sanctions by democratic countries only appears here as a linear positive effect. Against this backdrop, nevertheless, the significant positive linear effects of democratic arms sanctions by democratic countries and of democracy aid on actual changes in the *Electoral Democracy Index* stand out as robust results of this analysis.

In an additional attempt to increase the robustness of these results, I tested for regional patterns for model 2 (see *Table A4* in the appendix). My results indicate that the positive effect of democracy aid on the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' can mainly be observed in the MENA and EAS regions and only with a very weak significance in the LCN region – with the strongest effect in the MENA region. Interestingly, the effect cannot be fully traced in the same regions as in the previous analysis step (see *Chapter 4.2.3*). But again, the positive effect seems to span across different world regions. Nevertheless, this finding should also be assessed against the background of the previously discussed implications of the substantially less computable information/deviations included in the calculations with a change variable as the DV and included time and year fixed effects. Regarding democratic arms sanctioning by democracy countries, a positive effect in the SSF region stands out – as expected after the previous analysis of regional patterns in *Chapter 4.2.2* and *4.2.3*. Furthermore, I find a weakly significant positive linear effect of trade with democratic countries in the SSF region. However, this effect should not be overestimated in view of the model's weaknesses and its first appearance, but it is worth mentioning.

These general results also correspond well to findings by von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 967-969) and Pospieszna and Weber (2017, pp. 13-14) regarding democratic sanctions – although of different model specifications (e.g. use of fixed effects) and variable operationalisations – and to the overall findings on democracy aid's positive influence on democratic quality (Gisselquist et al., 2021, pp. 15-16; Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020, pp. 103-131).

4.3 Bundling and contextualising the results of the statistical analysis

The descriptive statistics chapter already visualises the worldwide autocratisation trend over the last ten years (2012-2022). It further shows that the regional distribution of democratic and autocratic countries is still following regional patterns with strong democratic systems in Europe and North America and more divided regions in terms of democratic quality especially in Africa and Asia. In addition to the major worldwide autocratisation trend that is driven by democratic declines in countries such as Hungary or India, comparatively 'smaller' autocratisation processes in consolidated democracies stand out (e.g. in the U.S. or Australia) as well.

Furthermore, the first descriptive inspection of the arms sanctions data reveals the pattern that arms sanctions with the objectives to enforce a pro-democratic change or end human rights violations are currently (in 2022) mainly imposed on states in Africa. There is also a clear trend of a more frequent usage of democratic arms sanctions after the end of the Cold War. Additionally, highly sanctioned countries are often sanctioned by democratic as well as autocratic countries. States that are in contrast only sanctioned by a smaller amount of democratic countries are mainly not targeted by autocratic countries at all. The first assessment of the FDI and trade data points out the strong economic acceleration of trade volumes in the past fifty years, while further emphasising the importance of the U.S., China, and Europe for world markets.

The subsequent regression analysis focuses on average effects of theoretically derived external factors such as arms sanctions, democracy aid, and economic linkage (FDI and trade) as independent time-lagged variables on the general democratic quality of states as well as on changes in democratic quality in four consecutive steps. The results indicate that a strong quadratic relation between arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries and democratic quality exists. Particularly in the post-Cold war era, when the usage of arms sanctions as a diplomatic tool is more frequent than before, a strong positive effect is visible between arms sanctioning by democratic countries and democratic quality when a large number of democratic countries apply arms sanctions against a country simultaneously. Based on the region-specific analysis, it can be assumed that these results are mainly driven by sanctions imposed on countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in the post-Cold War era. Here, the effect of democratic sanctions imposed by democratic countries on democratic quality is initially negative, but has a turning point at the 33rd sanctioning democracy. The overall effect is positive for 67 or more sanctioning democracies. As a positive relation indicates that the occurrence of joint democratic sanctioning in the previous year is associated on average with a higher level of democratic quality in the following year – in contrast to the case of the absence of joint democratic sanctioning in the previous year –, this effect can further be interpreted as an autocracy preventive effect (see also *Chapter 3.2.1*). Interestingly, when focusing on democratic sanctions effects on actual changes in democratic quality (so based on substantially less computable information) as a proxy for *autocratisation* and *democratisation*, a linear positive effect stands out, which can also be interpreted as a preventive effect. Taken together, this evidence from the quantitative analysis actually supports the hypothesised statement that democratic arms sanctions as coercive leverage-instruments contribute to preventing autocratisation (*Hypothesis 1*). However, these results seem to be driven by sanctions imposed on states in the post-Cold War era in the Sub-Saharan Africa region, while also pointing to the important role of joint sanctioning by democratic states.

Overall, these results correspond well to previous results by von Soest and Wahman (2015) and Pospieszna and Weber (2017) and further shed light on the complex role of joint sanctioning by democratic states.

Furthermore, the analysis reveals clear indications of a positive effect of democracy aid as a key linkage-instrument of democracy promotion/protection on democratic quality in the following year and the actual change in democratic quality (*Hypothesis 1*), which spans across regions. The result also relates very well to the general picture drawn in the literature (Gisselquist et al., 2021, pp. 15-16; Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020, pp. 103-131). My results further indicate that impacts of democracy aid unfold in the course of time, as the coefficient of the two year time-lagged democracy aid variable is higher than the one year lagged one. As another supportive element, the democracy aid per capita variable showed similar, but less significant results.

Regarding the other external factors, I found more limited results. Thus, with the regression analysis I was able to show a quadratic relation of trade relations with democratic countries in the most comprehensive model within my study for the entire time frame. The results indicate that trade with democratic countries is significantly negatively related for trade volumes between zero and 1.618 trillion US$ and positively after the turning point. The overall effect, however, remains negative in the whole data range. Still, the upward slope of the average marginal effects indicates that very strong economic relations with high trade volumes to democratic countries have a smaller overall negative effect on democratic quality than economic relations with low trade volumes. However, these results could not be shown in any of the other regressions[39], which is why the results can only be generalised to a limited extent. Arguably, it seems that trade is not a measure used by democratic countries to unintentionally incentivise pro-democratic reforms (*Hypothesis 2a*). Moreover, no significant effects are traceable for trade relations with autocratic countries and only limited results for the FDI variable (a negative effect on democratic quality) in a reduced model specification without further independent variables. In regard to the control variables considered in the models, the population size variable displays a highly significant positive effect in several model specifications, indicating that countries with growing populations tend to become more democratic.

Drawn together, the effects of democratic arms sanctioning by democratic countries, here especially of joint sanctioning in the post-Cold War period on states in Sub-Saharan Africa, and of democracy aid on democratic quality and actual changes in democratic quality stand out. The four-step exploratory analysis thus provided relevant insights into the effects of external factors on preventing autocratisation from abroad. The analysis further opens up room for discussion and future research that are assessed in-depth in *Chapters 6* and *7*.

[39] Also note the weakly significant positive linear effect found for trade relations with democratic countries on the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' for the SSF region in *Chapter 4.2.4*.

5 Cross-regional case studies

As the second part of the two-pronged mixed-methods design approach, the qualitative within-case studies of Senegal and Indonesia now focus on influences on decision-making moments of the contra-democratic executives in four observation periods to assess the mechanisms at work behind the relation of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation and external autocracy prevention and answer the underlying how question. While building on the qualitative case study research design presented in *Chapter 3.3.2*, I begin with the Senegal case study in *Chapter 5.1* and then continue with the Indonesia case study in *Chapter 5.2*.

5.1 Senegal

As highlighted in the case selection, due to Senegal's existing high economic and donor dependencies, the relevance of the state's colonial history, and still prevailing close relations with France as the former colonial power, Senegal is categorised as a *most likely case* for the underlying analysis as external factors are expected to have a strong potential influence on domestic politics regarding recent autocratisation processes. The analysis of the following case study is divided into three major parts. In the first step, I give an overview of Senegal's democratic development and recent democratic quality declines. The aim of this part is to identify specific observation periods with key decision-making moments in which democratic quality declines are initiated by a contra-democratic executive in power that can be taken up in the main analysis.[40] In the second step, necessary background information for the analysis are provided, covering the historical and political context. This step includes an assessment of the presidents as the main decision-makers, whose decision-making processes are the subject of the main analysis. The third step is the main analysis, where domestic and external influences on the decision of the presidents in the previously identified observation periods are assessed as potential perceived costs and benefits. The third part ends with an overall account in which the different influencing factors are weighed against each other.

5.1.1 Senegal's democracy and recent democratic quality declines

Senegal's reputation as a politically stable and democratic showcase country is no coincidence. Unlike most other states in the region, Senegal never experienced a severe form of authoritarianism or a successful *coup d'état* after gaining independence from its former colonial power France in 1960 (cf. Hartmann, 2010, p. 769; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 2). Instead, the state has been able to maintain a rather stable democratic political system since its successful transi-

[40] A dedicated timeline of the events during the observation periods is included in the appendix (see *Figures A4* and *A5*).

tion to democracy in 2000 and the last presidential elections were classified as mainly democratic by official European and U.S. observers (Arieff, 2011, pp. 1 & 3-4; European External Action Service (EEAS), 2020, p. 141). In 2012, Senegal had its fourth change of president with the election of current President Macky Sall of the Alliance for the Republic-Yaakaar (APR) party. Sall is a former member of the Senegalese Democratic Party (PDS) and won against the prominent, long-standing political figure President Abdoulaye Wade of the PDS. In 2019, Sall was re-elected for a second term.

Despite high expectations, several developments regarding politically motivated attempts to initiate changes to the electoral system and probable misuses of the judicative system during the Wade and Sall presidencies also led to disappointments among pro-democratic observers. In particular, attempts to influence the electoral system and circumvent presidential term limits regularly led to political debate, public protest, and outbreaks of low-level electoral violence (Burchard, 2013; Fiedler et al., 2020, pp. 64-65; Heyl & Llanos, 2020, pp. 5-6). For instance, in 2005, President Wade caused a postponement of the 2006 parliamentary elections for one year, citing high costs as motivating factor. Following Fiedler et al. (2020, p. 64),

> "[c]ritics accused the incumbent government of using the postponement to better position itself for the election. Eventually, the major opposition parties boycotted the elections, accusing Wade of manipulating the electoral and party system. As a consequence of the 2007 elections, Wade's government was able to govern without major political opposition" (ibid; while referring to Hartmann, 2010).

Only a few years later, in 2011, President Wade sought a third term against the electoral law that limits presidential terms to two – a law he had re-introduced at the beginning of his presidency (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 5). However, according to Wade's reasoning, his first term should not be counted, as with the 2001 constitutional reform his count should be set to zero. His interpretation was eventually confirmed by the Senegalese Constitutional Council (Melly, 2012, p. 5), although the independence of the Council's decision is questionable. Furthermore, Wade tried to establish the new post of a vice-president with a shared ticket in the presidential elections and to lower the 50 percent threshold in the first round of the presidential elections to 25 percent (Demarest, 2016, p. 64). This unsuccessful attempt "was generally viewed as a device to line up his son Karim for the succession", "[d]espite Wade's denials" (Melly, 2012, p. 5). His attempts led to a public outcry and the outbreak of low-level electoral violence (ibid.; Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 65; Heyl & Llanos, 2020, pp. 5-6). Although Wade could not be prevented from running for office again, he was eventually defeated in the 2012 presidential elections by his former prime minister and fellow party member Macky Sall.

Sall, who was no stranger to Senegalese politics and had already held various positions under Wade, supported the existing presidential term-limit rule during his campaign and sided with the pro-democratic oppositional forces (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6). In addition, Sall promoted institutional reforms aimed at shortening presidential terms from seven to five years that subsequently led to an election reform in 2016 (BBC News, 2016, Januar 18, 2016, March 23). However, in the same reform, a more "ambiguous wording" was introduced for the term-limit rule (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6). Furthermore, Sall's government implemented changes to the election law prior to the 2019 elections on rather short notice, which made it more difficult for opposition parties to nominate candidates (Klatt, 2019, pp. 1-2; Toupane et al., 2019). The re-

forms established, *inter alia*, a citizen sponsorship system called *Parrainage*-system (by collecting signatures) and were officially aimed at reducing the supposedly large field of applicants, in order to help citizens keep track of election programmes and reduce costs of elections in general (ibid.). Moreover, a pre-condition for presidential candidates was introduced, which made their own qualification for voting a prerequisite (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019, p. 28; Toupane et al., 2019). As a result of these changes, two of Sall's main political opponents (Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall) were not allowed to run for president in 2019, because of previous legal charges against them (Toupane et al., 2019, p. 4). In addition, the field of candidates finally consisted of only five candidates, thereby significantly fewer than in previous elections (15 candidates in 2007, 14 in 2012) – a consequence of the *Parrainage*-system considered beneficial for the incumbents' prospects to secure a first-round win (e.g. interviews 10.11.2022, 15.11.2022). As another element, for most of his second term, Sall refused to rule out the possibility that he might run again for a third term in the 2024 presidential elections, while his supporters openly campaigned for a third term (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6; Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26). Parallels to his predecessor, President Wade, are also immanent in the 2021 anniversary protests that commemorate the tenth year after the protests against Wade in June 2011 and that are at the same time directed against President Sall's possible third term ambitions (Rédaction Africanews, 2021, June 24).[41]

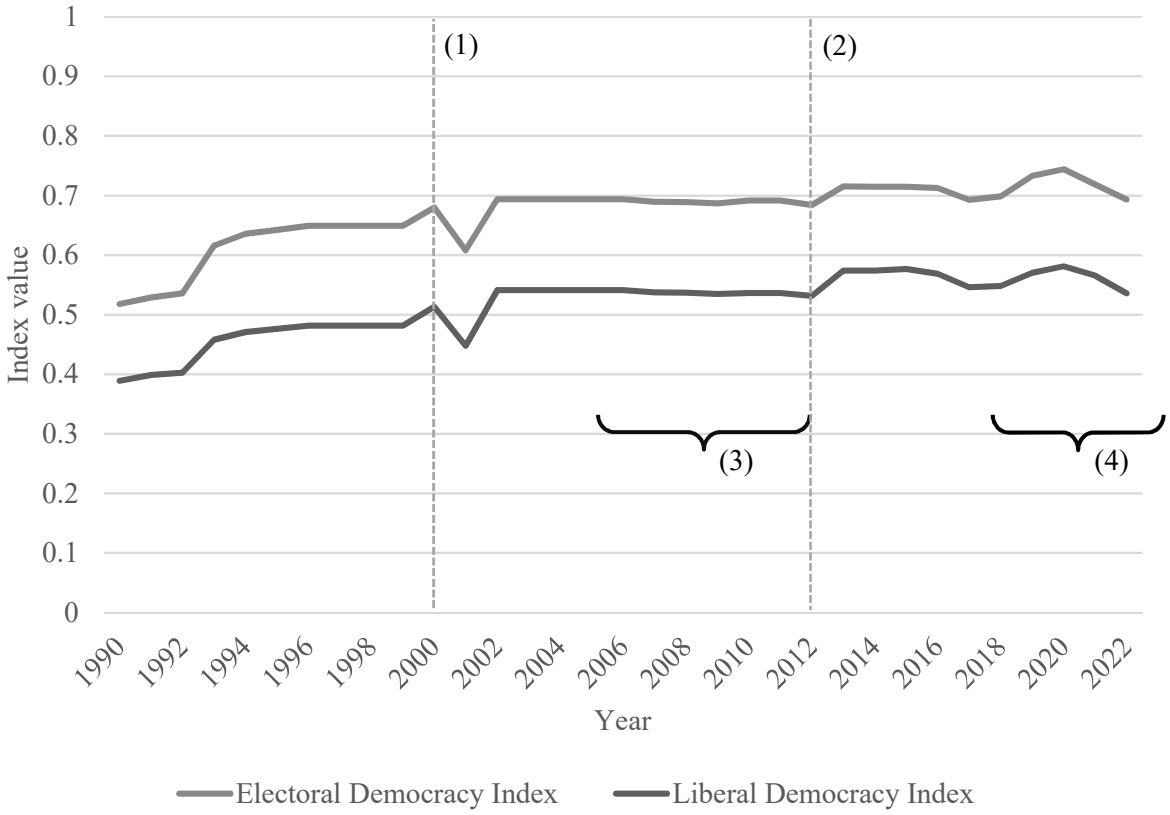
Besides the changes to the electoral law, President Sall's government is accused of politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents, while the misdemeanours of its own politicians are not sufficiently addressed (Kanté, 2021; Lu, 2021). The previously mentioned prosecutions of Sall's two main political opponents in the 2019 presidential elections, Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall, are seen as examples in this context – as well as the more recent prosecution of Sall's main political opponent, Ousmane Sonko, who is considered to have good prospects to succeed over Sall or one of his party members in the 2024 presidential elections (ibid.). Sonko had to stand trial for rape charges,[42] but the opposition accused President Sall and his government of being too much involved into the trial or even "that the government was plotting to thwart his [Sonko's] presidential candidacy" (Kanté, 2021, pp. 5-6). An unexpected arrest of Sonko in March 2021 thus led to severe outbreaks of (partly violent) protest around the country that also included attacks against French businesses (especially supermarkets and gas stations) (Kanté, 2021; Lu, 2021). The 2022 municipal elections that took place on 23 January can further be seen as an important test for the Sall presidency before the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, which led to major defeats of the ruling coalition in key cities (cf. Rédaction Africanews, 2022, January 25; Resnick, 2021). This trend continued in the 2022 Senegalese parliamentary elections on 31 July. At the very end of the period under study on 3 July 2023, Sall officially declared that he would not run again for president in the 2024 presidential elections, thereby ending months of speculation and tensions about his ambitions (Kane & Ngom, 2023, July 4). Shortly after, the government's conflict with Sonko and his opposition party further escalated, leading to Sonko's re-imprisonment on wide-ranging charges and the banning of his party.

[41] The obvious comparison between the two presidents was a recurring theme during my interviews conducted in Dakar in November 2022. Both parallels between the courses of the two presidents were emphasised, but also clear differences, for example, in the context of the international perception of the presidents (see, e.g. interview 15.11.2022b).

[42] An assessment of these allegations is made in the analysis section of this chapter.

Based on this first assessment of recent democratic quality declines in Senegal, two main observation periods with key decision-making moments for the analysis can be identified: (1) Wade's attempts to influence the electoral system and circumvent presidential term limits, beginning with the postponement of the parliamentary elections in 2005 and ending with his electoral defeat in 2012; (2) the election reforms and introduced pre-conditions for presidential candidates during the Sall presidency (prior to the 2019 elections and after), possible politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents as well as President Sall's potential third term ambitions (see also *Figure 27*). The second observation period ends with Sall's announcement in mid-2023 that he will not run again and the events that immediately followed.

Figure 27: Electoral and liberal democracy in Senegal between 1990 and 2022



Note: Displayed are the untransformed index values for V-Dem's *Electoral* and *Liberal Democracy Indices* that range from 0 to 1. The dotted lines mark the two presidential elections in which the decision-makers for the subsequent analysis were first elected to office: (1) the 2000 presidential elections in which President Wade won and (2) the 2012 presidential elections in which President Sall succeeded. In addition, the two open brackets (3 & 4) indicate the two observation periods under study. Note that the second observation period (4) lasts until mid-2023 and thus longer than the data period of the two indices displayed. *Source:* V-Dem v13 (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023).

Taking into consideration Senegal's rating in democracy indices in recent years (see *Figure 27* for Senegal's scores according to V-Dem v13 (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023)), the rating reflects Senegal's reputation as a politically stable and democratic showcase country in the Western Africa region. In 2022, Senegal's performance on the *Electoral Democracy Index* was actually the highest in the region (0.69), while only Ghana reached a slightly better score on the *Liberal Democracy Index* (Ghana: 0.54; Senegal: 0.53). However, it is important

to note that not all the political developments assessed before led to substantial changes in the ratings. Which makes sense, as these indicators mainly assess the quality of core democratic institutions (e.g. checks and balances, freedom of expression, or an independent judicative) – and do not so much capture unsuccessful attempts to, for example, change the electoral law.

Regarding influences of external factors on Senegal's political system and the cost-benefit assessments of the ruling executive to initiate institutional changes, Senegal's close ties to Western donors and especially its former colonial power France remain highly relevant. These close ties have to be assessed in light of Senegal's rather weak economy and high dependence on foreign aid and investments (cf. Arieff, 2011). Senegal's relations to France remained quite close after independence in 1960 and have resulted in continued strong ties (ibid., pp. 1, 13-14). A negatively perceived strong French influence on Senegal's politics and economy and particularly criticised corrupt networks of Franco-African authorities and business elites, which are also seen as an element of *Françafrique*, frequently led to public criticism and protest (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 10-11). Especially the still existing Franc of the Financial Community of Africa (Franc CFA) currency-system is subject to strong criticism and will be further discussed in the course of the analysis. Furthermore, in 2021, the protests following the trial of Ousmane Sonko led to violent protest directed against French businesses (e.g. Total) (Lu, 2021).

Nevertheless, Senegal still plays a prominent regional role as "a beacon of democracy and stability in West Africa" (ibid., p. 2) and is highly active in regional organisations like the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Arieff, 2011, p. 13). Senegal is further actively engaged in peacekeeping missions and regional conflict resolution efforts (ibid., pp. 13-14). In recent years, Senegal is also establishing closer relations with the U.S., which is interested in stable, influential pro-democratic allies in the region (Arieff, 2011; United States Department of State, 19.11.2021). Regarding Western donors' policies towards Senegal, Fiedler et al. (2020) describe a situation where Western donors are generally caught between prioritising political stability over promoting democratic political competition. Besides Senegal's relations to Western states, the increasing importance of China for the Senegalese government needs to be considered as well. Against this background, Senegal is diversifying its donor relations with China filling in the role of an alternative donor that provides interest-free loans and aid without possible pro-democratic conditionality (Gehrold & Tietze, 2011).

In the context of the 2012 presidential elections and President Wade's attempted third presidential term, there were also clearly visible short-term external influences as the European Union and single Western states (France, Germany, and the U.S.) strongly criticised the Wade administration and eventually imposed sanctions against the government (Callimachi, 2012, February 2; Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 69). In addition, external actors initiated cooperation with opposition movements (Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 69; Kelly, 2013). The European Union, ECOWAS, and the AU further accompanied the 2012 and 2019 presidential elections with election observation missions. Especially the EU is now promoting the 2012 mission as a showcase mission (European Commission, 2021). Further potential short-term external influences in the context of the previously identified decision-making moments will be assessed in the course of the analysis.

Summing up, an analysis of external influences on the cost-benefit assessments of the presidents'/executives' main anti-democratic decisions to initiate institutional changes that worsen the democratic quality in the previously identified observation periods is promising – particularly against the background of Senegal's strong external dependencies. The described developments during the two identified observation periods can also be put well in relation to the incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation phenomenon (see *Chapter 2*).

5.1.2 Contextualisation

In order to assess the influence of external factors on current democratic quality declines in Senegal – namely as influences on the decision/cost-benefit assessment of the executive – the analysis needs to be sensitive to the contextual conditions, i.e. the domestic and external actor setting in the given historical, political, and social environment. Therefore, the case study begins with an overview of the general context, followed by a closer look at the presidents as main decision-makers, including an assessment of the interests and attitudes of the presidents.

5.1.2.1 General facts

Senegal is a West African country on the Atlantic coast. Its neighbouring countries are Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Mauritania. In addition, Gambia is situated as an enclave in the south of Senegal along the eponymous river. The majority (more than 94 percent) of Senegal's rather small population (17,244,000 inhabitants, World Bank database (2020)) is Muslim (Arieff, 2011, p. 1; Lansford, 2021b, p. 3). The political and economic power of Islamic groups (e.g. Sufi religious brotherhoods) is considered to be high (Lansford, 2021b, p. 3; Melly, 2012, pp. 3-4). In this ethnically very diverse state, numerous languages are spoken. The main ethnic group are the Wolof, whose language is also the most widely used language in the country. Although French is still the official language, it is only used by a minority of the population in daily life (ibid.).

Senegal is a founding member of two highly influential regional organisations, the AU and its predecessor institution the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as well as ECOWAS, both of which are strongly relevant for Senegal's foreign and trade policy. Despite of Senegal's rather small size and low economic power, Senegal is very active in the region, for example, in regard to UN peacekeeping missions or as a mediator in conflicts (Arieff, 2011, pp. 13-14; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 12-13; A. Sall, 2013, p. 10).

Economic development, inequality, and poverty reduction are still major challenges for Senegal (Arieff, 2011, p. 10; Lansford, 2021b, p. 3). In 2021, Senegal ranked on the 103th position of the world's biggest economies with a GDP of US$ 28 billion (in comparison Germany ranked on the 4th position with US$ 4.23 trillion or the Netherlands on the 18th position with US$ 1.01 trillion) (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2021). The general government gross debt (percent of GDP) in 2021 amounted up to 71.9 percent after a sharp increase in the last approx. ten

years (ibid.). Senegal's existing economic system roots back to the heavily export and agriculture orientated system of the colonial period that depended primarily on the export of peanuts (Hargreaves, Camara, & Clark, 2021, p. 16). The country's main economic sectors today are fishery, agriculture (peanuts and cotton), and tourism, with fish replacing peanuts as the main export product (Arieff, 2011, p. 2; Hargreaves et al., 2021, pp. 16, 19). As already mentioned, France's influence on Senegal's politics and economy is still perceived as strong (e.g. regarding the Franc CFA currency-system).

Against the backdrop of economic development challenges as well as high debts and dependence on foreign aid, foreign investments, and aid programmes – such as the U.S. financed Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)[43] assistance – are of high importance for Senegal's economy and political officials (Arieff, 2011, pp. 8-9; Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 2; Lansford, 2021b, p. 3). In 2009, for instance, Senegal reached an agreement with the MCC to build roads and irrigation projects worth US$540 million (Lansford, 2021b, p. 4). But also the cooperation with 'new donors' and trade partners, especially China in the context of its Belt and Road Initiative, led to substantial investments in Senegal and a diversification of trade relations (cf. ibid, p. 13).

5.1.2.2 Historical contextualisation

The present territory of Senegal was an area of French influence since the 17th century. During the colonial period that was coined by violence and suppression, France began to introduce some democratic practices in the form of voting rights for French elections to a minority of the male Senegalese population in four coastal cities in 1848 (Schaffer, 1997, p. 40).[44] In addition, "in 1914 [,] Blaise Diagne became the first African to be elected to the French national assembly" (Melly, 2012, p. 3). As a result, a subset of Senegal's society already had early experiences with French traditions of competitive politics that now date back more than 170 years. These democratic traditions also translated to Wolof with the local concept of *demokaraasi*, which has developed its own distinct meaning that not only entails participatory institutions, but notably also "ideals of social welfare, and the consequent extension of the concept to refer to a range of actions that promote collective security" (Schaffer, 1997, p. 44).

Senegal first became independent from its former colonial power in 1960 – still as part of the Federation of Mali.[45] After two months, Senegal seceded and gained full independence on 5 September 1960 (Lansford, 2021b, p. 4). Shortly after independence, a first government was formed under President Léopold Sédar Senghor of the Senegalese Progressive Union (UPS) party[46], who was in office until his retirement in 1980 (ibid., pp. 4-5). During Senghor's presidency, the political system navigated through some turbulences, as the party system was a *de facto* single party system with exclusive elections that did not allow for oppositional candidates

[43] The MCC was formed in 2004 and is an independent, bilateral U.S. foreign assistance agency (Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), s.a.).
[44] An element that was also emphasised in the interviews (09.11.2022, 18.11.2022).
[45] For a more comprehensive overview of Senegal's history and political developments after independence see also Lansford (2021b).
[46] The name was changed to Parti Socialiste du Sénégal (PS) in 1976.

to run for offices as candidates (ibid.; Burchard, 2013, pp. 1-2). Some elections were accompanied by electoral violence and in 1962, Senghor's Prime Minister Mamadou Dia attempted an unsuccessful coup. In consequence, the political system was changed from the initial parliamentary system with a prime minister to a presidential system, but was changed again later in 1970 and the post of prime minister was re-established (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 4-5). At the end of Senghor's presidency, the first additional parties were admitted – a course that was further pursued by his successor (ibid.).

After Senghor's retirement, his former prime minister and protégé Abdou Diouf became the second president of Senegal. He allowed a "gradual process of democratization" (Melly, 2012, p. 5) to happen that included a multi-party system with an increasingly influential independent opposition that also became involved in the government and efforts to decentralise power (ibid.; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 5-6). In his speeches, Diouf referred to the concept of *demokaraasi* and linked it to religious metaphors in Wolof. While, on the one hand, he made the concept of democracy approachable and referred to Senegal's historical experiences with elections, on the other hand, Schaffer (1997, pp. 44-45) also sees an aim of reinterpreting the concept of democracy by downplaying the role of the opposition.[47] Moreover, there were episodes of reversal, especially after the assassination of Babacar Seye, the Constitutional Council's vice president, in 1993 that led to the imprisonment of main oppositional figures such as later President Wade of the PDS and his wife, Viviane Wade (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 5-6).

The 2000 presidential elections mark Senegal's successful transition to democracy. Following Wade's victory in the second round of the elections, Diouf allowed a peaceful transfer of power (ibid.; Melly, 2012, pp. 4-5). After his election, Wade and the PDS initiated further pro-democratic reforms, including a shortening of the presidential term to five years and the re-introduction of a term-limit rule allowing presidents to serve up to two terms. Wade's later actions, such as the postponement of the parliamentary elections in 2005 and his third term attempt (see Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 64), are now the subject of the assessment of the first observation period of this case study.

Although Wade could not be prevented from running for office again in the 2012 presidential elections, he was eventually defeated by his former prime minister and fellow party member Macky Sall. Sall introduced further reforms under the label of strengthening democracy and was re-elected in 2019. Sall's actions prior to the 2019 elections and after mark the second observation period of this case study. They entail controversial election reforms and introduced pre-conditions for presidential candidates, possible politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents as well as his third term ambitions.

[47] In his metaphors, for example, he referred to oppositional politicians as muezzins, thereby suggesting the interpretation that oppositional politicians are free to express their agendas, but not much more than that (Schaffer, 1997, pp. 44-45). Diouf's religious metaphors were also mentioned in an interview (18.11.2022), here to emphasise that Diouf acknowledged oppositional parties.

5.1.2.3 Senegal's current political system

Senegal's current political system that can be described as a centralised presidential republic roots back to the system established after Senegal's independence in 1960 that was strongly orientated to the French model (Lansford, 2021b, p. 3). Frequent constitutional reforms and amendments led to extensive changes in Senegal's political system – the post of president, however, remained central. Senegal's current constitution is from 2001 and was amended by Wade and the PDS shortly after his election (Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 24; Lansford, 2021b, p. 7). The last referendum that included major changes to the constitution was conducted in April 2016 under President Sall. Since the 2016 referendum, the president can serve up to two five year terms (previously seven year terms). In addition, in a recent constitutional amendment in 2019, the post of prime minister was again repealed and the president is now also head of government and appoints the ministers (Lansford, 2021b, p. 9).[48] As a result, the executive power in the Senegalese political system mainly emanates from the president. Moreover, in regard to foreign policy, the "president is at the heart of the foreign policy apparatus and his functions in that area are many and varied" (A. Sall, 2013, p. 8).

The main legislative body is the National Assembly ('Assemblée nationale') with 165 members, who serve five year terms. Following Lansford (2021b, p. 26)[49]:

> "The assembly currently consists of 165 members, 90 elected on a majoritarian basis at the department level and 60 elected on a proportional basis from national party lists. Fifteen members are elected by overseas voters. Members serve five-year terms, although the assembly is subject to presidential dissolution after two years."

Senegal has a multi-party system with 47 parties that participated in the parliamentary election in 2017 (ibid., p. 15). Parties frequently form electoral coalitions. The United in Hope coalition (*Wolof*: Benno Bokk Yaakaar, BBY) that is led by President Sall's APR party, is currently the most influential party coalition with 125 out of 165 seats. The coalition defeated – among others – another coalition, the Senegal's Winning Coalition, which is led by the PDS (ibid., p. 9). There are no primarily ethnic or regional parties, however, some parties for religious groups exist (Hartmann, 2010, pp. 775, 777-780). Furthermore, there is no party for the pro-secessionists of the Casamance region (ibid., p. 776).[50] In addition to the National Assembly, from 1999 to 2001 and from 2007 to 2012, Senegal had a Senate that worked as an upper house of the legislative system and consisted of 100 senators that were partly appointed by the president and partly indirectly elected from the districts (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 25-26).

The judicative branch is also orientated towards the French system, with a Court of Cassation as the highest court in Senegal. Lansford (2021b, p. 10) describes Senegal's judicative branch as follows:

> "The principal judicial organs, under a system revised in 1992, include a Constitutional Council, one of whose functions is to rule on electoral issues; a Council of State; a Court of Cassation; and a Court of Appeal; with magistrate courts at the local level. In addition,

[48] The post of prime minister was recently reintroduced in September 2022.
[49] For a description of the electoral system see also Kelly (2013) or the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (2017).
[50] For a detailed analysis of the Senegalese multi-party system see Hartmann (2010).

> a High Court of Justice, chosen by the assembly from among its own membership, is responsible for impeachment proceedings."

It is important to add that the influential – and for the underlying analysis central – Constitutional Council is an institution with seven members that are all appointed by the president (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 12). This again underlines the dominant role of the president in Senegal's political system.

In regard to sub-state level governance in Senegal, the state "is administratively divided into fourteen regions, each headed by a presidentially appointed governor who is assisted by an elected Regional Assembly; the regions are divided into 45 departments and 110 communes, along with 320 rural communities (communautés rurales)" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 9). Attempts to decentralise power were also part of the 2016 constitutional referendum that included changes to increase local governments' power (ibid.). Local elections in Senegal can be considered as influential for state level politics. They do not only allow for access to state resources, they often foreshadow election results on the state level. In the local elections for the post of the mayor of Dakar, for instance, a quarter of the Senegalese population is eligible to vote according to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (2022, p. 1).

A frequently pointed out challenge to Senegalese politics is corruption, especially in the context of government representatives and also in connection to corrupt Franco-African authorities and business elites (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 10-11; Melly, 2012). In 2021, Transparency International (2021) lists Senegal on rank 73 in a worldwide comparison using the Transparency International *Corruption Perceptions Index* – and thereby lists Senegal on the same level as Hungary or Ghana. Lastly, it can be stated that the military did not play a dominant role in Senegal's political system since independence, or as Melly (2012, p. 3) framed it: "The military stays out of politics."

Supported by this short overview of Senegal's general historical context and political system, the following assessment of the president as main decision-maker as well as the ensuing analysis of the domestic and external influences on the presidents' cost-benefit assessments in the identified observation periods are conducted.

5.1.2.4 The president as main decision-maker

The directly elected and thereby strongly legitimised president, who is head of state and government and main actor in regard to Senegal's foreign policy, can clearly be identified as the main decision-maker in Senegal's current political system. Especially during the Wade presidency, a "concentration of decision-making power in the presidency, and particularly in the hands of Wade" (Melly, 2012, p. 5; see also Mbow, 2008) took place. Democratic quality declines – in the underlying sense in form of introduced laws/reforms, regulations and prohibitions, or the illegitimate influence on the judicative system – can either be actively initiated or made possible by a non-prevention (through the absence of a reaction). However, limitations of the scope of actions due to the political majorities in the parliament and potential concessions to other parties in a governing coalition are possible and assessed in the course of the analysis.

During the first observation period that covers the time frame from 2005 to 2012, as introduced before, Abdoulaye Wade of the PDS governed as president. His election in 2000 also marked Senegal's successful transition to democracy, while his unsuccessful third term attempt in the 2012 presidential elections marks the end of the first observation period. Wade and his administration can therefore be identified as the first relevant decision-maker in the underlying analysis, from whom the cost-benefit assessment is analysed.

Prior to his election, Wade already was an active opposition member (Lansford, 2021b, p. 5). Wade was born in 1926 in Kébémer, a city in the northwest of Senegal. He studied in Senegal and France and obtained a doctorate in law and economics at the Sorbonne University, Paris. Initially he worked as a lawyer in France, but moved back to Dakar and continued to practice law. Moreover, he taught at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (Lawler, 2023).

At the beginning of his political career, in 1974, Wade founded the PDS "as a youth-oriented opposition group to implement the pluralistic democracy guaranteed by the Senegalese constitution" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 18; see also Lawler, 2023). Wade was an active advocate of democracy (Mbow, 2008, p. 158) and he already ran for president in 1982 and 1988 (Lansford, 2021b, p. 5). Especially in the 1980s, Wade was actively involved in pro-democratic protests against the government, positioning against election fraud and the exclusive political system (ibid., p. 18). Between 1991 and 1992 as well as 1995 and 1997, he joined the government of his predecessor Diouf. As a result of the assassination of the Constitutional Council's Vice President Babacar Seye in 1993, Wade and his wife were temporarily imprisoned on conspiracy charges (ibid., pp. 5-6, 18-19). In 2000, he won the presidential elections with the support of most other parties and an election campaign promising pro-democratic and economic reforms, including limitations to the power of the president (ibid., pp. 6-7; Resnick, 2013, p. 628). The promised reforms led to a national referendum in 2001 (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 6-7).

Contra-democratic tendencies that are focused on in the analysis of the first observation period began during Wade's presidency. They, *inter alia*, include attempts to initiate reforms to the electoral system to likely enable a succession by his son and to circumvent presidential term limits as well as frequent postponements of elections. According to Mbow (2008, p. 158), Wade's governing style can be described as follows: "Convinced of his legitimacy and believing that he carries with him all the hopes of the people, Wade's use of power smacks of authoritarianism, even though he battled for twenty-five years in the name of democracy." His administration also ignored self-imposed commitments and used "a textbook case of police repression followed by a mix of strategic concessions and clientelist cooptations" (ibid., p. 163) as a reaction to student movements. After his loss in the 2012 presidential elections, Wade and his son Karim became prominent oppositional candidates.

Regarding the second observation period that focuses on the period from 2018 until mid-2023, current President Macky Sall of the APR party is the second relevant decision-maker. He was elected president in 2012 and got recently re-elected in the 2019 presidential elections. Before entering politics, Sall "studied geological engineering and geophysics at University Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar (graduated 1988) and the French Institute of Petroleum outside Paris" (Eldridge, 2023). He was a party member of President Wade in the PDS and was referred to as a protégé of Wade (ibid.). Under Wade he served, *inter alia*, as minister of mines, energy, and water and became prime minister in 2004. In 2007, he resigned and became president of the

National Assembly. After a conflict with President Wade, very likely because of the growing influence of Wade's son Karim in the government, Sall left the PDS at the end of 2008 and founded the APR (ibid.; Klatt, 2019, p. 1; Lansford, 2021b, p. 19).

Sall was one of the prominent oppositional candidates running for president in the 2012 presidential election. During his campaign, he promised to respect the term-limit rule and to reduce the presidential term of office from seven to five years (Demarest, 2016, p. 73; Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6). After Sall's success in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections, he became the candidate of the newly formed electoral BBY coalition that united the opposition of the so-called June 23 Movement (M23) against Wade (Demarest, 2016, p. 73). He clearly won the second round of the elections and entered office in April 2012 (Conseil Constitutionnel Sénégal, 2012, March 6; Eldridge, 2023).

At the beginning of his presidency, Sall's administration initiated pro-democratic reforms as promised during his election campaign (BBC News, 2016, Januar 18, 2016, March 23) and drafted an ambitious economic reform plan, the *Plan Sénégal Emergent* (PSE) (Klatt, 2019, p. 1; Presidency of the Republic of Senegal, s.a.). Sall also addressed corruption and set up "a new office to investigate and prosecute malfeasance in office" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 14). His contra-democratic tendencies that are analysed in the context of the second observation period mainly relate to initiated election reforms and introduced pre-conditions for presidential candidates prior to the 2019 presidential elections, possible politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents as well as his potential third term ambitions. Sall's most prominent current political opponent is the opposition leader Ousmane Sonko of the coalition Yewwi Askan Wi (Liberate the People) (see Resnick, 2021).

The peculiarity is that both presidents, Wade and Sall, initially ran as pro-democratic opposition candidates against power expansion tendencies. The mobilisation that eventually led to their elections was achieved through pro-democratic opposition groups. Following on from this, both initiated pro-democratic reforms at the beginning of their presidencies and also appointed pro-democratic opposition figures to their administrations. Only in the course of their presidencies, contra-democratic tendencies increasingly occurred.

5.1.3 Assessment of the costs and benefits

After having identified two observation periods with notable democratic quality declines and the presidents as the main decision-maker of the contra-democracy groups in power, in the next step of the case study, I analyse influences on the presidents' prevalent cost-benefit assessments of whether to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality (or not). The first observation period assessed in the analysis of the domestic and external factors depicts Wade's postponement of the parliamentary elections that should have taken place in 2006, his attempts to initiate reforms to the electoral system, to enable a succession of his son, and to circumvent presidential term limits. The second observation period focuses on Sall's initiated election reforms and introduced pre-conditions for presidential candidates prior to the 2019

presidential elections, politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents as well as his potential third term ambitions.

As described in the methods chapter on the case study research design (*Chapter 3.3.2*), the main analysis is divided into three subsections. The main analysis begins with an assessment of the domestic factors, continues with the external factors, and closes with an overall account, which brings the two strands of the analysis together and applies the cost-benefit logic. Regarding the domestic dimension, the balance of power between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic group in power as well as the strength of democratic political institutions are key, which is why the analysis focuses on elements such as the existing political structure and party landscape, elite agency, election results, public attitudes and embeddedness of democratic norms, economic factors, as well as pro-democratic mobilisation and protest. For the external dimension, Senegal's main international relations (with a focus on economic and strategic/political relations) and more short-term international measures and reactions to prevent autocratisation are considered.

5.1.3.1 Domestic factors

To begin with Senegal's general political system that was previously described in *Chapter 5.2.3*, comparatively well-functioning democratic institutions can be observed. With the development of a multi-party system at the end of the 20th century, mainly free and fair democratic elections in the last two decades were made possible and with the general separation of powers, key democratic political institutions are in place. At the same time, a very active civil society and media as well as a low influence of the military on politics are noticeable (e.g. Klatt, 2019, p. 1; Melly, 2012, p. 3). The strong and even growing support for democracy in the Senegalese public since the successful transformation to democracy that is captured by repeating Afrobarometer (2021, 2023) surveys indicates that pro-democratic attitudes are also embedded in the Senegalese society (see *Table 8*). The embeddedness of democratic values and traditions, which root back to first experiences with French elections in 1848 and conceptually also entered Wolof with the concept of *demokaraasi*, was further pointed out in several interviews (09.11.2022, 15.11.2022). Nevertheless, the mobilisation and translation of political interests through Senegal's fragmented multi-party system to nominate and install competitive presidential candidates or elect political parties are central elements of Senegal's political system. Key limitations remain such as the strong concentration of political power around the president, attempts to influence elections, the misuse of the judicative, or corruption. Institutional reforms and democratic development were therefore – besides poverty reduction, frequent blackouts, job security, and other economic development issues – often central topics in the political discourse and for voter mobilisation.

The challenge to translate political interests through Senegal's fragmented multi-party system already becomes visible prior to the first observation period in 2000, when Abdoulaye Wade and the PDS won against the long-term president Diouf of the PS, who accepted a gradual democratisation process during his presidency and allowed for a peaceful transfer of power to

Wade.[51] This transfer of power can also be categorised as a marker for Senegal's successful transition to democracy (Melly, 2012, pp. 4-5). Wade's success was only made possible by the withdrawal of two other promising oppositional candidates from the elections, Moustapha Niasse of the Alliance des Forces du Progrès (AFP) and Djibo Kâ of the Union pour la Renouveau (URD), who had previously been prominent figures in Diouf's eroding and splintering PS and supported Wade in order to secure a majority against President Diouf (Hartmann, 2010, pp. 771-772). Comparable opposition agreements on single candidates are now a recurring element in the analysis.

At the beginning of his presidency, Wade took a pro-democratic course, but also had to manoeuvre Senegal's fragmented multi-party system. He formed a broad coalition cabinet with members of the AFP, the And-Jëf/African Party for Democracy and Socialism (AJ/PADS), the Parti de l'Indépendance et du Travail (PIT), and the Ligue Démocratique/Mouvement pour le Parti du Travail (LD-MPT) that was headed by Prime Minister Niasse of the AFP (Lansford, 2021b, p. 7). The opening of the civic space with the possibility to protest ('*la possiblité de marcher*') and Senegal's broad media landscape can be traced back to the beginning of Wade's time in office (interview 18.11.2022). Shortly after, Wade initiated a successful national referendum on pro-democratic constitutional amendments that he already promised during his election campaign. The amendments were, *inter alia*, supposed to limit the presidential power and re-introduced the official presidential term limit that was abolished shortly before the 2000 presidential elections in 1998 by the PS to allow Diouf to run for another term (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 5; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 6-7). In addition, parliamentary elections were initiated by Wade in 2001 to break the PS's hold on the National Assembly (Hartmann, 2010, p. 772). Wade

> "also started to create what is usually called a *mouvance présidentielle* in francophone Africa, i.e. a loose coalition of a multitude of smaller parties around his own party PDS. Rightly fearing that the PDS alone could not win an outright majority in parliament, the formation of the SOPI coalition (meaning 'change' in Wolof) with nearly 40 parties allowed the president to win 49.6% of the votes, and with a little help from the electoral system, to get 89 out of 120 seats" (ibid.).

This series of events already illustrates Wade's initial pro-democratic course at the beginning of his presidency, the central role of the term limit rule, and the importance to work with broad coalitions in Senegal's fragmented multi-party system after the dominant era of the PS in order to secure political majorities.

At the beginning of the first observation period that starts in 2005, however, Wade's initial pro-democratic course could already be doubted. The parliamentary elections that were supposed to be held in 2006 were postponed by Wade until 2007, justified with the saving of state resources. This action was criticised by the opposition and seen as a tactical manoeuvre (Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 64; Hartmann, 2010, p. 772; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 7-8). The later parliamentary elections then took place in 2007 shortly after the presidential elections in which Wade was able to secure a clear victory in the first round against his former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck (now with his new party, The Nation), Ousmane Tanor Dieng of the PS, and twelve other presidential candidates (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 7-8). The competition was centred though on Wade

[51] The gradual democratisation process during Senghor's, Diouf's, and Wade's presidencies connected to demands from civil society was also presented in detail by an interviewee (18.11.2022), pointing out that every president contributed to the process with individual steps (see also interview 09.11.2022).

and Idrissa Seck as main opposition candidate, who had left the PDS over dispute and was confronted with legal charges, also leading to "violent clashes between the supporters of the two candidates" (ibid., p. 8). Therefore, no clear counter-candidate of a mobilised oppositional pro-democratic group can be identified. After the presidential elections, opposition parties were heavily criticising the Wade government, referring to "alleged electoral malpractices and the use of an outdated electoral register during that year's presidential elections" (Hartmann, 2010, p. 772). As a result, they chose a boycott-strategy for the parliamentary elections that took place shortly after. This strategy led to a profoundly low turnout of only 34 percent (ibid.), showing public dissatisfaction, and enabling a dominant position of the Wade coalition in parliament for the following years. In addition, the "government further oppressed political debates and disabled alternative politics" (Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 64). Furthermore, a change in the term limit rule initiated in 2008 by the Wade government to extend presidential terms from five to seven years (starting in 2012) (Lawler, 2023, p. 2) can be categorised as a first successful attempt to limit the restraining purpose of the term limit rule. These actions by the Wade government show first signs of the gradual degradations of the democratic quality, while Wade's government continued to be the clear dominant political actor in Senegal without any clear mobilised pro-democratic groups with a competitive candidate for the 2007 presidential elections.

Table 8: Public opinion on democracy, the two term rule, and the performance of the president in Senegal between 2002 and 2021

Year	2002	2005	2008	2013	2015	2018	2021
Question:							
Support for democracy	74.8	75.4	69.6	87.5	85.0	82.3	87.9
In favour of two terms (agree and strongly agree)	69.9	/	73.4	76.7	82.0	77.4	84.7
Performance of the President (approve and strongly approve)	70.8	68.2	28.2	71.5	58.1	74.4	46.7

Note: Displayed are shares of respondents in percent. For the 'Support of democracy' values, the share of respondents favouring the statement "Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government" are taken. The question for the two terms instead of no term limit was not asked in Senegal in the third round of the Afrobarometer in 2005. *Source:* Afrobarometer online data analysis tool (2023) and Afrobarometer (2021).

Public dissatisfaction with the Wade government was not only visible in the low turnout of the 2007 parliamentary elections as public approval rates of the president's performance were very low as well. In 2008, only 28.2 percent of respondents in a representative survey by Afrobarometer (2023) approved or strongly approved Wade's performance over the past twelve months – in comparison to considerably higher values of 68.2 percent in 2005 or 70.8 percent in 2002 (see *Table 8*). The dissatisfaction can also be related to Poteete and Morrow's (2013, p. 5) characterisation of Wade's second term that was coined by "continued manipulation of institutions, patronage and nepotism, and socioeconomic stagnation." Besides public dissatisfaction with Wade's actions weakening Senegal's democratic institutions, disappointed economic expectations have to be emphasised in regard to Wade's decreasing approval rates during

his second term. Following Demarest (2016, p. 65), the

> "economic situation deteriorated, which was highlighted by urban (youth) unemployment and clandestine migration, compounded by rising food and petrol prices following the global food price spike of the 2007-8 (Resnick 2013). Moreover, the population was confronted with numerous electricity cuts, and, particularly in Dakar, recurrent flooding of the suburbs (*banlieues*)" (ibid.; while referring to Resnick, 2013).

This dissatisfaction also led to protests (Demarest, 2016, p. 66), which further shows the decreasing approval of the Wade government.

In light of declining approval rates of the Wade government and approaching regional elections in 2009,[52] the president's son Karim Wade, who had previously worked in the financial sector in London, came back to Senegal to take the position of an advisor to the president and manage key infrastructure projects (Melly, 2012, p. 6). Nevertheless, already in the 2009 regional elections, Karim Wade ran for the influential post of mayor in Dakar – a decision that was widely considered to be a first attempt to begin securing President Wade's succession (ibid.; Arieff, 2011, p. 4; Wienkoop, 2020, pp. 112-113). The 2009 regional elections now showed clear losses of the Wade coalition and a more successful political mobilisation by the opposition against Wade – especially against his son Karim Wade, who lost against Khalifa Sall of the PS in Dakar (Melly, 2012, p. 6; Zounmenou, 2011, p. 5). These results were thereby foreshadowing that the majority of voters were against Wade and also against his son in the upcoming presidential elections. However, Karim Wade was appointed as a new state minister by his father "for a sprawling new portfolio encompassing international cooperation, infrastructure, regional development and aviation. In October 2010, with Dakar struggling with power cuts, the president added the energy department to Karim's ministerial empire" (Melly, 2012, p. 6). As another reaction to the losses in the 2009 regional elections, Wade publicly expressed his third term ambitions in September 2009 (Burchard, 2013, p. 4). His reasoning was that "the two-term limit provision of the Constitution did not apply to him as it was enacted in 2001, a year after he began serving his first term in office. As such, term limits did not include Wade's 2000-2007 term in office and he should be cleared to run for another term" (ibid.; see also Heyl & Llanos, 2020, pp. 5-6). As the second major action, in June 2011, Wade started a reform process to introduce the post of vice-president that runs together with the president "on a joint ticket, and automatic succession of the vice president to the presidency in the case of the resignation, impeachment, or death of the president" (Poteete & Morrow, 2013, p. 6). In addition, Wade aimed at lowering the 50 percent threshold in the first round of the presidential elections to 25 percent (ibid.; Demarest, 2016, p. 64). The opposition saw Wade's plans as a strategic move to prevent a second round of voting and secure a powerful position for him and his son Karim, including an eventual transfer of power (Demarest, 2016, p. 64; Melly, 2012, p. 5; Poteete & Morrow, 2013, p. 6; Zounmenou, 2011). A public outcry of pro-democratic groups, steady protests as well as outbreaks of low-level violence against the Wade government eventually led to a withdrawal of the reforms (Burchard, 2013, p. 4; Demarest, 2016, p. 64; Heyl & Llanos, 2020, pp. 5-6; Melly, 2012, p. 5). Wade, however, stuck to his third term ambitions, but he waited with the official announcement until January 2012. The Constitutional Court followed Wade's interpretation that the two term limit did not apply to his first term in office in its decision at the

[52] The regional elections were also postponed from 2007 to 2009 (Poteete & Morrow, 2013, p. 5).

end of January 2012, only a month before the first round of the elections (Burchard, 2013, pp. 4-5). It is important to note again that the members of the Constitutional Court are appointed by the president (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 12) – meaning that Wade appointed all judges who decided in his favour (The Guardian, 2012, January 30). It can therefore not be assumed that the court's decision was sufficiently independent. Strong and partially violent protest accompanied the period before and after the court's decision (Burchard, 2013, pp. 4-5). Both actions by Wade, the third term gamble as well as the likely preparations for his succession, can be categorised as main decisions in regard to introduced gradual democratic quality declines during the first observation period.

Looking at the opposition and civil society groups, at the beginning of the first observation period in 2005, the opposition was not able to unite and mobilise behind a single candidate in the 2007 presidential elections and prevent Wade's second turn. Still, Wade's main actions in regard to gradual democratic quality declines started in the course of his second term. Drawing on the previously described growing public dissatisfaction with the Wade government in his second term, the prevention of his son's election as mayor of Dakar can be seen as first success of the political mobilisation and unity of the opposition under the newly formed Benno Siggil Senegal (United to Boost Senegal) coalition (Burchard, 2013, pp. 3-4). However, when it came to the upcoming presidential elections, unity among the opposition parties was not as clear. Or as Zounmenou (2011, p. 5) put it, the "weakest link in all this is the Senegalese opposition movement that is far from being united and coherent; though in the past a common front had helped them win the March 2009 municipal elections." As already mentioned, contra-government protests started in 2008 and continued until 2011, mainly due to high food prices, electricity cuts, and misuse of public funds (Demarest, 2016, p. 66; Wienkoop, 2020, p. 114). Furthermore, a large number of citizen movements was founded during the Wade presidency (Demarest, 2016, p. 66). One of the central pro-democratic groups was the *Y'en a marre* ('That's enough!' or 'Enough is Enough') movement that was formed by famous rappers and journalists in January 2011 (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 9; Poteete & Morrow, 2013, p. 6; Wienkoop, 2020, pp. 76-77).[53] *Y'en a marre* quickly developed into an influential group organising protests and focussing on "undertaking advocacy, monitoring and education on land reforms, constitutional reforms and electoral processes" (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 9). In March 2011, for instance, *Y'en a marre* organised a big protest against Wade (ibid.; Poteete & Morrow, 2013, p. 6).[54] These foundations of pro-democratic movements and intensifying protests mark a key moment for pro-democratic protest mobilisation as domestic safeguards against the government's contra-democratic course.

Wade's controversial election reform attempt to lower the 50 percent threshold and introduce the new post of a vice-president with a shared ticket in the presidential elections, can be seen as a trigger for more intense pro-democratic protest mobilisation. On the day of the vote for Wade's reform, 23 June, widespread protests in Dakar and around the country as well as low-level violence occurred (Demarest, 2016, p. 64). Following the events of 23 June, the M23 as

[53] For in-depth analyses of the social movement mobilisation in Senegal before the 2012 presidential elections see Wienkoop (2020) or Demarest (2016).

[54] The protests in March also led to an incident, "as opposition leaders convened a protest rally modelled after mass uprisings in North Africa and attended by an estimated 5,000 people, the government arrested a group of civil society and opposition party activists and claimed they were organizing a coup attempt. Opposition leaders rejected the allegations as politically motivated" (Arieff, 2011, p. 3).

"a coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups" (ibid.) was founded with the *Y'en a marre* as a central actor. As above-mentioned, the strong protests by the M23 movement eventually forced Wade to withdraw his controversial election reform (Burchard, 2013, p. 4; Demarest, 2016, p. 64; Heyl & Llanos, 2020, pp. 5-6; Melly, 2012, p. 5), thereby highlighting the movement's role as a domestic pro-democratic safeguard. In the following time, the M23 "based its campaigns primarily on democratic values and citizenship" (Demarest, 2016, p. 67). Strong protests continued, partly restricted by repressions from the government, until Wade's official announcement that he would run for president in the 2012 presidential elections. Oppositional candidates even repeatedly threatened that it might come to violence if the Constitutional Court allowed Wade to run in the elections (Burchard, 2013, pp. 4-5; Demarest, 2016, p. 64). In addition, oppositional candidates announced that in a second round of the presidential elections they would join forces (see Burchard, 2013, pp. 4-5, while referring to a statement by Idrissa Seck) – a clear signal that the opposition planned to unite against Wade.[55] The Constitutional Court's decision at the end of January 2012 culminated in more severe protests and riots that continued until the day of the first round of the presidential elections on 26 February 2012 (ibid.).

Before the beginning of the presidential elections, President Wade therefore found himself in a difficult situation with strong public dissatisfaction and (partly violent) protest directed against him – provoked by both, political and economic disappointment. In this context, his attempts to initiate institutional changes weakening the democratic quality in order to secure his power (or his succession) played a particularly important role. Yet, the strong backlashes from mobilised civil society groups and the political opposition as domestic pro-democratic opposition already indicate the degradation of Wade's political support and power. The pro-democratic opposition, however, was strongly mobilised with at least two promising presidential candidates for the elections, Macky Sall and Khalifa Sall.

Although Wade was leading in the first round of the 2012 presidential elections with 34.81 percent of the votes, he was not able to reach the necessary 50 percent threshold to win and prevent a run-off between him and Macky Sall (first round result: 26.58 percent) (Conseil Constitutionnel Sénégal, 2012, March 6). As expected, the majority of the opposition candidates united behind Sall before the second round and the new coalition Benno Bokk Yaakaar was founded (Demarest, 2016, p. 73). In the context of the M23 campaign demands, "Sall promised to reduce his presidential term from seven to five years after being elected" (ibid.). Furthermore, protests and demonstrations were discontinued before the second round of the presidential elections (Burchard, 2013, p. 5). In the second round (see *Table 9*), Sall and the BBY coalition clearly won with 65.80 percent, with Wade reaching again around 34 percent, indicating that Sall was able to mobilise voters' support from all the other oppositional candidates from the first round. Wade's support remained, by contrast, rather limited and he acknowledged his defeat "almost immediately" (ibid., pp. 5-6) and left office peacefully (ibid.; Demarest, 2016, p. 73; Resnick, 2013, p. 623). At the end of the first observation period, while only considering the domestic factors, the perceived costs for Wade to oppose the election results clearly seemed to exceed the benefits.

[55] Following Melly (2012, p. 72), some members of the M23 were discussing a boycott of the elections. Main oppositional candidates, however, still favoured running.

Table 9: Presidential elections results in 2012 and 2019

Candidate	Abdoulaye Wade	Macky Sall	Macky Sall	Idrissa Seck	Ousmane Sonko
Year	2012 (second round)		2019 (first round)		
Votes	992,556	1,909,244	2,555,426	899,556	687,523
Percentage	34.20	65.80	58.26	20.51	15.67

Note: In 2019, Macky Sall reached the 50 percent threshold, thereby winning the elections in the first round. Displayed are only the results of three of the five candidates. Turnout in 2012: 55 percent; turnout in 2019: 66.27 percent. *Source:* Conseil Constitutionnel Sénégal (2012, March 6, 2019, March 5).

In regard to the second observation period, it is now important to bear in mind that Sall's victory in the 2012 presidential elections was mainly made possible by the support of the pro-democratic movements and the united opposition parties against Wade's government. It was also emphasised in the interviews (e.g. 18.11.2022) that Sall could be seen as a 'free rider', as the main voters' interest was to prevent Wade's third term and as the other opposition candidates were unlikely to work together. After the elections, Sall formed a new government with members of the BBY coalition and changed administrative personnel (Demarest, 2016, p. 73). In addition, "[n]ot only were Sall's political colleagues within the M23 given positions; many former civil society members were co-opted within state institutions as well" (ibid.). Furthermore, Sall quickly initiated parliamentary elections, where the BBY coalition won a large majority with 119 of the total 141 seats (see *Table 10*). Very much like Wade, Sall's majority in the National Assembly was not just based on his own party, but on a broad coalition. The turnout, however, was rather low with 36.7 percent, indicating a low interest in the second major election in 2012. This considerably low interests in the parliamentary elections can also be related to the comparatively subordinate role of the National Assembly in contrast to the powerful president that traditionally leads to lower public interest as well as media coverage (Klatt, 2019, p. 1). Furthermore, this observation also relates well to research on the negative effects of holding presidential elections in addition to parliamentary elections on voter turnout in the latter (Tavits, 2009).

As promised during his campaign, Sall also promoted institutional reforms aimed at shortening presidential terms from seven to five years that subsequently led to an election reform in 2016 (BBC News, 2016, Januar 18, 2016, March 23). However, it is important to note again that in the same reform a more "ambiguous wording" was introduced for the term-limit rule (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6). In 2013, he further addressed ongoing corruption and set up "a new office to investigate and prosecute malfeasance in office" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 14). In addition, Sall engaged with the tense economic situation and introduced the PSE in 2014, a new ambitious framework that included domestic and foreign support from official and private donors as well as big infrastructure projects (Klatt, 2019, p. 1; Presidency of the Republic of Senegal, s.a.). Klatt (2019, p. 1) and Kohnert and Marfaing (2019, p. 11), however, highlight that specific issues such as youth unemployment or precarious employment conditions were not sufficiently addressed by the Sall administration. Nevertheless, Sall's public approval rates were constantly high during his first term with 71.5 percent positive responses in 2013 (see the Afrobaremeter

results in *Table 8*) and 58.1 percent in 2015. His BBY coalition also clearly won the parliamentary elections in 2017 with 125 of 165 seats – among others against a new coalition headed by former President Wade (the Manko Wattu Sénégal Coalition), which came in second with 19 seats (see *Table 11*). Other parties/coalitions could only reach comparatively low values. The turnout was higher than in 2012 with 53.7 percent, indicating a higher public interest in the elections than in 2012 (see *Table 11*).[56] In the Afrobarometer round of 2018, Sall's approval ratings even reached 74.4 percent (see *Table 8*). Summing up, it can be assumed that Sall had a good starting position in the run-up of the 2019 presidential elections.

Table 10: Senegalese parliamentary elections results in 2012

Party/Coalition	Popular Vote (in %)	Seats
Benno Bokk Yaakaar Coalition	52.9	119
Senegalese Democratic Party	15.2	12
Bokk Gis Gis	7.3	4
Citizen Movement for National Reform	5.7	4
Republican Movement for Socialism and Democracy	3.6	2
Total	84.7	141

Note: Only the results of the five strongest parties/coalitions are displayed. Overall seats in parliament: 150. Turnout: 36.7%. *Source:* Kelly (2013, p. 906).

Sall's introduced changes to the presidential election law and the reasonable allegations of politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents prior to the 2019 presidential elections now mark the beginning of the second observation period in 2018. The main reform to the election law that was implemented prior to the 2019 presidential elections on rather short notice was the so-called *Parrainage*-system (Klatt, 2019, pp. 1-2; Toupane et al., 2019). The *Parrainage*-system introduced a citizen sponsorship system that requires the collection of signatures (at least 0.8 percent of eligible voters from half of the 14 regions, so 53,457 signatures in 2019) before being allowed to run for president (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019, p. 28). The reform was officially aimed at reducing the large field of applicants in order to help citizens keep track of election programmes and reduce costs in general (Klatt, 2019, pp. 1-2; Toupane et al., 2019). The introduction of the *Parrainage*-system was strongly criticised by the oppositional parties for its potentially restricting effects (ibid.; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 3). In the interviews, the assessments of the *Parrainage* were mixed. On the one hand, it was pointed out that a large number of presidential candidates prior to the introduction of the *Parrainage* was not so much a problem as there were never more than fifteen candidates (10.11.2022). Furthermore, the system was criticised as too complex, e.g. regarding double signatures/sponsorship and necessary electoral lists, but also as unfair due to

[56] Increased interest in elections are also related to awareness campaigns by social movements such as *Y'en a marre* that mainly address young people (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 10).

necessary deposits. It is, however, important to note that none of the main promising oppositional candidates were prevented from running by the *Parrainage*-system (Klatt, 2019, p. 2). The main negative effect for the opposition was thus described (interview 10.11.2022) as more strategic, as reducing the overall number of oppositional candidates increases the likelihood of the incumbent president winning in the first round of the elections. Other interviewees (09.11.2022, 15.11.2022a, 17.11.2022), on the other hand, had less negative views about the system and agreed with the general notion that a reduction of candidates might be beneficial. My interviewees further pointed to similar practices in other states or newly introduced parity rules for the electoral lists. Still, the timing of the introduction and the short preparation time for the opposition parties were noted. Taken together, it can therefore be concluded that it is not the *Parrainage*-system as such that might be at the centre of criticism, but rather the strategic introduction shortly before the 2019 presidential elections and actual usage that led to a weakening of the opposition's position (see also interview 15.11.2022a).

Table 11: Senegalese parliamentary elections results in 2017

Party/Coalition	Popular Vote (in %)	Seats
Benno Bokk Yaakaar Coalition	49.5	125
Manko Wattu Sénégal Coalition	16.7	19
Mako Taxawu Sénégal Coaliation	11.7	7
Party for Unity and Rally	4.7	3
Patriotic Convergence Coalition	2.0	2
Total	84.6	156

Note: Only the results of the five strongest parties/coalitions are displayed. Overall seats in parliament: 165. Turnout: 53.7%. *Source:* International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (s.a.-a).

Moreover, a pre-condition for presidential candidates was introduced in the election reform of 2018, which made their own qualification for voting a prerequisite to run (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019, p. 28; Toupane et al., 2019):

> "Outre la jouissance des droits civils et politiques, le Code exige de tout candidat qu'il soit inscrit sur les listes électorales. Cette condition a été ajoutée lors de la réforme électorale de 2018. Si cette nouvelle condition a été controversée, ce n'est pas sur le fond – puisqu'elle n'a rien en soi de contestable, mais parce que dans le cas de cette élection présidentielle elle avait pour conséquence d'écarter aussi bien Karim Wade que Khalifa Sall" (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019, p. 28).[57]

The consequence of this rather minor adjustment to the election law was comparatively severe, as it excluded Sall's two main political opponents Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall from the 2019 presidential elections. One the one hand, the former major of Dakar, Khalifa Sall, was found

[57] The passage in the report can be translated as follows: "In addition to enjoying civil and political rights, the Code requires all candidates to be registered on the electoral roll. This condition was added during the 2018 electoral reform. If this new condition has been controversial, it is not because of its substance – since there is nothing questionable about it in itself, but because in the case of this presidential election it had the effect of removing both Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall" (translation by the author).

guilty for fraud and falsification of documents in 2018 and appealed unsuccessfully (Klatt, 2019, p. 4; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 12). Karim Wade, on the other hand, was already found guilty of corruption in 2015 with a prison sentence of six years. On behalf of President Sall, Karim Wade was released in 2016 and chose exile in Qatar (ibid.). Regarding both cases, the prosecutions of President Sall's main political opponents were widely seen as an example for politically motivated accusations and prosecutions of political opponents (ibid.; Kanté, 2021; Lu, 2021; Toupane et al., 2019, p. 4) – an element that was also mentioned in the interviews (e.g. 09.11.2022). The EU further states in its report of the election monitoring mission that

> "[l]es conditions dans lesquelles Karim Wade et Khalifa Sall ont été condamnés par les tribunaux sénégalais ont été portées à l'attention d'instances internationales par les deux intéressés. Les arrêts de la Cour de justice de la CEDEAO du 19 juillet 2013 (dans le cas de Karim Wade) et du 29 juin 2018 (dans le cas de Khalifa Sall), ainsi que les constatations du 8 novembre 2018 du Comité des droits de l'homme des Nations Unies (concernant Karim Wade) ont relevé, dans l'une ou l'autre affaire, un certain nombre de manquements graves notamment : violation du droit à un procès équitable, nonrespect de la présomption d'innocence et du droit à l'assistance d'un conseil, détention arbitraire, absence de droit à un recours effectif" (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019, p. 30).[58]

In light of the findings by international courts and observers of these strong legal misconducts, while the misdemeanours of the government's coalition own politicians were not sufficiently addressed,[59] the allegations of the intentional exclusion of the two main opposition candidates of President Sall from the 2019 presidential elections cannot be assessed as unfounded. They are therefore also categorised as contra-democratic actions in the context of initiated democratic quality declines. As already stated in 2008 by Mbow (2008, p. 165), "Senegalese democracy's true Achilles' heel, however, is undeniably the justice system. By presiding over the Superior Council of Magistrates, the president essentially controls the careers of judges" – an assessment that still holds true until today (cf. Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 12-13).

In the run-up to the 2019 presidential elections, the exclusion of Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall, the introduction of the *Parrainage*-system, and the general perceived lack of transparency[60] led to wide-spread criticism and strong protests by different supporting groups as well as to clashes of protesters with the police (Klatt, 2019, pp. 4-5). In reaction to the *Parrainage*-system, opposition parties also shortly tried to mobilise under the so-called C25-group, but remained unsuccessful in conveying a united approach (ibid., p. 3). In addition, student groups – also together with *Y'en a marre* – addressed poor studying conditions and perspectives for graduates with

[58] The passage in the report can be translated as follows: "the conditions under which Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall were convicted by the Senegalese courts were brought to the attention of international bodies by the two parties concerned. The judgments of the ECOWAS Court of Justice of 19 July 2013 (in the case of Karim Wade) and of 29 June 2018 (in the case of Khalifa Sall), as well as the findings of 8 November 2018 of the United Nations Human Rights Committee (concerning Karim Wade) have revealed, in one case or another, a number of serious failings, including: violation of the right to a fair trial, failure to respect the presumption of innocence and the right to counsel, arbitrary detention, lack of right to an effective remedy" (translation by the author).

[59] See, for example, the case against Macky Sall, who "himself had been accused of money laundering as well during his tenure as prime minister of Abdoulaye Wade in 2007, however, the case was closed without conviction" (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 12). Or more recent accusations against Sall because of unclear licencing of natural resources exploitations that involved Sall's brother Aliou Sall (McAllister & Ba, 2019, June 24).

[60] A generally shrinking civic space before elections was also mentioned in the interviews (09.11.2022).

protests in Dakar and Saint Louis (ibid. p. 5; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, p. 11). The government, however, stuck to the reforms, whereby the field of candidates for the 2019 presidential elections finally consisted of only five candidates – substantially fewer than in previous elections with 14 candidates in 2007 and 15 candidates in 2007. In the elections, Macky Sall was able to reach more than 50 percent of the votes, thereby winning the elections in the first round (see *Table 9*). Idrissa Seck, who was former prime minister to President Wade from 2002 to 2004 and a major oppositional candidate in previous elections, reached 20.5 percent of the votes (see *Table 9* and Klatt, 2019, pp. 2-3, 6). Prior to the elections, Khalifa Sall officially endorsed Seck's campaign (ibid., p. 6). A rather new face in the field of oppositional candidates was Ousmane Sonko, a former tax inspector and prominent critic of the misuse of public funds as well as unclear licencing of natural resources exploitations that involved Sall's brother Aliou Sall (Klatt, 2019, p. 2; McAllister & Ba, 2019, June 24). The affair led to widespread protests at the beginning of Macky Sall's second term and his brother, Aliou Sall, mayor of a suburb in Dakar, resigned as a reaction to the allegations (McAllister & Ba, 2019, June 24). Ousmane Sonko reached 15.67 percent in the 2019 presidential elections, what came as a surprise for observers (Klatt, 2019, p. 2).[61] His election campaign addressed corruption and ideas of how to use the newly found natural resources and was directed against Senegal's political establishment (ibid.). As a result, Sonko's campaign also resonated well with the pro-democratic social movements (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 10-11). Groups such as *Y'en a marre*, which is mainly focusing on "grass-roots advocacy with the electorate on good governance and democracy" (ibid., p. 10) and is related to higher turnouts in the 2019 elections, also called "for transparency in campaign budgets and applauds for example Ousmane Sonko's initiative to create citizen funds by means of social media" (ibid.) or identified "with Sonko's visions on pertinent political solutions" (ibid.). In the context of social movements, investigations by the government against international funding of movements such as *Y'en a marre* prior to the 2019 presidential elections were also seen critically (ibid., pp. 10-11; Klatt, 2019, p. 6). Summing up, although of the introduction of the *Parrainage*-system and the exclusion of Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall from the 2019 presidential elections, the opposition to President Sall was not nearly as mobilised and united as the opposition against President Wade seven years before. Protests against the government did only limitedly translate into further political action. Ousmane Sonko's surprisingly good result and the resonance of his campaign in pro-democratic social movements are, however, noteworthy.

At the beginning of Sall's second term, the cabinet of the government was reshuffled and the post of prime minister was again removed, with the former prime minister taking over the post of minister of state (Lansford, 2021b, p. 9). In addition, ongoing protests took place that were directed against the unclear licencing process in connection with the exploitation of natural resources that involved Sall's brother Aliou Sall and eventually led to his brother's resignation from the post as mayor of a suburb in Dakar (McAllister & Ba, 2019, June 24). The beginning of Sall's second term further marked the beginning of the second stage of Sall's economic long-term strategy PSE (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020, pp. 3, 5; Klatt, 2019, p. 7). The economic outlook, however, soon became clouded, due to the global Covid-19 outbreak at the beginning of 2020. Especially the outbreak in Europe "led to a dramatic drop in remittances from expatriate

[61] The other oppositional candidates played a comparatively minor role (Klatt, 2019, pp. 2-3).

Senegalese there. By April the finance ministry estimated that remittances had declined 30 percent. Remittances were estimated to account for between 10 and 15 percent of Senegal's GDP" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 15). As a reaction to the economic consequences of the pandemic, large scale economic emergency programmes were launched by the Sall government (ibid.).

Regarding further actions by the Sall government in the context of democratic quality declines, two processes need to be taken into account. Firstly, the Senegalese opposition was concerned that Sall would try to undermine the presidential election law and attempt to run for a third term (Heyl & Llanos, 2020, p. 6; Resnick, 2021, pp. 1-2; Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26). The already mentioned adjustments to the term limit rule, introducing a more 'ambiguous wording', are seen by Heyl and Llanos (2020, p. 6) as a first indication of Sall's potential political aim. They further state that "Sall sacked a public official in October 2019 after he had publicly stated that the Senegalese constitution does not allow Sall to stand for a third term" (ibid.). Furthermore, Sall repeatedly did not rule out that he might attempt to run for a third term (ibid.; Lu, 2021; Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26). Although these potential ambitions of Sall must be interpreted as reasonable speculations, the Senegalese opposition followed the course of events with scepticism (ibid.). It can also be assumed that the public was widely opposed to a possible third term gamble by Sall as the support to the two term limit rule reached an all-time high in the 2021 Afrobarometer round with 84.7 percent of the respondents favouring it (see also *Table 8* above).

The second relevant process are the recent legal cases against Ousmane Sonko, who was considered to be Macky Sall's main political opponent and a potential successor in the upcoming 2024 presidential elections (Kanté, 2021; Lu, 2021). As briefly assessed in the beginning of the case study, Sonko had to stand trial for rape charges brought against him by a young female employee of a massage studio in Dakar in February 2021 (ibid.). Sonko denies the charges and his opposition party accuses President Sall and his government of being too much involved into the trial or even "that the government was plotting to thwart his [Sonko's] presidential candidacy" (Kanté, 2021, pp. 5-6). An indication for the involvement of the government might be that "the accusations against Sonko were relayed by the Prosecutor's Office, which is itself subject to the minister of justice and ultimately under the head of state's authority" (Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26). Especially in the context of previous legal charges that helped to sideline Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall in the 2017 presidential elections, this interpretation of the events is not inevitable. Still, it is impossible to clearly evaluate the plausibility of the accusations against Sonko from the outside – an assessment that was generally shared in the interviews. At the same time, the politicisation of the rape charges including strong protest against the allegations can very likely result in a social environment, where women are further discouraged to speak out about rape and sexual assaults. As Lu (2021) rightly stated, "[t]his is especially troubling in Senegal, where rape was only recently prosecuted as a serious crime."

An unexpected arrest of Sonko on his way to court in March 2021 led to severe outbreaks of violent protest around the country (Kanté, 2021; Lu, 2021; Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26). In the protests, whose scale is comparable to the protests in June 2011, at least eight people died,[62] police forces used tear gas, stun grenades, and rubber ammunition, social-media platforms and

[62] Resnick (2021) reports at least ten people, Kanté (2021) eleven, Lu (2021) eight, and Soumaré and Ba (2021, March 26) eleven – thereby referring to a count by Amnesty International.

TV stations were restricted, and army tanks were eventually deployed in Dakar (ibid.). Besides the arrest of Sonko, the severity of the unrest is also related to "widespread resentment stemming from socio-economic hardships that have worsened with the government's strict measures to slow the spread of COVID-19" (Kanté, 2021, p. 2) that were already mentioned before. As a very likely result of the unexpected strong protest, Sonko was released after five days 'under judicial supervision' (Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26, p. 3). The protests continued in a weakened form and it took several days as well as mediation efforts by the Khalifa General of the Murdis until the protests temporarily ended (ibid., p. 4). They, however, continued in November 2021 (Resnick, 2021, p. 2) and in June 2023, Sonko was eventually sentenced to two years in prison in the ongoing rape-case for 'corrupting the youth' that also disqualify him for the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, resulting in substantial violent clashes between protesters and security forces (Hauptmann, 2023). Hauptmann (2023) also points out that so far, these protests were mainly driven by small groups and not by a mass mobilisation.

In a series of recent events, on 3 July 2023, Macky Sall officially declared that he would not run again for president in the 2024 presidential elections, thereby ending months of speculation and tensions about his ambitions (Kane & Ngom, 2023, July 4). Nevertheless, Sall pointed out that according to his party's logic, a third term would have been legal after his count was to be set to zero following the constitutional changes in his first term.[63] In the same month, on 29 July 2023, Senegal's state prosecutor made public that new charges against Sonko are brought up that include "insurrection; criminal conspiracy; threatening national security; plotting against the government; [manoeuvring] to compromise public security and create serious political trouble; criminal conspiracy with a terrorist organisation; and theft" (France 24, 2023, July 29). Shortly after, Sonko was taken into custody and started a one-month hunger strike on 30 July to protest against the allegations and his resulting likely exclusion from the 2024 presidential elections (Tagesschau, 2023, September 2).[64] In addition, his party Patriotes africains du Sénégal pour le travail, l'éthique et la fraternité (PASTEF) was dissolved by the government and a large amount of party members and supporters arrested (ibid.). The party is currently appealing to the ECOWAS Court of Justice and the Senegalese Supreme Court to reach a reversal of the dissolution (Rédaction Africanews, 2023, September 19). The further course of the events remains unclear at this stage.

Recent defeats of the ruling BBY coalition in the 2022 municipal elections (Rédaction Africanews, 2022, January 25) and losses in the 2022 parliamentary elections (see *Table 12*) further show the public discontent with the government's course. In the 2022 regional elections that took place in January, Sall's coalition suffered major defeats, while the opposition around Sonko was able to win in influential municipalities. Thus, oppositional candidate Barthélemy Dias won in Dakar and Sonko himself in Ziguinchor, the biggest city of the Casamance region. Sonko declared this success as a "first milestone" (Soumaré, 2022, January 25) towards his potential presidency in 2024. However, given the current escalations in his legal case and im-

[63] Sall, for instance, made this case in an interview given to France 24 on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2023 (M. Sall, 2023, September 21, with a relevant statement starting at 7:00).

[64] Furthermore, according to Le Monde (22.06.2023), "Sonko has filed a criminal complaint in France for 'crimes against humanity' against President Macky Sall, his lawyer said, as well as requesting a probe by the International Criminal Court (ICC)."

prisonment, these aspirations are becoming increasingly unlikely. The results of the 2022 parliamentary elections in July further led to the BBY losing its absolute majority and becoming dependent on one of the minor parties (the Bokk Gis Gis) to secure a one seat majority in parliament (see *Table 12*). Meanwhile, Sonko's Liberate the People coalition with 56 seats and Abdoulaye Wade's Wallu Senegal with 24 seats were able to strengthen their parliamentary role substantially.

Table 12: Senegalese parliamentary elections results in 2022

Coalition	Popular Vote (in %)	Seats
Benno Bokk Yaakaar Coalition	46.6	82
Coalition Wallu Senegal	14.5	24
Liberate the People	32.9	56
Total	94	162

Note: Only the results of the three strongest coalitions are displayed. Overall seats in parliament: 165. Turnout: 46.3%. *Source:* International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) (s.a.-b).

An evaluation of these ongoing developments is challenging – in particular with regard to the proportionality of measures applied by the government and the response of the protest group. Although Sall's decision not to run for a third term can be seen as positive in light of democratic quality declines, the developments around Sonko's imprisonment, the dissolution of Sonko's party, and the handling of protests are to be seen as highly critical elements in terms of gradual democratic quality declines. On the one hand, the government side-lines a promising oppositional candidate for the presidency and dissolves a major oppositional party, while facing substantial violent protest. The repressive course, on the other hand, might also led to a severe public rejection of the ruling party's candidate for the 2024 presidential elections.[65]

5.1.3.2 External factors

Senegal's general political and economic foreign policy

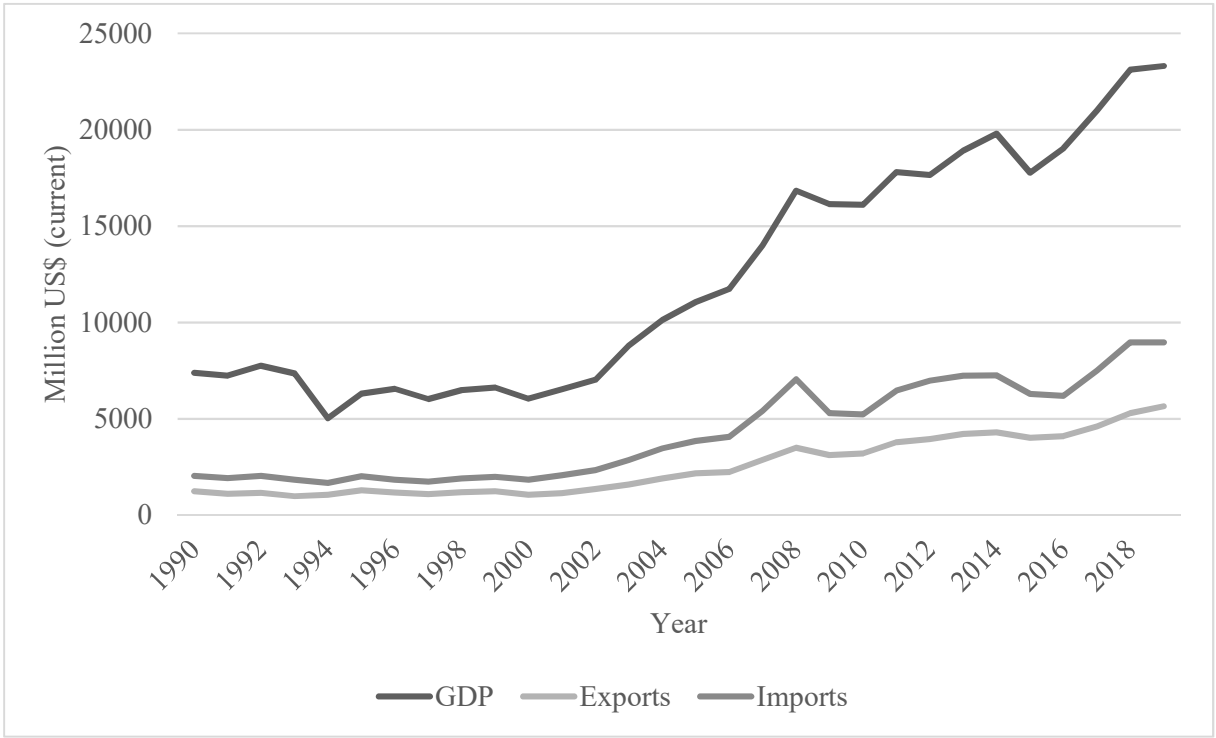
To begin with the general context of Senegal's foreign policy[66], as previously established, Senegal plays a prominent regional role as "a beacon of democracy and stability in West Africa" (Lu, 2021, p. 2) and is highly active in international and regional organisations like the UN, the

[65] Further, my interview partners related the developments (until November 2022) to the more general notion about Senegal's political system that more repressive courses by Senegalese governments prior to important elections are a common element. During the interviews, several interviewees also emphasised the risk of a potential escalation with view to the Sonko case.

[66] In regard to long-term elements of Senegal's foreign policy, it is important to note that "[i]n the first place the external policy of nation-states in general remains relatively constant because most of the time the long-term interests of the state tend to prevail over the vicissitudes of internal politics" (A. Sall, 2013, p. 5).

AU, and ECOWAS (Arieff, 2011, p. 13; A. Sall, 2013, p. 5). Senegal is formally nonaligned and generally tries to take a neutral position (Lansford, 2021b, p. 10; A. Sall, 2013, p. 5). Furthermore, Senegal is actively engaged in peacekeeping missions and as a mediator through regional conflict resolution efforts (Arieff, 2011, pp. 13-14) – for instance, Senegal has sent "500 troops to the ECOWAS-led peacekeeping force in Mali, the African International Support Mission to Mali (AFISMA)" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 13) in January 2013. In addition, during the second term of the Wade government in "March 2008[,] Wade helped negotiate a nonaggression pact between Sudan and Chad" (ibid., p. 12) and Senegal mediated "in the internal political conflict in Mauritania after its coup d'état in 2008" (A. Sall, 2013, p. 10). Senegal's high international reputation with an active foreign ministry and high diplomatic competencies was also pointed out in the interviews (e.g. 18.11.2022). As a result of this mediator role and very low level of domestic conflict, Senegal is often referred to as an anchor of stability in the region (cf. Arieff, 2011, p. 2; Klatt, 2019, p. 7; Lu, 2021, p. 2).

Figure 28: Senegal's GDP, net export, and net import in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2019

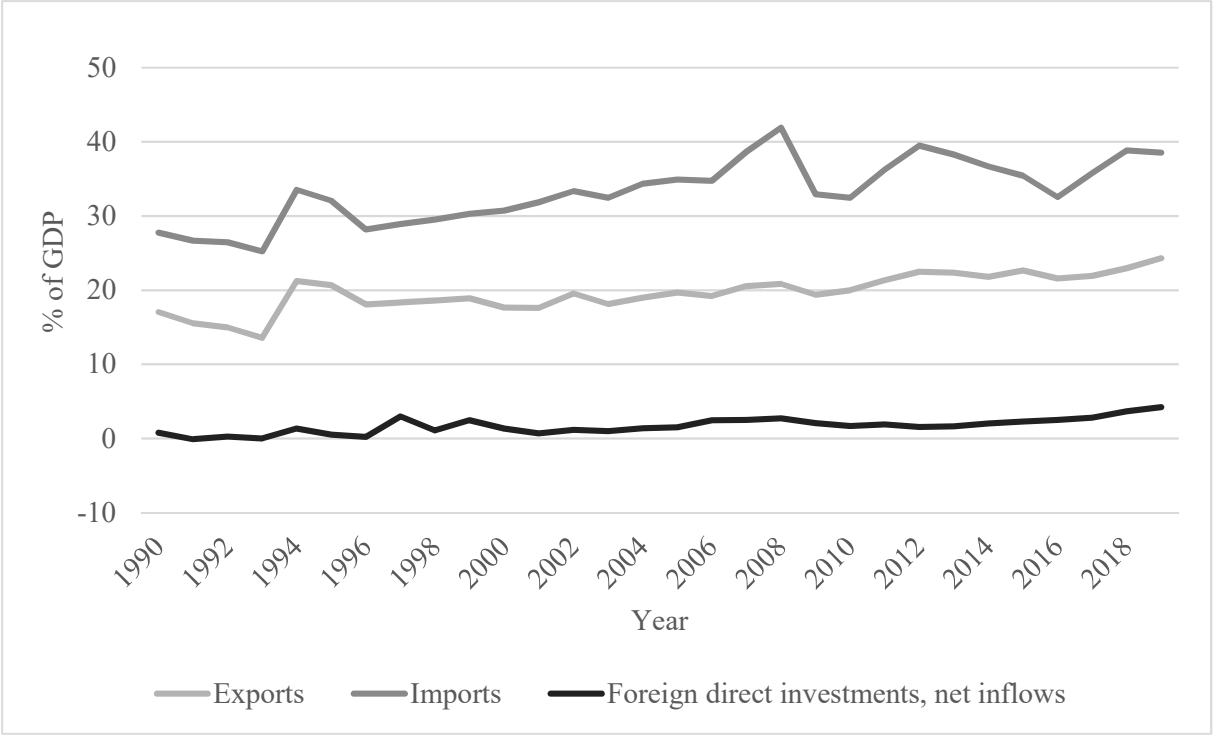


Source: World Bank database (2020).

However, there have been some regional struggles in the past that are partly ongoing (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 10-13). Especially after independence, Senegal's relations to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, and Libya were tense (ibid., p. 10). Moreover, there were struggles with Mauritania "that had been triggered by a dispute […] over farming rights along their border" (ibid., p. 11) and shortly after also included recriminations of support to secessionist movements. Moreover, Senegal had complicated relations to Gambia, which can be related to the geographical characteristic that Gambia is situated as an enclave in the south of Senegal (ibid., pp. 10-11). In addition, conflicts with separationist movements in the Casamance region that include armed rebel

groups that were partly based in Guinea-Bissau flared up repeatedly (cf. Arieff, 2011, pp. 11-12; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 11-13). However, Senegal is currently not involved in any major conflicts.

Figure 29: Senegal's net import of goods and services, net export of goods and services, and FDI, net inflows as % of GDP between 1990 and 2019

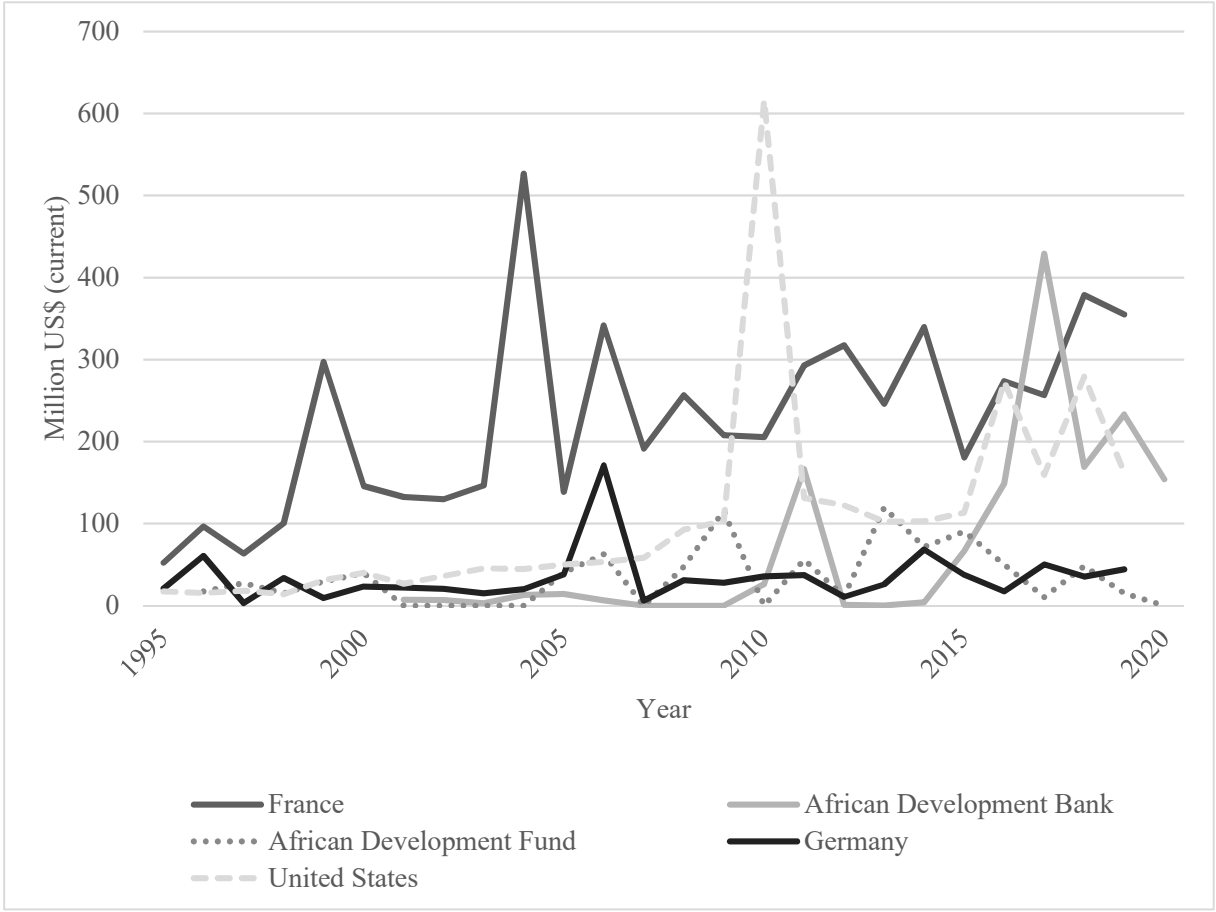


Source: World Bank database (2020).

Regarding Senegal's economic system, as mentioned before, the system roots back to the export and agriculture orientated one of the colonial period that was focused on the export of peanuts (Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 16). Today, Senegal's main trading partners include European countries such as France and the Netherlands as well as regional ones such as Mali and Nigeria (ibid., p. 21). The country's main economic sectors have shifted from the mono-cropping system of the past to fishery, agriculture (peanuts and cotton), phosphates, and tourism, with fish replacing peanuts as the main export product (ibid., pp. 16, 19; Arieff, 2011, pp. 2, 8). In general, Senegal's dependence on external markets, foreign aid, FDI, and remittances is quite high and therefore very relevant for the assessment of Senegal's overall international relations (cf. Arieff, 2011, pp. 8-9). In 2019, Senegalese import values reached a comparatively high value of 39 percent of Senegal's GDP, while the export values reached 24 percent of Senegal's GDP (see *Figures 28 & 29*). The dependence on external markets can also be visualised by the high share (70 percent) of food supplies that need to be imported (ibid., p. 10). In addition, remittances make up around 10 to 15 percent of Senegal's GDP (Lansford, 2021b, p. 15) and in 2007, foreign aid "represented about 23% of overall government spending" (Arieff, 2011, p. 9). This already underlines the economic importance of aid programmes for the Senegalese government (see, for example, the U.S. financed MCC or Chinese investments in the context of the BRI) as well as the importance of external markets and remittances. Furthermore, Senegal is still a

member of the Franc CFA currency-system, with its currency linked to the Euro (Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 20). In order to reduce dependences, frequent attempts to diversify aid and investment partners are visible, whereby "Senegal also appears to be playing potential rivals off one another in order to spark greater offers of aid and investment, thereby maximizing potential sources of economic assistance and hedging against conditions placed on Western aid flows" (Arieff, 2011, p. 13). Based on this overview, Senegal's respective bilateral relations to different states and regions are now analysed in more detail. The selection of these partners and institutions was guided by first insights drawn from the contextualisation and the literature and covers Senegal's relations to 1) France, 2) the EU, 3) the U.S., 4) to other states in the region, the AU, and ECOWAS, 5) the UN and international NGOs, 7) China, and 8) to the Middle East and Asia.

Figure 30: ODA commitments (in million US$ current) from selected donors for Senegal between 1995 and 2019



Displayed are the total amounts of ODA commitment values in million US$ (current) for a selection of donor states between 1995 and 2019 reported to the OECD's CRS. Aid data under the flow categories ODA grants, ODA loans, and Other Official Flows (non Export Credit) for all sector codes are considered. For more information about the OECD's CRS see *Chapter 3.2*. It is further important to note that a substantial amount of ODA is directed via international organisations and might therefore not be captured in this graph. *Source*: OECD's CRS (2021).

Relations to France

The colonial history and postcolonial structures very much shape the basis of the relations between European states and Senegal. Especially Senegal's relation to its former colonial power, France, remained very close after independence in 1960 and has resulted in continued strong political, military, cultural, and economic ties (Arieff, 2011, pp. 1, 13-14; Chafer, 2003, p. 159; 2013, pp. 5-7; Lansford, 2021b, p. 10; A. Sall, 2013, p. 5). Senegal's first President Léopold Sédar Senghor was promoting the strong link to France (Chafer, 2013, p. 5). As a result, the French influence is also reflected by the adaption of a constitution and political system that is very much orientated towards the French constitution, the maintenance of a French military base near Dakar immediately after independence, the adoption of French as official language as well as the still existing Franc CFA currency-system (cf. Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020, p. 10; Chafer, 2003, pp. 159-160; Hargreaves et al., 2021, p. 20).

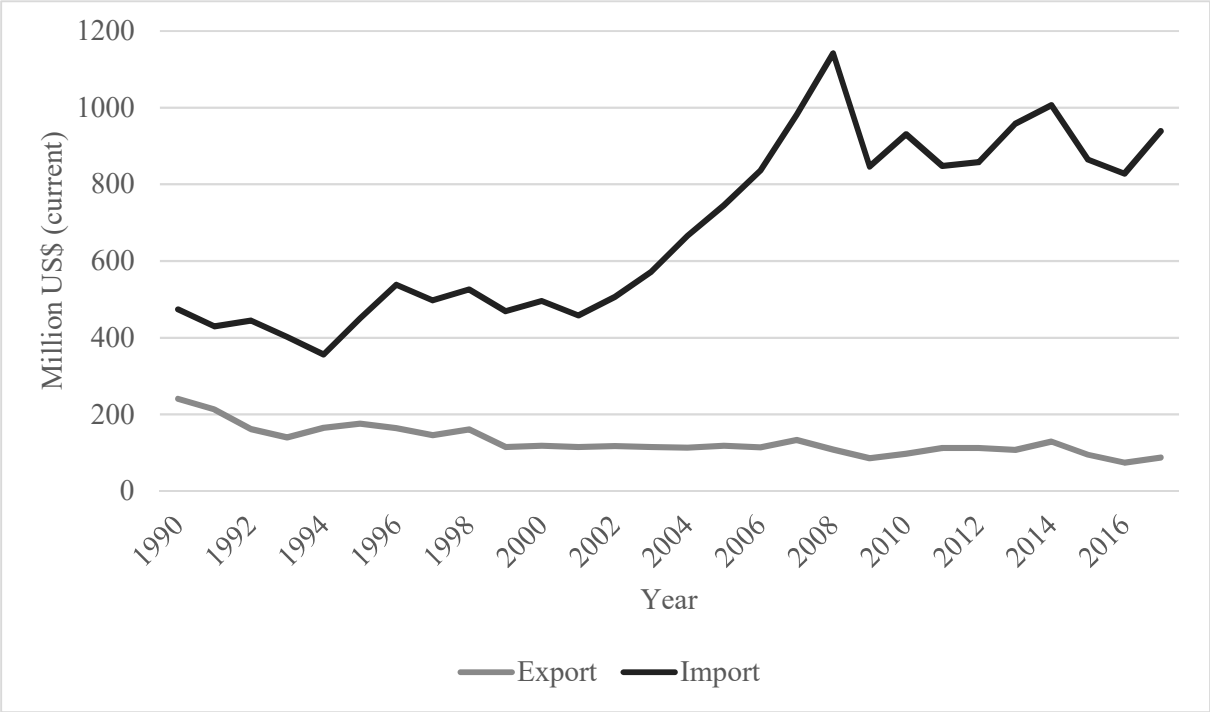
According to OECD's CRS (2021) data, France is one of the main single foreign aid donors to Senegal – between 2018 and 2019 France spend an average of US$268.4 million (see also *Figure 30*), the U.S. as the second most relevant single foreign aid donor spend US$179.3 million, and the International Development Association as most important multilateral donor US$384.3 million (see also Chafer, 2013, pp. 7-9). Additional French aid is provided through (and partly jointly by) institutions of the European Union – the European Investment Bank (EIB) with the European Development Fund (EDF) – that will be discussed at a later point (cf. ibid., pp. 7-8). In addition, France is also the leading FDI investor and most important trading partner of Senegal (France Diplomatie – Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires ètrangères, 2017). In 2017, according to OEC (2020) data, Senegal's net import of French goods and services reached almost US$1 billion, while the export only reached US$88 million – thereby underlining the great inequality in the economic relations of the two states. Import values substantially increased over the last twenty years and reached a peak just before the financial and economic crisis in 2008 with US$1.142 billion (see also *Figure 31*). Furthermore, French companies are still very dominant in Senegal, such as Total, BNP Paribas, France Telecom, or Société Générale, as they account for a quarter of Senegal's GDP and tax revenues (ibid.; see also Chafer, 2013, p. 7). In general, these points also emphasise the one-sided economic dependence of Senegal on France.

In regard to France's three focus sectors for development assistance in Senegal that were decided on in the bilateral partnership framework paper for the period 2013-2017, "democratic governance" is highlighted alongside "sustainable development" and "human development" (France Diplomatie – Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires ètrangères, 2017). Besides France's and Senegal's close economic ties, the two countries historically have also established close security cooperation. After independence, France maintained an important military base in the Dakar area (Chafer, 2003, pp. 159-160). The amount of French troops stationed in Senegal, however, was strongly reduced in June 2010 with the return of three military facilities to the Senegalese military and the withdrawal of 900 of France's 1,200 troops stationed in Senegal (Arieff, 2011, p. 13; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 12-13).[67] France still has an air force base within the

[67] Chafer (2013, p. 5) reports a reduction of troops from 1,300 to 450 in a first step and further reduction to 300 in a second step.

Léopold Sédar Senghor International Airport in Dakar. Furthermore, France runs military training programmes in Senegal and sends military advisers (Chafer, 2013, p. 11; France Diplomatie – Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires ètrangères, 2017). Also in the Senegalese education sector, French influence is traditionally strong (Chafer, 2003, pp. 160-161; 2013, p. 9). Until today, both countries cooperate in the educational and academic sector with programmes for student scholarships and in the cultural sector with an active Institut Français (Chafer, 2013, p. 9; France Diplomatie – Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires ètrangères, 2017).

Figure 31: Senegal's trade with France in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

A more negative element of French influence on Senegal and its former colonies in general is also coined by the term *Françafrique* that depicts corrupt networks of Franco-African authorities and business elites. Chafer (2003, p. 161) describes these networks that originated shortly after independence as follows:

> "An array of clientelist networks underpinned the special relationship. These networks, linking African and French political business, and military elites, thrived on French development aid and provided many opportunities for corrupt practices. In Africa, they benefited mainly the French-speaking elite, while in France the main beneficiaries were French political parties and certain French businesses" (ibid.).

These corrupt networks of Franco-African authorities and business elites lead to criticism and protests until today, for instance by *Y'en a marre* and Ousmane Sonko in the context of recent natural resource explorations or the still existing Franc CFA (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 9-11). The Franc CFA, in particular, is seen as a problematic issue by economists as the currency hinders exports to countries outside the Euro zone – a problem that would intensify if Senegal were to begin exporting natural resources on a bigger scale (interview 15.11.2022a).

Connected to this, protests against France that were mainly directed against French businesses (e.g. Total) also followed the trial of Ousmane Sonko in March 2021 (Lu, 2021, p. 4).

Summing up, Senegal's strong ties to its former colonial power in many different sectors become very well visible. Moreover, especially the very one-sided economic and donor relations with increasing import values further illustrate Senegal's still existing economic dependence.

Regarding this case study's relevant observation periods and the French-Senegalese relations during the Wade and Sall presidencies, frequent ups and downs coin the relations. At the beginning of the Wade presidency, Wade did not have the best relationship to French President Jacques Chirac (Chafer, 2013, pp. 14-16). Incidents, such as Chirac's attempt to install Abdou Diouf, Wade's predecessor, on a new post of the Francophone International linguistic and cultural association as well as "President Chirac's failure to attend Senghor's funeral in December 2001" (ibid., p. 14), on the one hand, led to disgruntlement among the Senegalese side. The Wade government, on the other hand, "sought to diversify Senegal's foreign relations away from the Francophone focus of his predecessors Senghor and Diouf" (Chafer, 2003, p. 164). Wade was, for instance, keen to strengthen relations with the U.S. and supported President George W. Bush's course against terrorism and even "refused to follow France in condemning the US-led invasion of Iraq" (Chafer, 2013, p. 14).[68]

Although the French-Senegalese relations improved in 2004 and continued to be good at the beginning of President Nicolas Sarkozy's presidency, after 2007, they soon deteriorated again (ibid., p. 16). Chafer (2013, p. 16) mainly relates this deterioration to "growing concerns in France and the West generally, about corruption and poor quality governance in Senegal." Furthermore, a leaked report of the active French ambassador in Dakar concretised these concerns (ibid.). As a result, the relation had already cooled at the beginning of the first observation period. Still, both the Wade government as well as the opposition were unsure, which side the Sarkozy government would support in Wade's third term gamble as the new French ambassador did not openly criticise Wade's proposed reforms to the electoral law (ibid., p. 17; cf. Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12). However, during the protests in June 2011, "France had refused to intervene on his [Wade's] behalf when the 23 June movement threatened to topple his regime in June 2011 and doors were closed to him in Paris" (Chafer, 2013, p. 17). According to Chafer (ibid.), it eventually became "increasingly clear that France, along with most Western nations, did not support Wade's plans for constitutional change and would not intervene in the election" (ibid.). Drawing on interviews conducted with representatives of bilateral cooperation and a domestic civil society representative, Fiedler et al. (2020, p. 69) further report that France together with "the European Union, […] Germany, and the United States successfully applied sanctions against the [Wade] government, such as freezing aid or banning travel visa." Leininger and Nowack (2022, p. 12) elaborate that "France and the EU negotiated a security zone for protests in Dakar." Furthermore, France reacted to the outbreak of electoral violence by announcing "its anxiety about such instability and emphasised its commitment to freedom of speech and assembly" (ibid., while referring to the Ambassade de France, 2012). As a result, pressure on the Wade regime is clearly visible.

[68] An action that was highly unusual for a Muslim-majority country.

At the beginning of his presidency, Macky Sall was eager to foster improved relations with France. His aim resulted in two symbolic visits to France shortly after his election – the first one to meet President Sarkozy and shortly after President François Hollande (A. Sall, 2013, p. 17). Sall's effort "resulted in significant financial support from France" and "Senegal-France bilateral agreements [were] concluded, with an ease and smoothness that has prompted some domestic criticism" (ibid.). In addition, France and Senegal agreed on a new defence and military cooperation agreement in 2012 (Chafer, 2013, p. 11). Already during the second observation period, France's as well as other donor's support to the Sall government was visible shortly before the 2019 presidential elections, where "Sall presented the second phase (2019 – 2023) of his development program, the PSE, at the donor countries' advisory group in Paris and again received considerably more financial support that anticipated and requested ($14 billion instead of $4.9 billion)" (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020, p. 5). In the region, Sall is also seen as a supporter of France's political course for the Sahel region (interview 15.11.2022b). Open French criticism or reactions against Sall's reform course, the exclusion of Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall from the 2019 presidential elections, or the trial against Ousmane Sonko that also led to protests against French businesses are, however, not known. In contrast to the first observation period, there is therefore no great pressure on the Sall regime to be assumed.

Relations to the European Union

In addition to Senegal's close bilateral relations with France, Senegal also maintains good relations with the European Union as well as some individual member states. The EU-Senegalese relations have already lasted for more than 50 years (Delegation of the European Union to Senegal, 2021). The Cotonou Agreement from 2000 has influenced many of the elements of the partnership between the EU and Senegal. Besides good economic and foreign aid relations as well as poverty reduction, the EU and Senegal also foster a dialogue on democracy, human rights, and the rule of law (ibid.). According to the Delegation of the European Union to Senegal (2021) under the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU and its member states are Senegal's leading trading partner (in 2021). As already mentioned, the EU provides development aid through the EIB and the EDF. In the 11th EDF that covers the time period from 2014 to 2020, 'Strengthening democratic governance' is one of the focus areas, whereby the EU also takes up the agenda of the Senegalese PSE (European Commission, 2016; European External Action Service (EEAS), 2020). The total development aid that is planned for Senegal in this period amounts to 347 million Euro. Individual EU member countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, or Sweden also have bilateral diplomatic relations with Senegal. Germany, for example, lists Senegal as a 'reform partner' under the G20 Compact with Africa Initiative since 2019 (Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ), 2023; Klatt, 2019, p. 7). It can therefore be concluded that the EU takes a central role for Senegalese foreign policy, especially in regard to trade and donor relations that result in more one-sided dependencies.

Regarding the first observation period, I have already mentioned in the section about the French-Senegalese relations that there was growing dissatisfaction among Western countries

with the Wade government during his second term (Chafer, 2013, p. 16). This was due to increasing corruption and bad governance in Senegal – for instance, regarding poverty reduction (ibid.; Melly, 2012, p. 8). Melly (2012, p. 8) further outlines that as a result "Sweden has shut down its main aid programme, while the Netherlands has dropped Senegal from its list of priority recipients. Other development partners have complained that Senegal failed to give adequate attention to the drafting of a detailed third-generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" (Melly, 2012, p. 8).

In the context of the climax of the first observation period, the 2012 presidential elections, the European Union was actively involved in different ways. When Wade announced his third term ambitions, the EU – together with other Western partners – unsuccessfully tried to persuade him not to run again (Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12). On the day of the ruling of the Constitutional Court that allowed Wade to run for a third term, the Wade government aimed to forbid protests in Dakar (Burchard, 2013, p. 5). According to Burchard (2013, p. 5), "[a]fter a sharp rebuke by the international community – and reportedly intervention by the European Union – the government rescinded its ban and instead dispatched riot police to Dakar." Immediately before the 2012 presidential elections, there was also a clear visibility of external influence as the European Union together with states such as France, Germany, and the U.S. "applied a logic of consequences by sanctioning government officials for corruption and threatening the government with cutting budget support" (Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12; see also Fiedler et al., 2020, p. 69). In addition, these Western donors "actively supported civil society in its opposition role" (Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12).

Besides these activities, the European Union accompanied the 2012 presidential elections in Senegal with an election observation mission (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2012). The EU evaluated the mission very positively as follows:

> "The presence of the EU observers during the elections in Senegal helped guarantee a credible electoral process for the voters and candidates alike. Without them, things could have taken a very different turn. The mission was perceived as having both a deterrent and a dissuasive effect on possible manipulation and fraud in all regions across the country. A spokesman for EU High Representative Catherine Ashton said the election was 'a great victory for democracy in Senegal and in Africa'" (European Commission, 2021).

The EU monitoring mission led to a high level of transparency and made election fraud difficult and costly. The EU is also indicating that the concerns about election fraud were well-founded: "[w]ithout them [EU observers], things could have taken a very different turn" (ibid.). To summarise, it can therefore be assumed that the perceivable pressure from the European Union on the Wade regime in combination with high dependencies was strong.

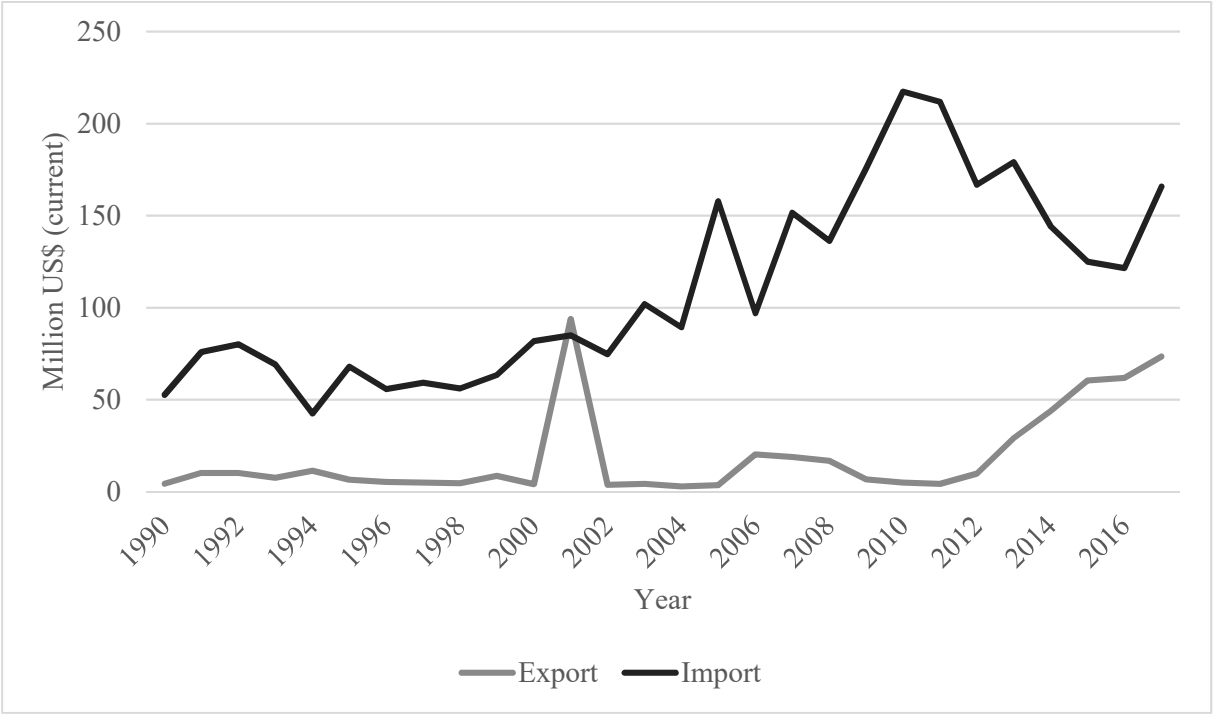
Regarding the second observation period during President Sall's presidency, the EU is again actively involved with an election monitoring mission for the 2019 presidential elections. In comparison to the prior observation period and Wade's third term gamble, there were notably less reactions by the EU to Sall's initiated election reforms and the exclusion of Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall from the elections. In its observer mission report (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2019), the observers still inform about the controversies. In general, the EU evaluates the elections positively (ibid.). Regarding the trial against Ousmane Sonko and the violent protests in 2021, the EU is largely reluctant to formulate diplomatic statements. Very

much in line with the assessment of the French reaction, therefore no great pressure on the Sall regime can be assumed.

Relations to the U.S.

The United States are another influential partner of Senegal. Bilateral diplomatic Senegal-U.S. relations already began in 1960, shortly after Senegal's independence. In 2021, both countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of their partnership (United States Department of State, 19.11.2021). Today, the U.S. is a major foreign aid donor with US$179.3 million between 2018 and 2019 (OECD Creditor Reporting System (CRS), 2021) (see also *Figure 30*), an important trading partner and strategic military ally of Senegal. OEC (2020) data shows that trade relations have generally increased since 2000 (see also *Figure 32*). Trade relations are largely dominated by the import of U.S. goods that, however, declined after a peak in 2010 and have been rising again since 2016. In recent years, Senegalese exports to the U.S. are steadily increasing. Also in regard to the U.S.' security agenda, Senegal as a quite stable pro-Western Muslim-majority country that is situated in a region struggling with terrorism and extremism is of special interest (Arieff, 2011, p. 2). It can therefore be concluded that the U.S. is playing an increasingly important role as a partner and foreign aid donor for Senegal.

Figure 32: Senegal's trade with the U.S. in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

At the beginning of his presidency, President Wade was keen to diversify Senegalese foreign relations – a strategy that is seen as an attempt to reduce French influence on the country (Chafer, 2003, p. 164; 2013, pp. 5, 14). As already mentioned, Wade supported President

George W. Bush's course after the 9/11 attacks and did not position against the U.S.-led war against Iraq (ibid.). Shortly after, President Bush visited Senegal in 2003 and a new U.S. aid package for Senegal was announced (Chafer, 2003, pp. 164-165). Bilateral aid from the U.S. was considerably growing the years after and focused on several key areas, *inter alia*, democratic governance (cf. Arieff, 2011, pp. 16-17). In addition to the bilateral aid, in 2009, the U.S.-funded MCC "approved a five-year, $540 million compact aimed at encouraging economic growth through improvements in infrastructure and agricultural production" (ibid., p. 19). In comparison, the total bilateral aid of the U.S. to Senegal in 2009 amounted $94 million (ibid., p. 16). As a result, an increasing one-sided influence of the U.S. can be assumed.

The approval of the MCC compact already fell into the time period of the first observation period and several Members of the Congress expressed severe "concerns over the decision process and timing of Senegal's MCC compact, given perceived democratic backsliding and rising corruption" (ibid., p. 19) in the course of 2010. It can be assumed that President Wade was also concerned about the public opinion in the U.S. and Washington's assessment of his third term attempt. He notably assigned the U.S.-based law firm McKenna Long & Alridge in Atlanta in October 2011 to "research and draft a 'white paper' showing that the 85-year-old was legally entitled to seek a third term in office, even though the Senegalese constitution was revised to impose a maximum of two" (Callimachi, 2012, February 2). Callimachi (2012, February 2) further reports:

> "Wade's lobbying effort was led by the former attorney general of Georgia and his firm of 475 attorneys and policy advisers. The president's office paid Atlanta-based McKenna Long & Alridge a $100,000 retainer, a $50,000 research fee, and $50,000 per month starting in October, according to the company's public disclosure with the United States Department of Justice. The correspondence between Wade and the lobbying firm included in the disclosure makes clear that the purpose of the 'white paper' is to sway public opinion in Washington, as well as back home."

The stated purpose of swaying "public opinion in Washington, as well as back home" (ibid.) is clearly indicating that Wade's government was reacting to concerns about his third term attempt in the U.S.[69] This is fitting to "uncharacteristically blunt" (ibid.) calls by U.S. officials, urging Wade not to run again:

> "Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs William Fitzgerald called Wade's candidacy 'regrettable' and said that it would be a good time for him to retire in an interview with French radio RFI. As recently as Monday, Deputy Secretary of State Bill Burns said that Wade's insistence on running again 'undermines the spirit of democracy', while State Department spokesman Victoria Nuland said: 'Our message to him remains the same. That the statesmanly like thing to do would be to cede to the next generation'" (ibid.).

These reactions can be seen as clear attempts by the U.S. to persuade Wade against running again as also pointed out by Leininger and Nowack (2022, p. 12). Statements by U.S. officials

[69] The wording in the contract (NSD/FARA Registration Unit, 2011 [2022]) was: "Based on the initial legal opinion developed through research and analysis, the registrant may assist in outreach to Executive Branch officials and Members of Congress in regard to U.S. foreign policy positions concerning the Republic of Senegal. The activities may include education of U.S. government officials on the pertinent laws of Senegal and the authority of the a [sic!] President of Senegal to seek a third term in office." Moreover, the costs reported by Callimachi (2012, February 2) can be confirmed on the basis of the original contract (ibid.).

were, however, noticeably more reserved after the court ruling by the Senegalese Constitutional Council (Callimachi, 2012, February 2). Nevertheless, the U.S. was involved in the already mentioned sanctioning of government officials as well as threatened cuts in budget support (Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12). Thus, a high external pressure on the Wade regime can clearly be identified.

In contrast to the first observation period, no major reactions by the U.S. or U.S. officials are known during the second observation period – an assessment that was also shared during the interviews (e.g. 15.11.2022a, 18.11.2022). It can be noted that under Macky Sall the cooperation between the U.S. and Senegal continued, for instance, in the field of military cooperation and counterterrorism (Lansford, 2021b, p. 13). Furthermore, a second compact under the MCC fund that mobilised $600 million for the Senegalese power sector was signed in December 2018 (Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), 2021). In addition, Senegal participated in President Joe Biden's democracy summit in December 2021 (Resnick, 2021, p. 5). Therefore, the pressure from the U.S. on the Sall administration during the second observation period can be categorised as comparatively low.

Relations to other states in the region, the AU, and ECOWAS

Senegal maintains friendly relations with countries in its neighbourhood, although it was involved in some regional struggles in the past (cf. Arieff, 2011, pp. 11-14; Lansford, 2021b, pp. 11-14). Especially secessionist movements in the Casamance region that include armed rebel groups flared up repeatedly and led to tensions with Gambia and Guinea-Bissau (cf. ibid.). As already assessed, Senegal is considered to be an anchor of stability in the region (cf. Arieff, 2011, p. 2; Klatt, 2019, p. 7; Lu, 2021, p. 2). This role relates to Senegal's active engagement in peacekeeping missions (see, for example, Senegal's engagement in Mali) and as a mediator of conflicts (for instance, mediation efforts in Mauritania after its coup d'état in 2008 and after the conflict between Sudan and Chad in 2008) (Lansford, 2021b, pp. 12-13; A. Sall, 2013, p. 10).

Senegal is also an active founding member of the two most important regional organisations, the AU and ECOWAS. Ideas of Pan-Africanism and fostered South-South cooperation are key elements of Senegal's foreign policy (A. Sall, 2013, pp. 13-15). "Pan-Africanist thinking in Senegal goes back to 1963 and the establishment at the meeting in Addis Ababa that established the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which was charged with bringing about the union of African nations" (ibid., pp. 14-15). Striving for African unity is also a goal laid down in the Senegalese constitution (ibid., p. 8).

In the context of regional economic cooperation and integration, Senegal's membership in ECOWAS and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) are most mentionable. Furthermore, Senegal strongly supported the development of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) programme of the African Union that also fosters economic integration, but fell short of expectations (ibid., p. 13). Senegal's major trading partners in the region are Mali and Nigeria. Both countries are, however, struggling with their democratic development and violent conflicts. Especially Mali is marked by conflicts, with the recent military

coup in August 2020 as a climax (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022a), but also Nigeria is confronted with an Islamist insurgency, high levels of domestic violence as well as strongly limited democratic institutions (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2022b).

Regarding potential regional reactions to democratic quality declines in Senegal it must be noted that Senegal is one of the most democratic countries in the region. Only Ghana and Burkina Faso have comparable values on V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* (between 0.7 and 0.75 in 2020) (Coppedge, Gerring, Knutsen, Lindberg, Teorell, Alizada, et al., 2021; Pemstein et al., 2021). ECOWAS, as an institution, however, aims to support democracy and good governance as a means for economic integration and the Directorate of Political Affairs, Peace and Security (PAPS) "facilitates the implementation of the protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security of 1999 as well as the Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance" (Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), s.a.). Instead of being exposed to strong regional pressure to follow democratic norms, it can be assumed that Senegal is interested in keeping its ascribed role as an anchor of stability in the region and potential democratic role model.

In both observation periods, the AU and ECOWAS deployed election observation missions to Senegal for the 2012 presidential elections as well as for the 2019 presidential elections (African Union, 2012, 2019, February 20; Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 2012, February 21), which can generally be classified as measures to increase the transparency of the elections. Furthermore, in the run-up to the 2012 presidential elections, the Senegalese opposition leaders asked former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to persuade Wade to stop seeking a third term (The Africa Report, 2012, February 22). As a reaction to increasing tensions between Wade and the opposition, the "African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (Ecowas) […] send in Obasanjo with a mandate 'to engage all the political stakeholders in Senegal with a view to promoting dialogue and ensuring peaceful, fair and transparent elections'" (ibid.). In the second observation period, Karim Wade appealed to the Court of Justice of ECOWAS because of his exclusion from the 2019 presidential elections, however, without success (Court of Justice of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), 2019; Klatt, 2019, p. 4). As a result, it can be assumed that there was only limited regional pressure in the first and second observation period, which mainly contributed to the transparency of the elections and was – in the first observation period – more focused on preventing conflict. In addition, the combination of deployed EU and regional election observation missions likely raised the legitimacy of the missions. However, at the latest with the coups in Mali (2021) or Niger (2023), more security related issues dominate the AU's and ECOWAS' political agenda.

In February 2022, President Sall was further elected as new Chairperson of the African Union (2022, February 5). In his acceptance speech, Sall prominently referred to the growing threat "of the phenomenon of coups d'état which constitutes a major attack on democracy and institutional stability on the continent" (ibid.). This position can further lead to an increased international perception of Senegal's ability to meet expectations about its ascribed role as an anchor of stability in the region and potential democratic role model.

UN and international NGOs

At different points, officials from varying UN institutions commented on violent protests in Senegal. For instance, in 2021, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reacted to violent protests over the arrest of Ousmane Sonko and called on both sides to renounce violence (BBC News, 2021, March 5). This message was very similarly voiced by the UN's special envoy for West Africa, Mohamed Ibn Chamba (ibid.). Regarding the presidential elections in 2019 and the legal process against Karim Wade that led to his exclusion from the elections, the UN Commission on Human Rights also published a report that considered a re-evaluation of the legal process as necessary (Klatt, 2019, p. 4). International NGOs such as Amnesty International also frequently drew attention to restrictions of the right to demonstrate in the run-up to the 2012 presidential elections and, for example, called on the Senegalese authorities to investigate incidents of violence as well as allow safe protests in the context of Ousmane Sonko's arrest in March 2021 (Amnesty International, 2012, February 1, 2021, March 8). Although the potential pressure from UN institutions and international NGOs cannot be classified as high, these actors played a relevant role in creating international awareness.

Relations to China

Without doubt, Senegal's relations with the People's Republic of China are rapidly changing in the last twenty years. While Senegal established official diplomatic relations with Taiwan shortly after independence, diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China were strongly restricted in the past. Increasing trade relations at the beginning of the 20th century eventually led to Senegal "reestablish[ing] diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, ending Senegal's long-standing recognition of Taiwan" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 12) in 2005. [70] In 2009, China's President Hu Jintao visited Senegal and "a number of new bilateral economic agreements were signed" (ibid.). As a result, trade figures grew from $300 million to $750 million from 2005 to 2009 (Gehrold & Tietze, 2011, p. 92).[71] In 2018, "China became Senegal's second-largest commercial partner […] with trade between the two countries of more than $2.3 billion" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 13). *Figure 33* further illustrates this general trend and depicts a large increase in import values in 2017. Quite comparable to Senegal's trade relations to Western partners, a strong surplus of imports is visible.

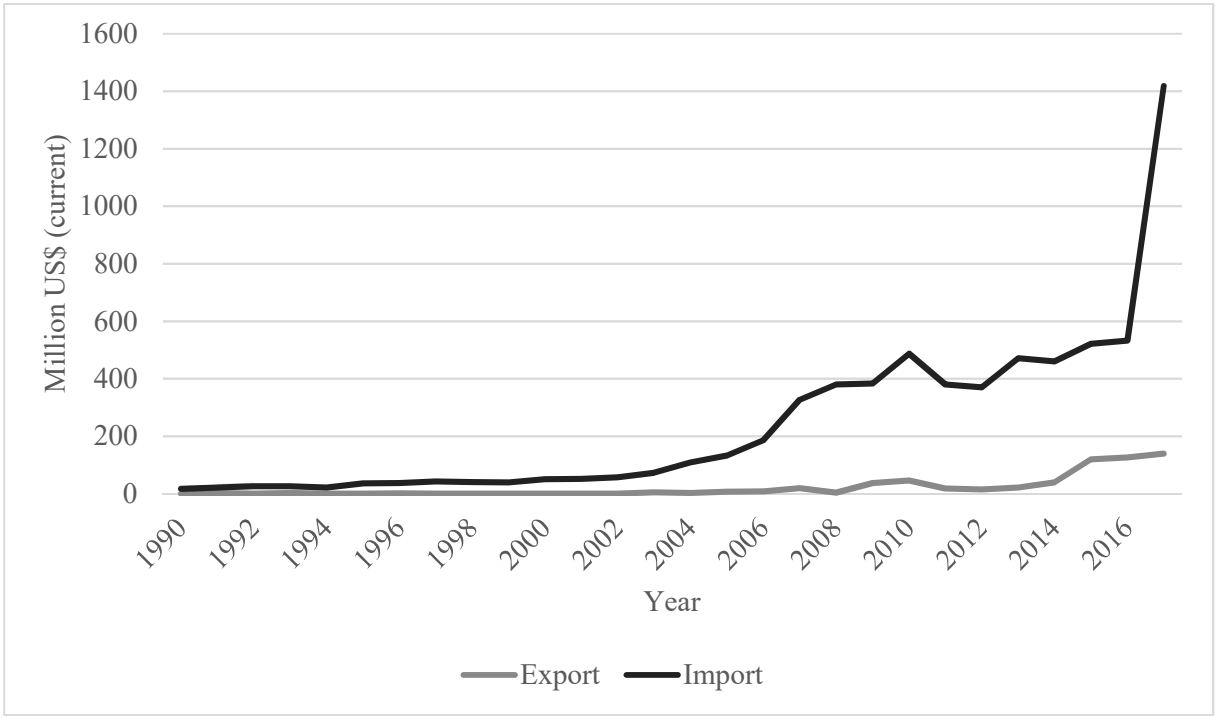
Although China's FDI in Africa is rapidly increasing, investments in Senegal were rather insignificant until 2009 (Gehrold & Tietze, 2011, p. 94). Instead, China is an active foreign aid

[70] During the Wade presidency, following Sall (2013, p. 8) it came to a rather controversial affair in regard to Senegal's relations with Taiwan: "As an incentive to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Taiwan, Senegal seemingly requested $7 billion in financial support from Taipei. Once granted, the loan followed a circuitous route, and the money finally passed between heads of state in the form of a personal gift between friends, to be invested in 'social sectors'. Media reports confirm that there is no trace of these funds in the public treasury" (ibid.).

[71] It should be noted that trade figures do vary depending on the source. OEC (2020) data, for instance, depict lower trade figures for Senegal and China in 2005 and 2009. The general trend is, however, clearly visible in the OEC (2020) data as well.

donor, for instance in the health sector, and provides interest-free loans that are frequently used for infrastructure programmes in Senegal. These infrastructure programmes, however, are often combined with the necessity of Chinese company involvement in so-called joint ventures (ibid., pp. 95-98, 110-111). Examples for these programmes are Chinese investments in ports in Kaolack and Foundiougne (ibid.) as well as in Senegal's outdated power system (Lansford, 2021b, p. 13). Furthermore, Chinese-Senegalese cooperation also includes the cultural sector, for example, radio broadcasting (Gehrold & Tietze, 2011, pp. 101-102), or the establishment of a Confucius Institute at the Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar.

Figure 33: Senegal's trade with China in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

For China, cooperation with Senegal is strategically relevant and can be seen as an attempt to improve perceptions about China in Senegal in general, to enhance China's influence on an important actor in the ECOWAS region as well as to gain access to new markets (ibid., pp. 108-112). In regard to Senegal's motivations, the described development of the relations can be very well referred to President Wade's aim to diversify Senegal's traditional trade relations and donor structure (Arieff, 2011, p. 13; Chafer, 2013, p. 15). President Sall is continuing the course of his predecessor and shortly after the beginning of the second observation period, in July 2018, "Senegal became the first country in the region to formally join China's Belt and Road initiative" (Lansford, 2021b, p. 13). According to Lansford (2021b), this action was met with divided opinions: "Proponents of the deal praised the growing ties between the two countries as a manifestation of Senegal breaking free from its neocolonial dependency on France. Opponents expressed concerns over the nation's growing debt to China" (ibid., p. 13). At the same time, this action illustrates the growing influence of China on Senegal and increasing dependencies.

Reactions by Chinese officials to the events during the observation periods cannot be determined. It is, however, noteworthy that trade relations and infrastructure projects were not affected by any actions of the Wade or Sall administration in the context of initiated democratic quality declines. This assessment also corresponds well to the perceptions in the interviews in which China's influence was primarily classified as economic (e.g. 10.11.2022, 18.11.2022).

Summing up, a strongly increasing importance of China for the Senegalese government in the context of its general diversification of donor relations is noticeable. China is seen as an alternative donor that provides foreign aid and loans 'without interests' – but still with conditions (see the necessity of Chinese company involvement in infrastructure projects). As a result, it is not unlikely that Senegal is creating new dependencies. However, an immediate Chinese influence in the two observation periods is not evident. Rather, the growing Chinese engagement very likely leads to a declining influence of pro-democratic international partners on Senegal.

Relations to the Middle East and Asia

Regarding Senegal's already mentioned attempts to diversify donor and trade partner relations, several new partnerships with countries such as Kuwait, Iran, Morocco, Dubai, India, or South Korea are mentionable as well (cf. Arieff, 2011, pp. 14-15; Chafer, 2013, pp. 15-16; A. Sall, 2013, pp. 13-14).[72] Many of these countries are noticeably less democratic than Senegal. Arab money, for instance, helped Senegal to build the infrastructure for the 2008 Islamic Conference meeting in Dakar (Chafer, 2013, p. 16). Relations to Iran were, however, severely damaged by the discovery of Iranian weapons that were meant for rebels in the Casamance region (Arieff, 2011, p. 15). Although Senegal's relations to its traditional partners and especially France are still strong, according to Chafer (2013, p. 16), the "impact of this diversification, however, has inevitably been to reduce French leverage, especially as many of Senegal's new sources apply less economic and political conditionality to their partnership with Senegal than does France" (ibid.). Accordingly, the expansion of these new partnerships can be seen as comparable to the deepening relations with China.

5.1.3.3 Overall account

The case of Senegal with the two identified observation periods is a good case to visualise the influences of domestic and external factors as costs and benefits as well as their interplay with each other in key decision-making moments of possible autocratisation of contra-democratic executives. In the following overall account, the two strands of the analysis are brought together to be weighed at the same time. I further present and structure the results of the analysis in a summarising table (*Table 13*).

[72] A more curios case was the North Korean financial support to the building of the controversial *Monument de la Renaissance Africaine* in Dakar for Senegal's 50th anniversary of independence in 2010 (Arieff, 2011, p. 5). This decision by the Wade government may have likely been a confrontational signal to Western donors.

The first observation period

Domestic factors do, in any case, play an important role in current democratic erosion processes in Senegal – as well as for their potential prevention. The political system with the dominant position of the president, the fragmented multi-party system, and the insufficiently independent judiciary provides the framework for political competition (see *Table 13*). Furthermore, the analysis of the domestic factors shows an active and vibrant civil society with widespread pro-democratic attitudes and a high interest-based mobilisation capacity, which frequently demands respect for the constitutionally guaranteed laws by the governing regime, as well as a rather free media that observes and points out potential violations of democratic principles. The mobilisation and translation of political interests through Senegal's fragmented multi-party system to nominate and install competitive presidential candidates is, however, a challenging process. Only through a joint mobilisation and unification among the opposition forces, it is possible to nominate a promising counter-candidate. Nevertheless, external factors also have an important role to play when it comes to episodes of potential autocratisation. Especially Senegal's close relations to France, strong economic dependencies on donor countries in general as well as the aim to diversify donor relations shape Senegal's foreign policy and thereby influence domestic politics. In addition, the importance of Senegal's role as a regional beacon of democracy, stability, and as a mediator has an important impact on the domestic level and is promoted by Senegal's active membership in regional organisations and in mediation efforts.

In more detail, the analysis of the first observation period (2005-2012) reveals that at the beginning of the episode, in 2005, Wade's approval ratings were still high and the domestic opposition lacked unity. On the international level, Wade's relations with France were improving after a tenser period at the beginning of his presidency, while efforts to diversify Senegal's donor relations with increasing engagements from the U.S. or China were equally successful. Wade's first decision, the postponement of the 2006 parliamentary elections until 2007, seemed to be a beneficial tactical manoeuvre of the Wade administration to be in a better position for the elections. Although domestic protests from oppositional parties and the civil society against Wade's decision can be categorised as perceivable costs, there was no clear pro-democratic group that already effectively mobilised against Wade and was later able to unify behind a promising candidate for the upcoming 2007 presidential elections. Instead, the competition was centred on Wade and his former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck. Wade was able to secure a safe victory already in the first round of the presidential elections. As a result, opposition parties chose a boycott strategy for the 2007 parliamentary elections that can be related to the considerable low turnout. Nevertheless, Wade could secure a distinct majority for his governing coalition for the next years.

Despite the fact that there were no immediate major reactions by pro-democratic Western donors that should be considered as costs for the Wade administration in the equation, Western donors became increasingly concerned by the developments in Senegal. While donors such as Sweden or the Netherlands with minor portfolios already cut or reduced aid programmes referring to bad governance and insufficient engagement of the Wade government with domestic poverty, relations to France as a substantially more important donor deteriorated as well. Especially a leaked report of the French ambassador in Dakar in 2008 concretised Western concerns

about increasing corruption and bad governance of the Wade administration. Relations with the U.S. initially seemed to be rather unaffected as the MCC programme was still in preparation.

The 2009 regional elections already showed a different picture. Wade's coalition and especially his son Karim Wade, who ran for mayor in Dakar, suffered clear defeats. This, on the one hand, showed the decreasing public satisfaction with the Wade government that can also be referred to perceived bad governance, disappointed economic expectations, and discontent with the increasingly strong positioning of Karim Wade, but, on the other hand, the more effective mobilisation of the pro-democratic opposition. As a result, Wade's position and political power was considerably weakened, while also his likely plans to build up Karim Wade as his successor were threatened.

Wade's decisions to announce his third term ambitions in 2009 and to start a reform process in June 2011 introducing a post of a vice-president that runs on a joint ticket with the president as well as lowering the 50 percent threshold in the first round of the presidential elections can be categorised as the first major decisions in regard to initiated democratic quality declines (see the second column in *Table 13*). After the defeats in the 2009 regional elections, this approach can clearly be related to an attempt to secure Wade's position of power in an already weakened situation – with the preservation of power and the future envisioned transfer of power to his son as perceived benefits. Wade's official announcement to attempt a third term in January 2012 as well as his actual candidacy in February and March 2012 were his second major decisions (see the third column in *Table 13*).

With the strongly mobilised civil society, massive pro-democratic protests around *Y'en a marre* (founded in January 2011) and M23 (founded in June 2011) as "a coalition of opposition parties and civil society groups" (Demarest, 2016, p. 64) as well as outbreaks of low-level violence, the perceivable costs of Wade's actions become clearly visible.[73] Pressure from these pro-democratic opposition actors was constantly high around the decisive decision-making moments (see *Table 13*). Furthermore, international awareness from Western donors was high in the run-up to the 2012 presidential elections. Blunt reactions by U.S. officials urging Wade to step down after his official announcement in January 2012 are an illustrative example for the official international condemnation of Wade's actions, while the threat for the Wade government to lose the MCC funding and further development aid from European donors was very concrete over the last months of Wade's presidency. In addition, according to Fiedler et al. (2020, p. 69), "the European Union, France, Germany, and the United States successfully applied sanctions against the [Wade] government, such as freezing aid or banning travel visa." The Wade administration's attempt to influence the public opinion in Washington by assigning the U.S.-based law firm McKenna Long & Alridge to prepare a white paper that was supposed to legitimise Wade's third term ambitions illustrates its concerns about Washington's assessment in October 2011.

[73] It is important to note that costs of repression are always high for a regime in power (at least in an autocratic setting), especially when the possibility of failure and a loss of power is high (Marks, 1992, p. 51). The possibility of failure depends on the general balance of power between the ruling regime and the opposition that is determined by the mobilisation and unity of the opposition (ibid.).

Table 13: Overview of actors and strategies of autocracy prevention in Senegal

	First observation period (2005-2012)		*Second observation period (2018-2023)*	
Decision-maker	President Wade		President Sall	
Main decision-making moments	Wade's announced intention to run for a third term (Sep 2009) and introduced reforms to the presidential elections (lower threshold & vice-president with shared ticket) (Jun 2011)	Wade's official announcement to attempt a third term (Jan 2012) and his actual candidacy in the elections (Feb & Mar 2012)	Sall's adjustments to the electoral law introduced in Apr 2018 (*Parrainage*-system and new pre-conditions for presidential candidates)	Potential misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus (against Sonko and his PASTEF party from 2021-2023); ongoing third term gamble until 2023
Domestic level				
Context conditions	Comparatively well-functioning democratic institutions; fragmented multi-party system; mainly free & fair democratic elections; active civil society & support for democracy; concentration of power around president; ongoing misuse of the judicative & corruption			
Institutional pro-democratic opposition	No substantial, observable opposition; instead strong influence of Wade on the Constitutional Court	No substantial, observable opposition, Constitutional Court approved Wade's third term attempt in January 2012	No substantial, observable opposition	No substantial, observable opposition
Political pro-democratic opposition	Oppositional parties organised meetings with local leaders (2008-2009) and were able to build coalitions and secure important victories in the 2009 local elections	All major opposition leaders opposed Wade's third term attempt & joint mobilisation with social society groups (M23); joint candidate for the second round of the election	Lack of mobilisation and unity among the opposition parties in the 2019 presidential election;	Strong mobilisation against Sall among opposition parties (e.g. PASTEF) and successes in the 2022 municipal and parliamentary elections;
Social pro-democratic opposition	Strong support for democracy; ongoing contra-Wade protests; formation of social movements	Even stronger protests (e.g. *Y'en a marre*) & outbreak of low-level violence	Strong criticism and protest (especially from supporters of K. Wade & K. Sall)	Strong (partly violent) protest and mobilisation against Sall (2021-2023)
International level				
Context conditions	Prominent regional role as beacon of democracy and stability; strong economic dependencies (high aid dependency, importance of remittances and external markets, CFA currency-system); attempts to diversify donor & trade relations (e.g. China)			
France	Continuing close ties, but relations to Wade cooled down; no open condemnation, but clear signals that France would not support Wade and oppose repressions against protest	Growing pressure on the Wade regime that included condemnation, backroom talks, and concrete sanctions (e.g. freezing aid); pushing for the possibility of protest	Substantially improved relations with Sall's government; economic and financial support (e.g. PSE), closer military cooperation; no observable open criticism	No initial substantial reactions known, instead ongoing support for Sall's development plans

Table 13: Overview of actors and strategies of autocracy prevention in Senegal (*cont.*)

EU and individual member states	Financial support of pro-democratic Senegalese groups; attempts to convince Wade not to run again; withdrawing or pausing funds by member states	Election monitoring mission; condemnation; threats of and actual sanctioning; backroom talks; concrete pressure to lift ban on protest	Improved relations with Sall's government; election monitoring missions in 2019 (report noted controversies); no other reactions	No initial substantial reactions known
U.S.	Important trade and security relations; approval of the MCC compact in 2009, but open concerns about its timing in 2010	'Blunt' condemnation (Jan 2012); joined the sanctioning efforts by other donors	No substantial reactions known; signing of the second MCC compact in Dec 2018	No initial substantial reactions known; Sall participated in the Biden summit in 2021
Neighbouring states, the AU, and ECOWAS	Senegal's positive role as a beacon of democracy and stability in the region; no substantial reactions known	Joint election monitoring missions with the EU; sending former Nigerian President to persuade Wade to stop seeking a third term (Feb 2012)	K. Wade unsuccessfully appealed to an ECOWAS court in Nov 2018 to allow him to participate in the 2019 presidential elections	Highly dominant security related issues on the regional agenda; Sall was elected as Chairperson of the AU (2022)
UN and international NGOs	International NGOs supported international awareness-raising and called for safe protests conditions		Report of the UN Commission on Human Rights, which considers a reassessment of the trial against K. Wade as necessary	UN officials & international NGOs (e.g. Amnesty International) called on both sides to renounce violence and allow safe protests
Main opposition and interactions	Active mobilisation and coalition building among political parties, formation of social movements as well as pressure and support of international pro-democratic partners (against the background of strong relations)	Opposition parties were able to rally behind Sall; strong opposition from social movements and international pressure on the regime and support to pro-democratic actors	Only restrained domestic and international reactions to the adjustments; not enough time for the (social and political) opposition to react, mobilise, and decide on a joint candidate	Strong mobilisation and protest (from both social and political opposition); substantially less pressure from international pro-democratic actors than in the first observation period
Decision/Outcome	Wade had to withdraw his adjustments to the electoral law in Jun 2011	Wade was not prevented from running again in the 2012 presidential elections, but lost to Sall and accepted his defeat	Reforms were implemented, K. Wade & K. Sall remained excluded; Sall won the 2019 elections	Strong repressions against Sonko and his party; Sall declared that he would not run for a third term

As a result, the backlash of Western donors that included sanctions and the threat of further sanctions against the background of high levels of linkage and leverage can clearly be categorised as perceived costs. In addition, external actors supported pro-democratic civil society actors (Leininger & Nowack, 2022, p. 12) and according to Burchard (2013, p. 5), especially the EU intervened on the day of the ruling of the Constitutional Court on 27 January 2012 that allowed Wade to run for a third term and pressed the Wade government to lift an announced ban on protests. These actions can be categorised as important interactions between the domestic and international level. The high domestic and international pressure eventually forced Wade to not continue with his reform plans in June 2011, indicating that the perceived costs already outweighed the benefits. Wade, however, stuck to his plan to run again in the 2012 elections.

Domestic and international pressure on the Wade administration remained high until and during the 2012 presidential elections in February and March 2012 (see *Table 13*). External actors refrained from publicly trying to prevent Wade from running after the Constitutional Court ruling in January 2012, but pushed for fair, transparent, and peaceful elections instead. The deployment of the EU election observation mission on invitation of the Wade government, together with missions by the AU and ECOWAS, can be categorised as a key element, increasing the level of transparency and making election fraud difficult and costly. The combination of deployed EU and regional election observation missions from the AU and ECOWAS likely raised the legitimacy of all missions. The EU is also stating that the concerns about election fraud were well-founded and that the EU-mission might have even tipped the scales: "[w]ithout them [EU observers], things could have taken a very different turn" (European Commission, 2021). The interplay of international and domestic factors also becomes visible by the fact that Senegalese opposition leaders asked former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo to visit Senegal and persuade Wade not to seek a third term. Obasanjo was eventually sent by the AU and ECOWAS in February 2012 with a mandate to enable dialogue and "ensuring peaceful, fair and transparent elections" (The Africa Report, 2012, February 22) – further indicating that international awareness for the elections and potential electoral violence in the region was quite high.

The second key element was, however, that the mobilised and externally funded pro-democratic opposition was able to translate their political interests into action by nominating and rallying behind a competitive presidential candidate with pro-democratic positions in the second round of the 2012 presidential elections. In the final decision moment of the first observation period, Wade could have tried to influence the 2012 presidential elections, for instance, by postponing the elections on short notice, by hindering oppositional candidates to run, by manipulating the election results or by simply not accepting them. The combination of international attention and pressure as well as the united approach by the domestic opposition with a clear win in the second round raised the perceivable costs for the Wade regime sufficiently enough to prevent substantial election fraud or a refusal to acknowledge the election results (see *Table 13*).

These results also support the theoretical premise that external influences cannot work as a single *sufficient condition* for preventing autocratisation. External pressure could not have worked without a mobilised and united opposition that was able to translate their political interests into action by nominating and rallying behind Macky Sall as a competitive presidential candidate with pro-democratic positions – as a *necessary condition* for a prevented autocratisation. However, it is unclear whether the external pressure and interplay of international and domestic factors were also decisive *necessary conditions* in Wade's decision process, without

which the pressure on the Wade administration would not have been high enough. Still, the reactions of the Wade administration to the external influences against the background of high linkage and leverage indicate that they were perceived as costs and thereby made the gradual democratic quality declines less likely. As a result, the *Hypotheses 1* and *2b* can be accepted for the first observation period.

The second observation period

At the beginning of the second observation period in 2018, President Sall was also in a good starting position with a clear victory of his Benno Bokk Yakaar Coalition in the 2017 parliamentary elections and high public approval ratings for his performance as president. In addition, after Sall's election in 2012, Western donors were satisfied with the new course of the administration that entailed the introduction of the PSE and led to improved relations with France as well as substantial financial support. At the same time, Sall continued the diversification-course of the Senegalese donor structure, especially in regard to relations with China and the U.S.

The Sall administration's decision in April 2018 to introduce the *Parrainage*-system and the pre-condition for presidential candidates, making their own qualification for voting a prerequisite to run, triggered widespread domestic protest (see the fourth column in *Table 13*). Although the *Parrainage*-system did not prevent major promising opposition candidates from running, the introduction of the pre-condition for presidential candidates led to the exclusion of Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall from the 2019 presidential elections, due to prior court rulings against them. This approach was highly controversial as misdemeanours of the government's coalition own politicians were conversely not sufficiently addressed. Still, the exclusions can be categorised as highly beneficial for the Sall administration as both candidates could have been promising counter-candidates who might have prevented a clear first-round success of Sall. In addition, the perceived costs for the decision were comparatively low as the pro-democratic opposition lagged mobilisation and unity at this point (see *Table 13*) – a *necessary condition* for the prevention of a democratic quality decline in an election.

International reactions were also rather restrained to these changes, which additionally led to low costs for the Sall administration. The EU, AU, and ECOWAS again deployed election observation missions for the 2019 presidential elections after being invited and the EU report reflected on the consequences of the *Parrainage*-system as well as on the introduced pre-condition for presidential candidates. Although the assessment was critical, no further official reactions stand out. Moreover, Karim Wade appealed to an ECOWAS court to allow him to participate in the elections. However, the decision of the court was not in his favour and confirmed the interpretation of the Senegalese authorities. The UN Commission on Human Rights published a report about the process that concluded differently, by stating that a re-evaluation of the process would have been necessary. Going beyond direct reactions of Western donor countries to political processes in Senegal, instead successful conclusions of economic programmes were noticeable (see, for instance, Western contributions to the second round of the PSE and the signing of the second compact under the MCC fund in December 2018). At the same time,

Senegal formally joined the Chinese BRI as the first member of the West African region in July 2018.

The judicial allegations[74] against and imprisonment of Ousmane Sonko, who was widely considered to be the most promising oppositional counter-candidate for the 2024 presidential elections, as well as Sall's potential third term ambitions mark the second and ongoing decision-making process of the Sall administration (see the fifth column in *Table 13*). In contrast to the institutional changes introduced prior to the 2019 presidential elections, the question of a potential third term attempt can be classified as substantially more sensitive for the pro-democratic opposition. Although Sall's third term ambitions were mainly speculative, the opposition was highly sensitised to the potential gamble and a broad majority of the Senegalese civil society favoured the two-term limit rule – making it a costly gamble for Sall. With Sonko already established as a prominent figure and potential opposition candidate, his imprisonment in March 2021 triggered substantially more and violent domestic protest than any other action by the Sall administration prior to the 2019 presidential elections. The high mobilisation capacity and severity of the protests came as a surprise and was likely related to the worsening economic situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the perceivable costs for the Sall administration were high and likely explain the prompt release of Sonko after five days.

Interestingly, some protests were also directed against French businesses – what can be related to openly criticised corrupt networks of Franco-African authorities and business elites in the context of recent natural resource explorations and the still existing Franc CFA system by the opposition around Sonko and the *Y'en a marre* movement (Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 9-11). International reactions to Sall's potential third term gamble or Sonko's first imprisonment were, however, very restricted. The only noteworthy identifiable reactions came from UN officials and international NGOs such as Amnesty International that were strongly calling on both sides to renounce violence and also allow safe protests. At this point in time, therefore, very limited perceivable costs for the Sall administration can be assumed triggered by external pressure.

Election results from the 2022 local elections and 2022 parliamentary elections as well as election polls by Afrobarometer (2021) further indicate that the mobilisation and unity of the opposition behind Sonko as a pro-democratic candidate increased substantially since the 2019 presidential elections and that the public satisfaction with the Sall administration steadily decreased. Furthermore, protest against Sall's potential third term gamble and the ongoing legal case against Sonko continued, until in a series of latest events in 2023, Sall officially ruled out in July 2023 that he would run again in the 2024 presidential elections. Shortly after, however, Sonko was taken into custody under new legal charges that include insurrection, conspiracy, and terrorism. In addition, Sonko's PASTEF party was dissolved and several party members were arrested. While Sall's decision not to run for president again can be seen as a positive development after a prolonged period of uncertainty, taken against a backdrop of intense – and costly – domestic pressure from pro-democratic opposition actors, the action against Sonko and his party is highly dubious. On the one hand, there is the possibility that the action was intended to remove the main competitor from the race for the upcoming elections in 2024, while, on the

[74] As already pointed out in the analysis, it is impossible to clearly evaluate the plausibility of the accusations against Sonko from the outside (see *Chapter 5.1.3.1*).

other hand, the destabilising potential of Sonko and his supporters was used as a justification for the government's action. Regardless of the motivation, there is now the possibility that the action against Sonko and his party will lead to a punishment of the ruling party in the upcoming elections. At this stage, however, no final assessment of the events can be made. At the same time, no official international reactions to these recent developments have been recorded.

The overall results of the second observation period are now indicating that there is a high threshold before external actors are engaging in an ongoing autocratisation process. On the one hand, this threshold seems to be related to the extent of the domestic pro-democratic mobilisation and unity – a *necessary condition* for the prevention of a democratic quality decline – and, on the other hand, to the perceived severity of an autocratisation process/action.[75] Especially when elections are influenced more indirectly by misuses of the judicative that are difficult to assess from the outside or when initiated changes only lead to a very gradual and slow democratic quality decline, foreign donors seem to be more reluctant to get involved. It is therefore not surprising that comparable international reactions to decisions by the contra-democratic executive in the first observation period were still lacking at the beginning of the second observation period, when the Sall administration initiated changes to political institutions that decreased their democratic quality less visibly. Furthermore, although linkage to Western partners and potential leverage are still relatively high, international attention is currently not that visible. Thus, only limited conclusion can be drawn (yet) about the hypotheses. As I find no indications of a direct effect of the overall strong relations with pro-democratic partners on Sall's decision-making process in the comparatively absence of direct democracy protection measures, my findings provide evidence for rejecting *Hypothesis 2a*.

The analysis also shows the growing influence of 'new donors', especially China, as an attempt of the Wade and Sall administrations to diversify Senegal's donor structure and reduce dependency on potential Western aid conditionality (Arieff, 2011; Lansford, 2021b). This course thereby leads to less linkage to Western donors and less potential leverage – lowering the *costs* of any institutional change that can be categorised as autocratisation processes or disregard of existing laws. It remains to be seen how these diversification efforts may also affect the outcome of future decision-making and cost-benefit assessments.

As a contrasting case from a different world region where external influences might be comparatively weaker and less visible than in the Senegalese context, in the next step, I present the results from the in-depth case study of autocratisation processes in Indonesia.

5.2 Indonesia

Until now, primarily domestic explanatory factors are analysed in order to assess autocratisation processes in Indonesia. Domestic factors are – without doubt – highly relevant. However, analyses that include the international dimension and thus take into account possible direct and

[75] This statement was also presented in the interviews and generally shared for the Senegalese context (e.g. interview 15.11.2022b).

indirect external effects are not yet sufficiently conducted. To address this gap, the analysis of the following case study is divided into three main parts. In the first step, an overview of Indonesia's democratic development and recent democratic quality declines is given. The aim of this part is to identify specific observation periods with key decision-making moments in which democratic quality declines are initiated by a contra-democratic executive in power that can be taken up in the main analysis.[76] In the second step, necessary background information for the analysis are established, covering the historical and political context. This step includes an assessment of the president as the main decision-maker, whose cost-benefit assessments in key decision-making moments are the subject of the main analysis. The third step is the main analysis in which the domestic and external influences on the decisions of the president in the previously identified observation periods are assessed as potential perceived costs and benefits. The third part ends with an overall account that weights the different influencing factors against each other.

5.2.1 Indonesia's democracy and recent democratic quality declines

The development and current state of Indonesia's democracy quite frequently led to both high expectations, but also disappointments among pro-democracy observers. In a regional comparison, Indonesia's experiences with democracy started relatively early at the end of the Second World War and thus at the beginning of the second wave of democratisation. Under the guidance of the highly influential leader of Indonesia's nationalist movement and later first president Sukarno[77], Indonesia experienced an initial democratisation period with its first legislative elections in 1955. This initial period of democratisation took place alongside Indonesia's state-building process and still during the struggles for liberation from several centuries of colonial rule. During this time, Sukarno's independence movement also introduced the political philosophical theory *Pancasila* – with the principle of democracy at its core. However, Indonesia's transition to democracy was soon interrupted and entered a phase of so-called 'Guided Democracy' under an increasingly autocratic ruling Sukarno. Eventually, the initial transition period ended for good in 1966 with the seizure of power by President Suharto and the implementation of a military dictatorship – the so-called 'New Order' regime. Nevertheless, the achievements of the first transition period, especially around *Pancasila* with its distinctive features, still play a major role in Indonesia's democratic development.

Indonesia's second transition to democracy started more than thirty years later at the end of the 1990s during the peak of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. The transition came along with heavy protests by civil society actors against Suharto's military regime in 1998. These protests led mainly peacefully to the first free (indirect) elections of the president after the fall of the Suharto regime in October 1999 and enabled a major reform process called *reformasi*. In the course of the reform process, the political system that is still rooted in the post-colonial system designed during the Sukarno era was substantially adjusted. For example, since 2004, the public

[76] A dedicated timeline of the events during the observation periods is included in the appendix (see *Figure A6*).
[77] Note that it is not uncommon on Java that persons only have one name.

directly elects the president, who is now the head of state and government as well as the supreme commander. However, *reformasi* initiated a rather soft transition in contrast to a more far-reaching revolutionary process. As a result, varying actors criticise design flaws of *reformasi*, mainly the integration of former authoritarian-era contra-democratic political elites in the political system that are considered to inhibit the democratic development (see, for example, Bland, 2019; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019). Accordingly, the first freely elected presidents had a military or 'establishment' political elite background and the influence of military actors on politics is still comparably high.

Nevertheless, Indonesia quickly started to pro-democratically engage on the international level after the end of the Suharto regime and to re-define its new regional and global role (cf. Karim, 2017). Notably, Indonesia promoted the distribution of democratic values and norms in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) by supporting their inclusion in the ASEAN Charter that was adopted at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007 (cf. ibid., p. 393). Furthermore, Indonesia initiated the foundation of the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF) in 2008 with the proclaimed aim of fostering democracy and human rights (cf. ibid., pp. 394-397). Indonesia's cautious engagement[78] in Myanmar's recent (unsuccessful) transition to a more democratic political system can be seen as another example, although several pro-democratic actors wished for an even stronger commitment by the Indonesian government (cf. Ichihara et al., 2016, pp. 2-3; Karim, 2017, pp. 397-400). Despite some flaws, Indonesia's democratic development since the end of the Suharto regime was internationally recognised and the state perceived and labelled as a 'beacon of democracy' (or success story) in Southeast Asia and the Muslim world (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 14; Power, 2018, p. 308).

Even though the election of the current president Joko 'Jokowi' Widodo in 2014 as the first Indonesian president without a military or establishment political elite background initially raised hopes in the pro-democratic camp and was generally perceived as a sign of a continuing progressive democratic consolidation process, there are recent shifts in the perception of Jokowi, his role as a promoter of democracy and the actual democratic quality of Indonesian political institutions (cf. Bland, 2019, pp. 2-3; Power, 2018, p. 308). Political rapprochements to and compromises with establishment political elites as well as intolerant religious and military personal – all groups are associated with a preferred less democratic course – during Jokowi's presidency are perceived as challenges to Indonesia's democracy (ibid.).

In particular in the run-up to the 2019 elections, the Jokowi government allowed a weakening of human and minority rights as well as hindered political opponents and critics by extensively using law enforcement agencies (ibid.). In addition, Jokowi's appointment of the Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin as his running-mate for the 2019 elections was viewed critically, as Ma'ruf Amin was a prominent figure in the religiously motivated and controversial mobilisation against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), the former governor of Jakarta and long-time ally of Jokowi (Power, 2018, pp. 309-310). The Jokowi government in general reacted with contentious actions and repressions to the anti-Ahok protests in Jakarta, for instance, with a decree on the limitation of mass organisations from July 2017 (see ibid., pp. 314-315). Furthermore, the new

[78] The engagement mainly consisted of advisory support with the reform process towards a liberal democratic system by sending a retired general as advisor and establishing the Institute for Peace and Democracy (IDP) to help opening up room for dialogue between opposing groups in Myanmar (Ichihara, Sahoo, & Erawan, 2016, pp. 2-3).

controversial interpretation of laws and the use of law enforcement agencies against a more diverse range of political groups by the Jokowi government after the 2019 elections actually led to the biggest student protests since the end of the Suharto regime (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30). Finally, the administration restricted the rights and actions of the highly influential Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK), which is one of the main actors in the fight against corruption since its foundation in 2002, and quite recently pushed through a highly criticised overhaul of the criminal code (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30; Jaffrey & Warburton, 2023).

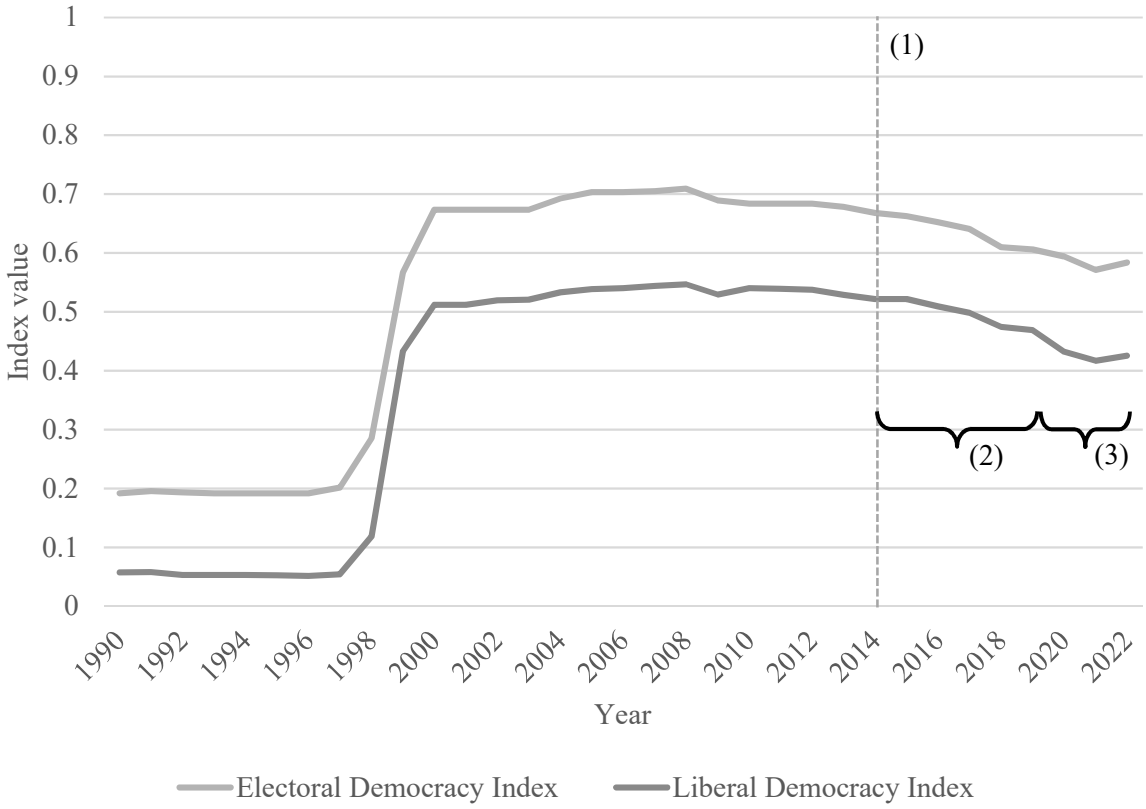
There is no verified evidence – nor is it considered likely by scholars – that the Jokowi administration has manipulated the results of the 2019 or 2014 elections. Neither is the administration currently trying to enable a third term of office for Jokowi. However, with the recent procedural change that the 2019 presidential and legislative elections were to be held at the same time, a new process for nominating presidential candidates was needed. The introduced proposal by the Jokowi administration, which established a nomination based on the previous (2014) legislative election results, can at least be categorised as beneficial for Jokowi (cf. Power, 2018, pp. 321-323). Furthermore, by restricting the freedom of speech, the rule of law, and basic human rights, the government is affecting the democratic institutions of fair and free elections as well as equal opportunities to participate at their core, which fits very well to the more gradual power shifts in the sense of the underlying concept of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation. This is also why Bland (2019) describes the current state of Indonesian democracy in his analysis and paper subtitle as 'resilient elections, defective democracy'.

Drawing on this first overview of recent initiated changes that can be categorised as democratic quality declines in Indonesian political institutions (*dependent variable*), two relevant main observation periods with key decision-making moments for the analysis – the assessment of the prevalent cost-benefits of the president/the executive – can be identified: (1) Jokowi's first term in office from 2014-2019, with the first round of democracy threatening laws (July 2017) in the context of the religiously motivated protests in Jakarta that started in 2016 and continued with the misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus against more mainstream democratic opposition prior to the 2019 elections (2018-2019); (2) developments during Jokowi's second term in office that followed after the 2019 elections and covers a set of reforms restricting the autonomy of the KPK (September 2019) and two attempts to overhaul the criminal code (September 2019 and December 2022) as well as the ongoing use of repressive measures against protesters (2019-2022) (see also *Figure 34*).

These developments since the end of the Suharto regime are also reflected in Indonesia's democracy performance ranking in democracy indices and in assessments of (democratisation) scholars (see *Figure 34*). In the rankings, Indonesia's score initially improved following the fall of Suharto in 1998 and reached a high period from 2000 to 2013. Since 2014, the score is dropping again to a current low in 2021 (V-Dem v13, *Electoral Democracy Index* (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023); see also Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy Index* (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2023)). Still, Indonesia's score shows the second best performance in Southeast Asia behind Timor-Leste (V-Dem v13, (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023)). Warburton and Aspinall (2019) conclude that Indonesia is currently in the midst of a democratic regression, with typical democratic quality declines for the incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation phenomenon under the last two presidents (President Jokowi and

his predecessor Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono) as central figures (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, pp. 256-257).[79]

Figure 34: Electoral and liberal democracy in Indonesia between 1990 and 2022



Note: Displayed are the untransformed index values for V-Dem's *Electoral* and *Liberal Democracy Indices* that range from 0 to 1. The dotted line marks the presidential elections in which the decision-maker for the subsequent analysis was first elected to office: (1) the 2014 presidential elections in which President Jokowi won against President Yudhoyono. In addition, the two open brackets (2 & 3) indicate the two observation periods under study. *Source:* V-Dem v13 (Coppedge et al., 2023; Pemstein et al., 2023).

For the explanation of the declines in democratic quality in Indonesia, the literature is mainly pointing to domestic factors and often focuses on initial design flaws of the current political system in the *reformasi* era (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 14; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019), on elite agency, and public attitudes (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019).[80] Populism, polarisation, and the influence of conservative and anti-pluralistic religious identities are additionally analysed as drivers of democratic quality declines (Power, 2018). However, there is a lack of assessments of the international dimension of this phenomenon. Although the 1997-98 Asian financial crises and post-Cold War developments undisputedly played a major role in ending the Suharto regime and Indonesia is currently trying to define its regional leadership role in a rapidly changing international environment (see, e.g. Indonesia's engagement in ASEAN and China's growing

[79] See also Bland (2019), Power (2018), and Simandjuntak (2018) who draw similar conclusions.
[80] Warburton and Aspinall (2019, p. 279) are explicitly not including the international landscape as an influence, because of scope. Instead, they focus on three domestic factors: the political structure, elite agency, and public attitudes.

regional influence), international interdependencies as well as other long-term external influences are mainly not assessed as relevant factors affecting latest democratic quality declines. Furthermore, to gain new insights, an assessment of short-term international reactions to the initiated democratic quality declines by the Jokowi administration is necessary.

Summing up, recent democratic quality declines in Indonesia can clearly be identified as well as two main observation periods with key decision-making moments for the analysis. Many of the changes were introduced or tolerated by a strong executive around the president and seem to be quite fitting to the incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation process derived in the theory chapter. Still, the potential influence of external factors needs to be further investigated to get a clearer picture on recent democratic quality declines in general.

5.2.2 Contextualisation

In order to assess the influence of external factors on democratic quality declines in Indonesia – namely as influences on the cost-benefit assessment of the governing executive in key decision-making moments – the analysis needs to focus on the strength of the pro-democratic and contra-democratic group in the given historical, political, and social context. Therefore, the case study begins with an overview of the general context, followed by an historical contextualisation and an overview of Indonesia's political system. The fourth step focuses on the president as main decision-maker and includes an assessment of the general interests and attitudes of the president.

5.2.2.1 General facts

Today, Indonesia is the fourth most populous country as well as the most populous Muslim country in the world (with approximately 268 million citizens in 2018) (United Nations Population Division, 2019), which is also why Indonesia is frequently referred to as a potential democratic role model for the Muslim world (cf. Macdonald, 2016, p. 103; Rabasa & Haseman, 2002, pp. 1-2). The island state is surrounded by mostly less democratic states (see Malaysia, the Philippines, or Papua New Guinea), but also has Australia as a well-developed democracy as a direct neighbour. The ethnically diverse country spreads over more than 17,000 islands and at least 700 different languages are spoken (see also Drakeley, 2005, p. xiii; Macdonald, 2016, p. 103). In addition, Indonesia is a founding member of ASEAN, which has developed into a cornerstone of Indonesian foreign policy. Due to Indonesia's size, geopolitical location, and economic weight, its regional influence – especially in ASEAN – is quite extensive. However, the country is also dealing with many challenges as a result of its wide-ranging ethnic and religious diversity, its history and development (cf. Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Guelke, 2012, pp. 16-17).

In 2019, Indonesia ranked on the 16th position of the world's biggest economies with a GDP of US$ 1.21 trillion (Germany in comparison ranked on the 4th position with US$ 4.16 trillion or

the Netherlands on the 17th with US$ 954.93 billion) (International Monetary Fund (IMF), 2019). The economic system was historically strongly oriented toward the production of tropical goods and the extraction of resources for Western industries (Elson, 2009, p. 22). The concentration on resource extraction and labour-intensive production continued during the New Order regime, while trade policy maneuvered in the area of tension between protectionism and openness (Felker, 2009, p. 51; Pangestu, Rahardja, & Ing, 2015). Despite the good development of the Indonesian economy after the end of the New Order regime and the IMF-supported reform process, poverty, inequality, and international competitiveness of the labour market as well as the still existing remnants of the elite-interwoven and patronage system of the Suharto era remain ongoing challenges (King, 2008, pp. 114-115; Mishra, 2014; Pangestu et al., 2015, p. 248). In addition, the integration of Indonesia's economy into the world market and especially into global value chains is still comparatively low (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2021). In this context, Indonesian officials in power currently want to further develop Indonesia's harbour infrastructure and merchant fleet to strengthen the state's position as an important sea power that can profit from China's BRI (Senkyr, 2017; Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). The sea routes through Indonesian territorial waters are therefore considered to be highly important to extend Indonesia's role in the regional and global economy. Nevertheless, addressing the economic development challenges described as well as the political/social ones driven by Indonesia's wide-ranging ethnic and religious diversity remains central to Indonesian democratic development and policy-making.

5.2.2.2 Historical contextualisation

Following on from this first introduction to the Indonesian case and its characteristics, the historical contextualisation provides the necessary background to core political developments and already highlights central challenges that have a substantial influence on Indonesian politics and democratic development until today. After the Dutch colonisation and a short Japanese occupation during the Second World War, the independence of the Indonesian Republic was declared on 17 August 1945 under the leadership of Sukarno, who was a central figure in Indonesia's nationalist movement and later the state's first president (Drakeley, 2005, p. 75; Macdonald, 2016, p. 107).[81] While the declaration was proclaimed at the time of a relative power vacuum in the region at the end of the Second World War, the Dutch forcibly attempted to re-establish control in the following years. After the 'Indonesian War of Independence' and under strong international pressure, the Netherlands eventually recognised Indonesian independence over most of the territory in 1949 (cf. Drakeley, 2005, pp. 75-81; Macdonald, 2016, p. 108). However, it took until the 1950s for Indonesia to reach a more extensive detachment from the Netherlands with an official cut of the diplomatic relations in 1960, although some controversial issues such as the West Papua separation movement remained unsolved and also affected the democratic development in the first transition period (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 99-107; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2019).

[81] A more detailed overview of Indonesia's history can be found in Drakeley (2005).

Democratic values were a central aspect of the young Indonesian Republic and visible in the proclaimed political philosophical theory *Pancasila*, which was introduced by Sukarno's independence movement and included five main principles: democracy, social justice, national unity, humanism and internationalism as well as the principle of One-God-Believe (cf. Macdonald, 2016, p. 107). Under the leadership of Sukarno, Indonesia was initially following a pro-democratisation course with the first election of the legislature in 1955 (Drakeley, 2005, p. 95). In the same year, the Bandung Conference took place as the first Asian-African Conference dealing with the (post-)colonial heritage (ibid., p. 100). The conference also led to the foundation of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at the beginning of the Cold War in 1961, with Indonesia emerging as an important member. Indonesia subsequently shifted towards a more autocratic political system that culminated in the implementation of the so-called 'Guided Democracy' in 1957 by Sukarno (ibid., pp. 102-106). During his presidency, Sukarno had to balance strong different interests and powers in the young nation, mainly the military, Islamic groups, communists, and regional separationists. The Indonesian system of 'Guided Democracy' lasted until a military group around General Suharto took over power in 1966 and established the so-called 'New Order' regime (ibid., pp. 113-121).[82]

The New Order regime proved to be politically quite stable, what can be related to the geopolitical environment that was dominated by the Cold War equilibrium, economic progress driven by the administration's course, and closed autocratic structures (cf. Berger, 2009, pp. 43-44; Drakeley, 2005, pp. 107 & 122-124). Indonesia evolved into one of the so-called 'new tiger states' with a rapid economic development from a "boost of agricultural productivity" (Fritzen, 2009, p. 77), which was initiated by wide-ranging reforms of the regime and orientated towards the 'old tiger states'. In 1975, after Portugal as long-term colonial power withdraw from East Timor, Suharto invaded East Timor in order to integrate it into the Indonesian state, which culminated in a severe use of violence and human rights violations against the population of East Timor (Drakeley, 2005, p. 134). The invasion led to a severe damage of Indonesia's international reputation and relations, although international reactions were rather restrained due to the on-going Cold War (Drakeley, 2005, p. 134; Guelke, 2012, pp. 103, 141-142).

At the beginning of the 1990s, when the fall of the Berlin wall and the end of the Cold War led to a substantial change of the international order with democracy being globally on the rise, Indonesian civil society actors started to demand a democratisation of the Suharto regime and more political participation (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 136-137). In addition, criticism by the U.S. of the regime grew louder after the disappearing of the perceived Soviet threat, especially in regard to the annexation of East Timor and ongoing human rights violations (Guelke, 2012, p. 142). Instead, the new world order with open markets made it increasingly redundant for the U.S. to

[82] The military coup followed a highly controversial incident in 1965, when an 'attempted coup' directed against leading military personal took place. Previously, growing influences of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and Sukarno's pro-Soviet and China course during the peak of the Cold War that were accompanied by economic troubles of the Sukarno administration led to high domestic and external uncertainties. The attempted coup was officially attributed to Indonesian communists – although the background of the incident was insufficiently investigated and is still highly uncertain (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 110-112; Macdonald, 2016, p. 109). In the aftermaths of the event, the military, which was led by General Suharto, took over power and initiated a massacre against the supporters of the communists with approximately half a million deaths. In the course of these developments, Sukarno was forced to step down and Suharto established the New Order military regime (Berger, 2009, pp. 42-43; Drakeley, 2005, pp. 110-112).

support the authoritarian Suharto regime. In the meantime, Suharto moved to engage more intensely with domestic conservative Muslim groups to gain more support and promote political stability. However, economic struggles and international dependencies further led to high uncertainties and instabilities (Case, 2009, pp. 101-102).

The Asian financial crisis that began in 1997 showed the limits of Suharto's economic policy as well as the extent of corruption and patronage in the Indonesian political and economic system and the entanglement of political positions with military ones (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Guelke, 2012, p. 142; Macdonald, 2016, p. 110). Heavy protests against Suharto's military regime started in 1998. The protesting groups were very diverse and came from different social backgrounds, comprising a dissatisfied youth and students, an emerging middle class and the urban poor, but also Muslim intellectuals, religious leaders, professors, lawyers, and top business figures (including Chinese businesses group) (Case, 2009, pp. 101-102; Hughes, 2009, pp. 127, 131). Although the protests originated from urban centres and mainly the Jakarta and Yogyakarta[83] regions, they soon spread throughout the country. The core demands of the protesting groups culminated in the reform process called *reformasi*. Hence, the Indonesian transition to democracy is generally considered to be a 'bottom-up' transition. In addition to the protest, the backing of the Suharto leadership by the majority of the military was unclear, mainly because of the unpopular extensive patronage and corruption system by the Suharto clan (Macdonald, 2016, p. 110).

Suharto reacted to the social upheaval and stepped back in May 1998, thereby giving in to the central demand of the protest groups. His Vice President Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie became interim president until 1999 to enable elections and take up demands for democratisation of the *reformasi* process (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 145-146). Against initial expectations and without further destabilising the tense political situation, Habibie initiated a rather widespread reform process that covered, *inter alia*, the electoral rule set for a democratic national parliamentary election, freedom of press, restriction of the political power of the military, creation of new parties, and – to a certain extent – addressed the corruption and patronage system of the Suharto era (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 145-146; Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 65-66). Furthermore, an extensive devolution/decentralisation reform process was initiated. The process "included making regencies and cities the focal points of provincial power rather than governors; transferring a number of administrative and financial functions to regencies and cities; granting local parliaments control over the [sic!] their budgets; and introducing revenue shaping between central and regional" (Macdonald, 2016, p. 105). The entire reform process was closely followed and supported by international agencies, especially through substantial funding of the 1999 parliamentary elections (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 66-67). During his short presidency, following strong pressure by the UN and other external actors, Habibie also enabled that a referendum in East Timor for an autonomy plan or immediate independence from Indonesia took place that was administered by the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 148-149). The result of the vote was clearly favouring the independence of East Timor, which led to an immediate outbreak of severe violence by Indonesian troops and paramilitary groups that caught many international partners by surprise (ibid.). With sanctions

[83] Yogyakarta and the Sultans in Yogyakarta still had a special role including privileged rights, because of their importance in the independence movement after the Second World War.

and intense international pressure, President Habibie was pushed to order Indonesian troops to withdraw from East Timor and to allow UN peacekeeping troops – mainly Australian forces – to secure the newly independent state of East Timor at the end of 1999 (Drakeley, 2005, p. 149; Rabasa & Haseman, 2002, p. 39). The violence resulted again in a significant international credibility loss and further discouragement of needed foreign investment during Indonesia's critical reform process (Drakeley, 2005, p. 149).

Still in the midst of Indonesia's turbulent reform process, during the ongoing Asian financial crisis, ongoing protests, and the aftermath of the East Timor crisis, Habibie decided not to run in the 1999 presidential elections (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 149-150). In October 1999, Abdurrahman Wahid was thus elected as the first (indirectly) elected president of the post-Suharto era. Despite high initial hopes and general support by Western states, Wahid inherited an unstable political and economic situation just at the end of the violent East Timor struggles. Following Drakeley (2005, p. 155), Wahid performed rather poorly during his short presidency as "[p]oor organizational skills, woeful media management, and a lack of discipline and effective teamwork from Wahid and the loose coterie of presidential advisers and spokespersons that swirled around him gave his presidency a chaotic, unfocused, and ineffectual appearance." In addition, Wahid was facing a parliament that was testing its regained political power and a military that slowly recovered from its weakened position and that tried to prevent civilian oversight (ibid., pp. 156-157). At the same time, a strong "combination of comprehensive devolution and democratization [was] carried out" (Fritzen, 2009, p. 87; see also Macdonald, 2016, p. 105) across the country. With growing tensions around separation movements in Aceh, the Moluccas as well as other swelling conflicts across the archipelago, Wahid's position was further weakened and his attention was diverted "away from key problems such as the economy and corruption" (Drakeley, 2005, p. 158). Accusations of corruption and patronage – that were rather dubious according to Drakeley (2005, p. 159) and can instead be classified as a political manoeuvre of the opposition – eventually led to a successful impeachment process against Wahid in 2001. Nevertheless, he tried to prevent his impeachment with a series of undemocratic measures.

Sukarno's daughter Megawati Sukarnoputri, who was already active as vice-president of Wahid and leader of the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI-P) since its foundation in 1996, was elected as Wahid's successor in 2001 (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 67-68). Following Macdonald (2016, p. 114), she was publicly perceived as "the leading figure of the pro-democracy movement" and after the failure of Wahid, people placed high hopes in her democratic leadership. Although Megawati had a more comfortable starting point than Wahid with a stronger parliamentary group gathered behind her and an ascribed role of a reformer, a generally perceived lack in leadership and a too reserved appearance soon led to disappointments (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 160-165). This was especially connected to Indonesia's continuing economic difficulties related to a lack of sufficient economic reforms able to boost economic growth and create job opportunities (ibid., pp. 165-171). However, as a part of her pro-democratic reform course, she "introduced a new direct election for the president, conducted separately from the election for the legislatures in order to ensure a popular mandate for the elected president and put it into force in the 2004 election" (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, p. 68). During her presidency, Megawati also had to deal with the rise of Islamist extremism as a new security threat with the 2002 Bali bombings as most severe event and further terrorist attacks in Jakarta in 2003/4 targeting the Australian embassy and a Marriott Hotel (Drakeley, 2005, p. 164). The

constant pressure on the government caused by the combination of various economic, societal, security, and political challenges determined Megawati's presidency – and are in part still decisive today.

In 2004, Megawati was eventually followed in office by Indonesia's first directly elected president, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of the Democratic Party of Indonesia (PDI). As a former New Order military man, he was a representative of a more conservative political approach and in the course of his presidency, he showed reluctance towards far-reaching democratic reforms (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, p. 269). Instead, he was more concerned about fostering stability and economic recovery, thereby substantially improving Indonesia's attractiveness for foreign investments (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 68-69). As Yudhoyono held the position until 2014 and was thus Jokowi's immediate predecessor, references to his presidency are made in the further course of the analysis.

Summing up, the historical contextualisation points out Indonesia's political development after independence and the countries rather rocky road to democracy, which was frequently inhibited and interrupted due to ongoing power struggles and conflict. It further already identifies (and gives background to) the struggles between pro-democratic reformers and conservative authoritarian-era military political elites, deeply embedded corruption and patronage structures, economic development, and tensions around separation movements as well as Islamist extremism as ongoing domestic political challenges, which also have a substantial influence on Indonesia's democratic development today. Besides the domestic elements, the strong external influences in the post-Second World War period during the Cold War are evident, *inter alia*, in the context of violent annexations, separation movements as well as connected to Indonesia economic development.

5.2.2.3 Indonesia's current political system

In order to better assess the relevant actors and their competencies/power in Indonesia's political system as well as the consequences of potential contra-democratic reforms to the system, I give a comprehensive overview in this sub-chapter. Indonesia's current political system roots back to the first declaration of independence and provisional constitution in 1945 (cf. Drakeley, 2005, pp. 90-95). The later *reformasi* process introduced major changes after the long period of military rule. Indonesia's current political system can be described as a presidential republic, where the president is the head of state and government as well as supreme commander.[84] The president and his vice-president can serve up to two five year terms and together with the cabinet form the executive branch of the political system. All laws need to be approved by the president and the legislative, giving the president a de-facto veto power. Furthermore, the president can initiate presidential decrees and is responsible for Indonesia's international relations,

[84] Information about Indonesia's current political system and constitutional framework were drawn from the official translation of "The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Law of the Republic of Indonesia Concerning the Constitutional Court" provided online by the Indonesian Constitutional Court (The Constitutional Court of the Republic of Indonesia, s.a.). A comprehensive and frequently updated description of Indonesia's political system can be also be found in the Encyclopaedia Britannica (Wolters et al., 2023, pp. 50-56) or – in parts outdated – in Bjornlund et al. (2008, pp. 8-23).

although international treaties need to be approved by the legislative as well. To nominate a presidential candidate, a candidate currently needs the support of a party or party-coalition that was able to achieve at least 20 percent of the seats or 25 percent of the votes in the previous legislative elections (Power, 2018, p. 321).

The legislative branch of the Indonesian political system is defined by a two-chamber system with one dominant chamber, the People's Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) with 575 parliamentarians. The DPR has legislative, budgeting as well as oversight competencies, including the drafting and adopting of laws. The second chamber, the Regional Representative Council (Dewan Perwakilan Daerah, DPD) with 128 regional representatives, was founded in 2001 under Megawati and is comparatively powerless, as it only holds the rights of hearing and proposal. Nevertheless, the concept of regional representation was already rooted in the 1945 constitution and partly institutionalised in the Sukarno era (cf. Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 67-68). Both legislative chambers form the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia (Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Republik Indonesia, MPR-RI) that is responsible for constitutional amendments. The MPR was a central actor during the *reformasi* process that initiated central reforms and effectively limited the competencies of the president, signalling the end of the New Order regime (cf. ibid., p. 65). It further started an anti-corruption and anti-nepotism process and members of the military and police were excluded from the MPR. After its central role during the *reformasi* period, the competencies of the MPR were widely reduced at the end of the process in 2003. Previously, the MPR was responsible for the election of the president and vice president. As the public directly elects the president and his vice since 2004, the MPR's central role is now mainly to hold inaugural sessions for the president, initiate possible impeachments, and elect the president and/or his vice in case of a vacancy of the position (i.e. due to an impeachment, death in office, or resignation). Another central constitutionalised legislative institution is the Audit Board of Indonesia (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan Republik Indonesia, BPK) that is primarily responsible for managing state finances. Indonesia has a complex multiparty system with currently nine parties in parliament (after the 2019 legislative elections). The party system does not follow a classic left-right spectrum, but is more shaped by a liberal-conservative cleavage with dominant nationalist and religious elements. Jokowi's governing PDI-P is currently (as of 2023) the strongest party in parliament and leads a broad coalition with 471 of the 575 parliamentary seats. It is quite common for Indonesian politics that after the elections, many parties try to get involved in the governing coalition in order to get access to political positions, state resources, and be protected from potential prosecution (e.g. for corruption) – a practice that is described by scholars as 'party cartelisation Indonesian-style' (Bland, 2019, p. 10) and will be taken up in the course of the analysis.

Especially since the heavily promoted devolution process after the end of the New Order regime, regional self-government has played a major role in the 34 Indonesian provinces. Provincial parliaments and governors are directly elected. In addition, four provinces including Aceh, Papua, West-Papua, and Jakarta have a special status with an individual set of rights – in Aceh, for instance, additional regulations following Islamic criminal law were allowed to be implemented (see also Hughes, 2009, pp. 135-136 for religious movements in Indonesia).

Indonesia's judicative branch is composed of several institutions. The Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court are the highest and most influential judicial bodies as well as the Judicial

Commission that is responsible for monitoring the judicial performance and selection of nominees for the Supreme Court judges (Lansford, 2021a, p. 8). The president has the competency to choose the Supreme Court judges from the Judicial Commission's selection, while the judges of the Constitutional Court are chosen by the Supreme Court. The Constitutional Court, on the one hand, enjoys a high reputation and following Bjornlund et al. (2008, p. 10), the

> "court has established initial legitimacy and has become a key democratic institution in ensuring commitment to constitutional democracy. It also has strengthened the rule of law by serving as a model for other courts by such things as focusing on ethics and making its decision publicly available on its website."

The Supreme Court, on the other hand, is categorised by the same authors (ibid.) as a "far more questionable institution than the Constitutional Court. It suffers from an overload of cases, poor administration, and a reputation for corruption." Further institutions such as the Commercial Court, State Court, Religious Court, or State Administrative Court are relevant on the lower level of the judicative branch – and are also often associated with corruption (cf. Bjornlund et al., 2008, p. 10; Lansford, 2021a, p. 8). In this context, the KPK is another central and very popular institution, which is responsible for the investigation of corruption cases (Mietzner, 2020, pp. 238-239; Mujani & Liddle, 2021, p. 81). The KPK began operating in 2003 as an independent institution – the institution's independence was, however, strongly limited by a recently adopted law by the Jokowi government in 2019 – an important aspect in regard to current democratic quality declines that is taken up in the course of the analysis (ibid.). As corruption is high on the political agenda, the public frequently follows closely the decisions made by the KPK. Following on from the work of the KPK, corruption and patronage are still very common phenomena in Indonesia. Although rooting back to colonial time with different social pre-conditions, Indonesia's military regime continued to promote patronage and corruption (see King, 2008, pp. 164-168 for further explanations of patronage and corruption). Until today, vote buying and bribery, for example, are considered central hindering elements in elections (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, pp. 354-357; Bland, 2019, p. 10) and result in high costs that make the participation for new parties very expensive. Moreover, corruption negatively affects Indonesia's economic development (King, 2008, pp. 114, 164-168). Following a recent survey conducted by the Asian Barometer Survey about the political attitudes and perceptions of the public, corruption (particularly by government officials) is considered to be the most pressing political issue in Indonesia (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30).

Based on this overview, the general democratic structure of the political system with a basic separation of powers is visible. However, with the strong position of the president, who faces an influential parliament that is coined by a strong party fragmentation along a liberal-conservative cleavage with dominant nationalist and religious elements, as well as with the ongoing phenomena of corruption and patronage, the political system is subject to strong socio-political tensions.

5.2.2.4 The president as main decision-maker

Drawing upon the previous presentation of Indonesia's political system, the president as directly elected and thereby strongly legitimised head of state, head of government, and supreme

commander as well as his administration can now be identified as the main decision-maker in Indonesia's political system following the underlying theoretical framework. Democratic quality declines – in the underlying sense in form of laws, regulations and prohibitions, or illegitimate actions (e.g. the usage of law enforcement agencies) – can either be actively initiated or enabled by a non-preventive approach. However, limitations of the scope of actions due to the political majorities in the legislative institutions and possible concessions to other parties in a governing coalition are possible and will be taken up in the course of the analysis.[85]

As already mentioned, the current president in his second term of office is President Joko Widodo (also called Jokowi) of the PDI-P, who was first elected in 2014 and re-elected in 2019. He (respectively the executive around the president) can therefore be identified as the main decision-maker in the relevant considered time frame of the case study, whose cost-benefit assessment is analysed. Jokowi followed President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (president from 2004-2014) in office and is Indonesia's first president without a military or establishment political elite background – as he was not politically active during the New Order regime. Prior to his political career, Jokowi owned a furniture business, which is often categorised as the origin of his personal 'man-of-the-people image' (Bland, 2019, p. 3; Mietzner, 2014, p. 115). His political style is described by Aspinall and Mietzner (2019, p. 106) as a "hands-on style, [with an] easygoing way with voters," that is, following Bland (2019, p. 3), driven by a "workmanlike attitude, and […] focus on short-term tactics over long-term strategy." Connected to Jokowi's popularity, parallels between Jokowi and the former U.S. President Barack Obama were drawn, referring to Jokowi as "Indonesia's Obama" (Lamb, 2019, April 4).

Before running for president, Jokowi was the former mayor of Surakarta (or Solo) and later governor of the capital district of Jakarta (Daerah Khusus Ibukota) – already as a member of Megawati's PDI-P (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019, p. 106). During this time, he was known for his strong focus on economic issues, but also for an anti-corruption, dialogue-orientated approach (Warburton, 2016, pp. 307-311). In his presidential campaign, Jokowi emphasised an anti-corruption and pro-democratic course that attracted supporters and voters from the pro-democratic camp (ibid.). After his election as president, Jokowi launched major infrastructure projects and economic measures that fall in line with his economic focus (ibid., pp. 307-308). His current vice president[86] is the Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin, a member of the conservative Islamic group. Jokowi's choice to appoint Ma'ruf Amin was widely considered to be a controversial step as Ma'ruf Amin was a prominent figure in the Jakarta protests against Jakarta's former Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) (Power, 2018, pp. 309-310).

Jokowi's handling of Indonesia's democratic development during his presidency against the background of the various political, economic, and social challenges discussed in this contextualisation sub-chapter is now the subject of the following in-depth analysis of his cost-benefit assessments.

[85] Note that Jokowi's government is currently in a big coalition with other parties, which can also be related to the previously described concept of 'party cartelisation Indonesian-style' (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 10). An assessment of the resulting compromises and power structure is following in the next chapter.

[86] Jokowi's former Vice President Jusuf Kalla was previously vice president to Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono in his second term from 2009-2014 and therefore not allowed to run again for the position.

5.2.3 Assessment of the costs and benefits

After having identified two observation periods with notable democratic quality declines in the specific Indonesian context as well as the president as the main decision-maker in power, in the next step, influences on the president's prevalent cost-benefit assessment of whether to initiate an institutional change that weakens the democratic quality (or not) are analysed. Recalling the identified observation periods, the main time frames in regard to the president's decision-making moments are coined by: (1) Jokowi's first term in office from 2014-2019, with the first round of democracy threatening laws (July 2017) in the context of the religiously motivated protests in Jakarta that started in 2016 and continued with the Jokowi government's misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus against more mainstream democratic opposition prior to the 2019 elections (2018-2019); (2) developments during Jokowi's second term in office that followed after the 2019 elections and covers a set of reforms restricting the autonomy of the KPK (September 2019) and two attempts to overhaul the criminal code (September 2019 and December 2022) as well as the ongoing use of repressive measures against protesters (2019-2022).

Similar to the procedure in the Senegal case study and as described in *Chapter 3.3.2*, the following analysis contains three subsections. First, I assess the domestic factors, followed by an analysis of the external factors. In a subsequent third step, the two strands of the analysis are brought together in an overall account, while applying the cost-benefit logic. For the domestic dimension, the balance of power between the pro-democratic opposition and the contra-democratic group in power as well as the strength of democratic political institutions are key. Therefore, the analysis focuses on elements such as the existing political structure and party landscape, elite agency, election results, public attitudes and embeddedness of democratic norms, economic factors, as well as pro-democratic mobilisation and protest. Regarding the external dimension, Indonesia's main international relations (with a focus on economic and strategic/political relations) and more short-term international measures and reactions to prevent autocratisation are considered.[87]

[87] Even though ecological influencing factors cannot be taken into account in-depth, due to the scope and the substantially more difficult identification/reconstruction of chain of effects, Indonesia is very much affected by ecological challenges, *inter alia*, connected to climate change. An illustrative example of the current ecological challenges Indonesia is facing is the strong pollution, increasing flooding, and sinking of its capital Jakarta. The Jokowi administration is therefore planning to relocate the government and parliament until 2024 from Jakarta to a new capital in Borneo, Nusantara (Eliraz, 2020; Normile, 2022). The relocation is aimed to bring relief to the heavily stressed capital. While the administration is mainly pointing to the ecological reasons and urban problems in the Jakarta-region, there are likely also other reasons such as the history of the Jakarta-region with the strong influence of conservative Islamic groups as well as the emphasised symbolic shift from a Java-centric to an Indonesia-centric location. Other relevant ecological factors include, *inter alia*, air pollution due to burnings for palm plantations, the effects of heavy agricultural usage (monocultures, groundwater extraction), pollution due to coal mining, ineffective waste management, and geological activities in the region.

5.2.3.1 Domestic factors

As introduced before, the Indonesian political system is rooting back to the political system established after independence in 1945, which was largely based on democratic ideas (Bjornlund et al., 2008, pp. 8-9; Macdonald, 2016, pp. 107-108). It was widely modified during the authoritarian rule of Sukarno and Suharto especially by emphasising the role of the president and the military as well as by cutting democratic procedures (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 64-65; Lansford, 2021a, p. 5). After the end of Suharto's New Order regime in 1998, the *reformasi* process, which lasted until 2004, introduced major pro-democratic changes to the political system (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 65-68). Key elements of this process were the reinstatement of the separation of powers, the limitation of the influence of the military, and the reintroduction of democratic elections for the president as well as for the legislature (ibid.). In this context, the General Elections Commission (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, KPU) as the major institution to organise the elections and the Indonesian KPK became central institutions of Indonesia's current political system (Bjornlund et al., 2008, p. 8). Furthermore, efforts to decentralise power and to help the struggling economy recover after the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis were key elements of the political developments of the post-Suharto era (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 65-66).

In general, the democratic transition period that ended the New Order regime cannot be described as a clear-cut revolution, but more as an incremental reform process. Following on from this, the *reformasi* process did not completely remove the old political system with its influential elites and power structures. Instead, key authoritarian-era political and economic elites are still integrated into the current system. In the intrastate context, for instance, "local bureaucratic and business elites who first established their dominance during the New Order proved very capable at reinventing themselves as democratic politicians, capturing local-level state power throughout much of Indonesia" (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, p. 265). By that, however, the reform process enabled a rather peaceful transition and "Indonesia's new democratic system was widely accepted, but the mass movements that had impelled regime change in 1998-99 had dissipated and were unable to transform themselves into political vehicles" (ibid., p. 266). At the same time, central actors of the contra-democratic group – in particular the military, but also Islamic groups and establishment political elites – are still very powerful in Indonesia's current political system (cf. ibid., pp. 264-267) and are continuously hindering a comprehensive democratic consolidation. Before the first observation period and the election of Jokowi, Case (2009, pp. 104-108) classifies the political system thus as a 'low quality democracy and reversal'.

In this sense, all presidents who were in office after the end of the New Order regime and before Jokowi was elected in 2014 had a military or establishment political elite background. Jokowi's influential immediate predecessor President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of the Democratic Party of Indonesia, who was the first directly elected president of the republic and followed on President Megawati Sukarnoputri (2001-2004), was, for instance, a former New Order military officer (Slater, 2020, p. 54). During his ten years in office, he was rather reluctant towards far-reaching democratic reforms and the process of democratic deepening was on hold (Warburton

& Aspinall, 2019, p. 269). Instead, Eve Warburton (2020, p. 64) describes Yudhoyono's governing style as favouring

> "compromise and stability over competition and conflict. […] Yudhoyono's preference for compromise made him reluctant to engage in tough or disruptive reform, and so Indonesia's democratic progress stagnated; but these were also years of political stability and a notable absence of divisive political conflict" (Warburton, 2020, p. 64).

Although Yudhoyono cannot be categorised as a clear figure of a contra-democratic group who intentionally curtailed democratic institutions or tried to circumvent the constitutional term limit rule, his approach of including contra-democratic actors in his government in the name of compromise and stability eventually blocked the democratic reform process (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, pp. 269-270). Furthermore, Yudhoyono's governing style is also associated with his unsuccessful attempt to build up a promising candidate from his party as a successor for the 2014 presidential elections (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 350).

The anchoring of democratic values in the Indonesian society after Indonesia's rapid democratic reform process is another relevant factor to be taken into account. In general, several surveys conducted by the Asian Barometer and the Indonesian Survey Institute indicate high levels of satisfaction with democracy since 2004 and high overall support for democracy in contrast to non-democratic regime types since 2009 in the Indonesian public (Aspinall, Fossati, Muhtadi, & Warburton, 2020, p. 508; Muhtadi, 2020, pp. 147-151; Power & Warburton, 2020, p. 14; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, pp. 256, 273). However, these apparent pro-democratic attitudes and the overall pro-democratic consent need to be contextualised. In contrast to a liberal interpretation of the democratic idea that underlines the importance of individual rights and procedures, several assessments (see Power & Warburton, 2020, p. 14; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, pp. 256, 273) have shown that pro-democratic attitudes in the Indonesian public are closely linked to the satisfaction with the government and its socio-economic performance. As a result, public satisfaction with the government is a key element for the assessment of democratic values in the Indonesian society and by that, a lack of satisfaction with the government is also posing a challenge to the support and legitimacy of the political regime as a whole (ibid.). This is further indicating that in the Indonesian context good governance and economic performance are highly relevant for the agendas of ruling administrations and might be prioritised over democratic reforms.

At the beginning of Yudhoyono's presidency and thus already in the wake of Indonesia's democratic transition, Jokowi entered the political field and joined President Megawati's PDI-P in 2004. In 2005, he successfully ran for the post of mayor of Surakarta[88] (2005-2012) and in 2012 for the influential post of governor of the capital district of Jakarta (Daerah Khusus Ibukota) (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 351; Mietzner, 2014, pp. 115-116). Particularly his success in the gubernatorial elections came as a surprise, but is related to his "earthy personal style" (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 351) and "personal attributes that many Indonesians can identify with: his language is informal and peppered with Javanese phrasing and pronunciation; he dresses casually, eats at roadside food stalls, travels economy class on airplanes, and interacts warmly with ordinary people" (ibid.; see also Mietzner 2014, pp. 115-116). After his victory in Jakarta, Jokowi was already considered to be "a national media star" (Mietzner, 2014, p. 116)

[88] A city in the Central Java-province with around 600,000 inhabitants that is also known as Solo.

and he continued to use his media and internet presence to sell early successes of his administration. These measures included a new healthcare scheme and scholarship programme for students, which were aimed to support poor households in particular (Mietzner, 2014, p. 116). Despite a certain distance and reservations between the PDI-P leadership and Jokowi, party leader Megawati declared him as presidential candidate of the PDI-P in March 2014, mainly building on Jokowi's growing popularity and prospects of success. Jokowi then chose a prominent figure as his running mate, the former vice president of his predecessor Vice President Jusuf Kalla of the Golkar Party.[89] Jokowi continued to benefit from his ascribed role as a national media star, who interacts caringly with the people. In his presidential campaign, central themes were "improved government services for the population" (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 351) and general improvements of the efficiency of the government – themes that connected well with the public. Furthermore, Jokowi's introduced measures in Surakarta and Jakarta led to him being perceived as an advocate for social justice and poverty reduction (cf. Yusuf & Sumner, 2015, p. 336). Unusual for previous Indonesian presidential elections, Jokowi's whole campaign can be categorised as a grassroots campaign that was substantially building on support from predominately young volunteers and fundraising efforts among his supporters (Mietzner, 2014, p. 119). This unusual source of support was necessary, as the PDI-P party leadership gave him only limited support for his campaign (ibid., pp. 118-119).

Jokowi's course in regard to Indonesia's democratic development needs to be assessed in light of the campaign of his main political opponent Suianto Prabowo of the Gerinda party. Prabowo, a former general and son-in-law of Suharto, was an active and highly controversial figure of the New Order regime, especially because of human rights violations committed by a military unit under his command (Mietzner, 2014, p. 114; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, p. 258). After the end of the New Order regime, Prabowo "was one of the few authoritarian-era political figures who became virtually a political persona-non-grata" and "was discharged from the military in such disgrace that he went into a period of self-imposed political exile in Jordan" (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, p. 258). However, after his return to Indonesia, he was quickly able to re-establish himself in the political field and founded his own political party Gerinda in 2008. Prabowo and his supporters made no secret of their rejection of democratic values and promoted a clear cutback of democratic institutions and lobbied for contra-democratic reforms (Bland, 2019, p. 10; Mietzner, 2014, pp. 121-122; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, p. 258). For instance, Prabowo aimed to replace direct elections of the president by indirect elections and in general to "return to the 1945 Constitution" (Mietzner, 2014, p. 122), thereby getting rid of reforms introduced in the *reformasi* era limiting executive power (Aspinall, 2015, pp. 19-20). As Aspinall (2015, pp. 19-20) frames it,

> "Prabowo represented a classically authoritarian-populist challenge of a sort that is common in democratic regimes characterized by pervasive patronage politics, weak institutions, and highly decentralized governance. […] First, he invoked nationalism, describing Indonesia's poor economic conditions as a product of the country's exploitation by foreign powers. Second, he condemned the corruption of political elites and the environment of deceit and money politics fostered by many politicians, presenting

[89] Note that Jusuf Kalla was also the former presidential candidate of the Golkar Party for the 2009 elections and that the Golkar Party was running with their own presidential candidate for the 2014 presidential elections.

> himself as an anti-political outsider who could provide the strong leadership Indonesia needed."

Still, Prabowo's political efforts and campaign were very much backed by powerful oligarchs as well as Islamist groups and based on clientelist and patronage elements (Aspinall, 2015, pp. 21-22; Mietzner, 2018, p. 269). In addition, he was able to win broad support from other parties and build a strong coalition for his nomination (Aspinall, 2015, pp. 23-24). Summing up, Prabowo can clearly be identified as a contra-democratic representative of the conservative authoritarian-era political elite.

In contrast to Prabowo, Jokowi started his presidential campaign as a perceived representative of the pro-democratic group. He "stated strong support for Indonesia's existing democratic framework, promising to make it more effective" (Mietzner, 2014, p. 116). Following Mietzner's (2014, pp. 116-119) assessment, with Prabowo being perceived as a threat to Indonesia's competitive elections, backed by oligarchic structures of Indonesia's conservative authoritarian-era political elite and drawing on authoritarian-populist methods, Jokowi was ascribed the role of a moderating figure who favoured competitive elections and relied on grassroots mobilisation. Observers describe his approach as based "on a largely democratic and inclusive platform, and with the support of volunteers and a coalition of left wing and liberal civil society organisations" (Aspinall & Warburton, 2017, p. 2). However, in regard to Indonesia's democratic development, "he failed to formulate a clear political strategy or vision for the next phase of Indonesia's democratization" (Mietzner, 2014, p. 116). Instead, Jokowi's emphasis on making the government more efficient and rather unspecific support of Indonesia's democratic framework is already noticeable before his presidency – and stands in contrast to very likely hopes and expectations of his supporters in a pro-democratic reform course.

The upcoming presidential elections and the competition between Jokowi and Prabowo were also strongly influencing the prior elections for the Indonesian People's Representative Council that took place in April 2014 – so only shortly after the announcement that Jokowi would run as candidate of the PDI-P. As "[t]he right to nominate presidential candidates was limited to parties or party coalitions that received 20% of the seats or 25% of the votes in the preceding parliamentary poll" (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 357), the results of the legislative elections and the ability to build sufficient party coalitions were also key steps for the road to the presidency. While Yudhoyono's Democratic Party of Indonesia suffered heavy losses, the PDI-P became the strongest party with 19 percent of the votes, resulting in 109 seats (see *Table 14*). The good results of the PDI-P were related to the "Jokowi effect" (ibid., p. 354), although even stronger results were expected before the elections. That the PDI-P felt short of expectations was mainly related to ongoing internal power struggles in the PDI-P, especially between the PDI-P leadership and Jokowi's campaign team (ibid., p. 356). Prabobo's Gerinda party came in third with 12 percent (73 seats) (see *Table 14*). In addition to the strong influence of the upcoming presidential elections, Aspinall and Mietzner (2014, pp. 354-363) identify extensive vote-buying and money politics as well as highly personalised campaigns of candidates – also related to changes in the voting system emphasising the role of personal votes for individual candidates instead of party votes – as influential features of the 2014 legislative elections. As a result of the elections, only Jokowi and Prabowo emerged as presidential candidates being able to build strong enough party coalitions allowing them to run for the presidential elections in July 2014. Jokowi, on the one hand, was only able to form a rather small supporting coalition

for his candidacy that included the PDI-P, the Nasdem Party, the National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB), and the People's Conscience Party (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura)[90] – making up 208 out of 560 parliamentary seats. This is associated with Jokowi's announcement during campaigning that he would not get involved in deals with other parties for the distribution of government posts or about conditions beforehand, which weakened his coalition prospects considerably and instead strengthened Prabowo's position (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 357). With this approach, Jokowi aimed at circumventing the dominant patronage networks that were still in place after the end of the New Order regime and stood in sharp contrast to his predecessor Yudhoyono, "who pursued broad-based coalitions. Yudhoyono welcomed parties with open arms, offering them patronage in return for loyalty" (Warburton, 2016, p. 300). Prabowo, on the other hand, was willing to make deals and promised influential government posts, which helped him unite 63 percent of parliamentary seats in the Red-and-White Coalition that supported his candidacy (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 358; Mietzner, 2016, p. 215). Furthermore, Prabowo supporters launched an "anti-Jokowi smear campaign" that was based on "false rumours […] that Jokowi was the son of a Singaporean Christian" (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 359), thereby drawing on religious biases and 'religio-ideological polarisation' (Power & Warburton, 2020, p. 12) that is taken up in more detail in the context of the 2016-17 Islamist mobilisations against Governor Ahok.

In the months before the elections, the race between the two candidates for the lead in election polls was relatively tight, with Prabowo closing the gap to Jokowi's previous lead. Only shortly before the elections, the trend turned again in favour of Jokowi, which Aspinall and Mietzner (2014, pp. 360-361) refer to contra-democratic statements made by Prabowo and growing discomfort with Prabowo's approval ratings among less determined groups of voters, a comparatively strong core constituency of Jokowi as well as an improved campaign performance of Jokowi in the last days before the elections. In the following 2014 presidential elections on 9 July, Jokowi finally won by a small margin of six percent against Prabowo (see *Table 15*). As a result, Jokowi's success can be categorised as a success of a perceived pro-democratic group representative against a contra-democratic candidate of the conservative authoritarian-era political elite. However, the strong result of Prabowo also underlines the persistent influence and approval of former military actors of the contra-democratic group in the political system. Furthermore, it can also be categorised as a clear sign of the vulnerability of the Indonesian system to authoritarian-populism in general (Warburton & Aspinall, 2019, pp. 258-259).

[90] The Nasdem Party that was founded by an influential media businessman and the Hanura Party founded by the controversial military man Wiranto, who was Commander of the Indonesian National Armed Forces during Indonesia's transition to democracy and played a controversial role during the East Timor struggles in regard to human rights violations, can be seen as parties "established as personalist vehicles for prominent politicians" (Fossati, Aspinall, Muhtadi, & Warburton, 2020, p. 4; see further Aspinall, 2015, p. 7).

Table 14: Indonesian People's Representative Council election results in 2014 and 2019

Party	Full Party Name	Popular Vote (in %)	Seats	Popular Vote (in %)	Seats
		2014		2019	
PDI-P	Indonesian Democratic Party – Struggle (Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan, PDI-P)	18.95	109	19.33	128
Golkar	Golkar (Partai Golongan Karya)	14.75	91	12.31	85
Gerindra	Great Indonesia Movement Party (Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya, Gerindra)	11.81	73	12.57	78
Demokrat	Democratic Party (Partai Demokrat, PD)	10.19	61	7.77	54
PKB	National Awakening Party (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa, PKB)	9.04	47	9.69	58
PAN	National Mandate Party (Partai Amanat Nasional, PAN)	7.59	48	6.84	44
PKS	Prosperous Justice Party (Partai Keadilan Sejahtera, PKS)	6.79	40	8.21	50
Nasdem	Nasdem Party (Partai Nasdem, Nasdem)	6.72	36	9.05	59
PPP	United Development Party (Partai Persatuan Pembangunan, PPP)	6.53	39	4.25	19
Hanura	People's Conscience Party (Partai Hati Nurani Rakyat, Hanura)	5.26	16	1.54	0
Other		2.37	0	8.44	0
Total		100	560	100	575

Note: Turnout in 2014: 75.11%; turnout in 2019: 83.86%. *Source:* The General Elections Commission, Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) (2014a, 2019b) and Jakarta Globe (2019, May 21).

Table 15: Presidential election results in 2014 and 2019

Candidate	Joko Widodo	Prabowo Suianto	Joko Widodo	Prabowo Suianto
Year	2014		2019	
Popular vote	70,997,833	62,576,444	84,654,894	68,359,086
Percentage	53.15	46.85	55.3	44.7

Note: Turnout in 2014: 71.31%; turnout in 2019: 81.93%. *Source:* The General Elections Commission, KPU (2014b, 2019a) and Jakarta Globe (2019, May 21).

The beginning of Jokowi's presidency now also marks the beginning of the first observation period in which I analyse the president's decisions in regard to democratic quality declines in detail. After the presidential elections, Jokowi's first governing coalition was formed by the parties that had previously supported his candidacy, the PDI-P, the Nasdem Party, the PKB, and Hanura – resulting in an initial minority government faced with a strong opposition around Prabowo's Red-and-White Coalition and with a limited scope for action. In addition, Prabowo and his supporters systematically tried to oppose the election results in the weeks after the elections and claimed victory themselves by drawing on manipulated quick counts and later by unsuccessfully challenging the results in the Constitutional Court (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, pp. 363-364). Although other parties, especially the influential Golkar party[91], showed interest in joining Jokowi's governing coalition, Jokowi's maintained position that the support of other parties should be unconditional made them hesitate (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 365; Mietzner, 2016, p. 215). However, the cabinet announced by Jokowi in October 2014 already showed Jokowi's weakened position and that he had to make clear compromises with Megawati and functionaries of his coalition partners concerning cabinet post decisions (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2014, p. 365). As a result, he was not able to consider all the persons he was trying to include in his cabinet. Still, in regard to his initial pro-democratic course and aim to circumvent the dominant patronage networks, Jokowi's invitation to the KPK "to help vet potential ministers for the new cabinet" (Warburton, 2016, p. 310) is mentionable. Jokowi's difficult starting position continued and as Warburton (2016, p. 297) describes it,

> "[d]uring his first year in office, from October 2014, he [Jokowi] faced multiple crises: a series of political missteps, conflict within his cabinet, a disruptive opposition coalition in parliament, and troubled relations with his own party. These misfortunes left the president looking weak and out of his depth. His administration also appeared ill-equipped to deal with Indonesia's economic slowdown and rising inflation."

Although Jokowi's no-deal approach and cooperation with the KPK can be categorised as notable parts of a pro-democratic course to prevent patronage and corruption, the weak start and power position of Jokowi's administration overshadowed and prevented any large-scale reform ambitions at the beginning of the presidency. Specific pro-democratic reforms or actions which were hoped for by liberal groups were also not pursued – for instance, in the fields of corruption or human rights and justice (see Warburton, 2016, pp. 310-315). Nevertheless, following Warburton (2016, p. 313), "[t]here was thus an implicit sense of hope that if Jokowi could govern from a position of strength, then human rights and justice might return to the political agenda."

Despite these initial difficulties, Jokowi managed to consolidate his power in the course of 2016. With the PAN, the PPP[92], and especially Golkar joining Jokowi's government, his coalition reached a solid majority in parliament (ibid., p. 301).[93] At the same time, only minor concessions regarding cabinet posts were made to these parties – instead, other means of pressure (withholding legal recognition and access to material rewards) were used by the Jokowi administration (ibid.). After the administration strengthened its governing coalition, however, Jokowi showed no interest in taking up his anti-corruption efforts or human rights and justice claims

[91] Golkar originated from the ruling party during the New Order regime and reformed itself into a conservative right-wing party during the democratic transition (Bjornlund et al., 2008, pp. 21-22).
[92] The PPP is a conservative Islam-based party that was founded in 1973.
[93] The pressure that Jokowi's government exerted on the Golkar party's internal decision process was unusually strong (Warburton, 2016, p. 300).

from his campaign (ibid., pp. 310-315). This is illustrated, for example, by Jokowi's handling of the prominent Freeport scandal that was triggered by the disclosure of corruption in the oil sector, where Jokowi chose to back two prominent politicians involved in the scandal instead of sufficiently sanctioning them for their actions (ibid.). In regard to human rights and justice, Jokowi further did not pursue to launch promised investigations into past human rights abuses and refused to intervene when radical Islamist groups publicly attacked the Indonesian LGBTQI+ community, "with leading public figures claiming that the LGBT community was endangering the nation and constituted a threat as serious as terrorism and drugs, and that gay activism was part of a foreign 'proxy war' targeting Indonesia" (Warburton, 2016, p. 313, while referring to a newspaper article in the Time from 11.08.2016). Instead, the growing influence of military figures in Jokowi's administration is emphasised by Warburton (ibid., p. 314), further elaborating that "many of them have ultra-conservative credentials and poor human-rights records." Moreover, Jokowi's main attention notably shifted to his ambitious economic development and infrastructure agenda, an approach by the administration that Warburton (ibid., pp. 306-307) denotes as "New developmentalism", prioritising economic development over other political goals. With the improvement of key economic figures in 2016, Jokowi's approval ratings also improved considerably (ibid., pp. 297-298) – an aspect that connects very well to the close relation between public pro-democratic attitudes and the satisfaction with the government that I have discussed before. It can therefore be assumed that in the second year of his presidency, Jokowi arranged himself with the existing patronage networks and instead of promoting pro-democratic reforms, for instance, in the corruption or human rights sector, even draw on the support of the patronage networks and protected them in order to not disturb his economic agenda.

In addition to the persistent influence of conservative military actors on Indonesian politics, conservative anti-pluralistic religious actors are another group that became more powerful and active in the Indonesian political system during Jokowi's first term. While the old cleavage between anti-pluralistic Islamic groups and pluralists is one of the main social cleavages in Indonesian society, which also led to disputes under Sukarno during the first democratisation period[94], the Suharto-regime actively suppressed the religious cleavage and favoured a more pluralistic religious approach (see Aspinall and Mietzner, 2019, pp. 107-108; Warburton, 2020, p. 64). With the pro-democratic reform process during the *reformasi* period and in particular with enabling the right of freedom of speech, new room was given to Islamic political ideas, activities, and associations (Aspinall and Mietzner, 2019, p. 108). In the first years after the end of the Suharto regime and especially during the Yudhoyono presidency, the cleavage was still widely 'hidden' by the patronage and cartelisation structures of the government system that allowed for party cartelisation on the domestic level (ibid.; Mietzner, 2018, p. 269).[95] Jokowi, who won the presidential elections with a pluralist-centrist profile, chose a different course than his predecessor and, for instance, "reduced or halted casual, off-the-books payments to key Islamic leaders […]. Essentially, Jokowi tried to ignore Islamist organizations rather than con-

[94] Note that the political philosophical theory *Pancasila* is only referring to a One-God-Belief, not specifically to Islam.

[95] Note that the Bali bombings in 2002 and on-going secessionist movements were also connected to radical religious aspirations.

fronting them, and even mainstream Muslim groups began to complain about a lack of presidential attention" (Mietzner, 2018, p. 270). In the context of this new course, a climax of current disputes along the religious cleavage was reached, with the religiously motivated mass protests that started in 2016 in Jakarta against Governor Ahok, a Christian member of the ethnic-Chinese minority and successor of Jokowi as governor, accusing him of blasphemy (cf. Aspinall and Mietzner, 2019, pp. 106-111). The controversy erupted over a statement by Ahok during a speech in which he spoke out against the interpretation of a Koranic verse in the sense of that the Koran is prohibiting the election of non-Muslims (ibid., p. 107). The following mass protests were mainly aimed at preventing Ahok from running again for governor and putting him on trial for the statement. At the same time, however, the protests were also considered to be directed against Jokowi's aim to run for a second term and his more pluralist-centrist approach that allocated substantially fewer patronage funds to Islamic organisations (Mietzner 2018, p. 273). According to Aspinall and Mietzner (2019, p. 107), the protests "became a rallying point for both mainstream and more radical Islamic organizations […]. Elite backing from Jokowi's political opponents, including Prabowo, soon arrived as well." The political weight of the protests was thus unneglectable and illustrates the still existing mobilisation capacity along the anti-pluralistic/pluralist cleavage in Jokowi's first term.

That Jokowi also perceived the mobilisation as a threat to his own ambitions for re-election became particularly clear from the actions his administration initiated as a response to the controversy. On the one hand, after an initial reluctance to act, the Jokowi administration initiated measures to appease the protesting groups. These measures included an exchange with the two largest Muslim organisations and later with several party leaders, the increase of financial (patronage) resources to Muslim organisations, the support of the demand for a trial against Ahok, and the promotion of policies to address inequality issues (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019, p. 107; McKirdy, 2016, November 5; Mietzner, 2018, pp. 273-274). Since these measures did not achieve the success hoped for, on the other hand, the Jokowi government also chose more repressive measures to stop the protests. For instance, various legal charges were brought up against protest leaders, especially against cleric Rizieq Shihab, partly for treason, but mainly for other offences that were not related to the protests. Following Mietzner (2018, pp. 275-276), who draws on statements from interviews, "between December 2016 and March 2017, the police – apparently, with Jokowi's explicit approval – arbitrarily criminalized four of the most prominent protest leaders." In addition, events of the Islamist groups involved in the protests were targeted with the help of non-state militias, forcing them to dissolve their events in order to limit their mobilisation potential (ibid.). Moreover, following the Jakarta gubernatorial elections in which Islamist groups emerged as winners, a ban of a prominent Islamist group was initiated by the executive on the basis of a government regulation that was issued on short notice for legalising this very action – instead of relying on a standard judicial process (ibid., p. 277; Aspinall & Mietzner 2019, p. 109; Power, 2018, p. 314).[96] In Indonesian democracy research, this more repressive course by the Jokowi government is referred to as an "authoritarian turn"

[96] Following Aspinall and Mietzner (2019, p. 109), "in July 2017 his [Jokowi's] government banned Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, the Indonesian branch of a transnational Islamist organization that over the preceding decade had gained popularity on Indonesian college campuses. In doing so, Jokowi was aiming a blow at an ideologically vulnerable component of the wider Islamist coalition: Hizbut Tahrir openly called for Indonesia to become part of a universal Islamic caliphate, leading to charges that it was hostile not merely to Pancasila but to the very idea of a sovereign Indonesian nation-state."

(Power, 2018) or as measures for "fighting illiberalism with illiberalism" (Mietzner, 2018), thereby acknowledging that the measures were mainly used against illiberal groups themselves. However, they can be identified as clear actions in the sense of democratic quality declines initiated by the administration.

In the following months, the focus on the upcoming national level elections continued to increase and, in particular, the pending change that the 2019 presidential elections and the legislative elections were for the first time planned to take place on the same day made changes to the appointment rule of presidential candidates necessary. The new rule issued by the Jokowi government was to still rely on the previous (2014) legislative results for the determination of the majority ratios and keep the existing thresholds (20 percent of seats or 25 percent of votes in the legislative elections) (Power, 2018, p. 321). This decision, which was clearly to the detriment of newer oppositional parties that did not run for the 2014 legislative elections, generated criticism and was (unsuccessfully) challenged before the Constitutional Court (ibid.). It also impeded the selection of a promising oppositional counter candidate, eventually leading to a third attempt by a considerably less motivated and ambitious Prabowo (ibid., pp. 322-323). As a result, the electorate's choice was again rather limited regarding the constellation of candidates, consisting of Prabowo as a clear anti-pluralistic populist authoritarian candidate and an increasingly repressively acting Jokowi.

In the run-up to the presidential elections, the course of misuse of legal and law enforcement by the Jokowi administration was further continued, but notably the repressive measures were now also targeting different political groups in the Indonesian political system. According to Power (2018, p. 315), "more mainstream expressions of democratic opposition", for instance "peaceful assemblies of activists from the 2019 Change the President (2019GP) movement" (ibid.) moved into focus of the Jokowi administration and his legal and law enforcement institutions. Aspinall and Mietzner (2019, p. 111) further report that Jokowi "asked the military to promote his government's achievements; the police continued to arrest people who spread 'misinformation' about him." In addition, the largely selective prosecution of oppositional politicians on corruption charges by the KPK and the attorney general's department, while politicians loyal to the government were conspicuously absent from the list of prosecuted persons, are important elements of democratic quality declines towards the end of Jokowi's first term (Power, 2018, pp. 330-331). These elements also indicate that illiberal measures were no longer directed solely against illiberal groups. Still, "the repression of political opponents has attracted little criticism from mainstream civil society groups, media organisations, or the progressive intelligentsia" (ibid., p. 334). Furthermore, in regard to the appointment of running mates for the presidential elections, Jokowi's choice to appoint the controversial Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin, who was a key figure in the anti-Ahok protests, can be categorised as an extensive concession to anti-pluralistic/conservative Islamic groups (cf. ibid., p. 326). At the same time, the appointment was aimed to protect Jokowi from potential Islamist mobilisation and smear campaigns against his second term ambitions (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019, p. 111). In addition, a campaign of the Jokowi camp introduced shortly before the elections attempted to motivate pluralist voters to vote by emphasising that not voting would help Prabowo in particular and could enable an anti-pluralistic government (ibid., p. 114).

It can thus be concluded that at the end of his first term and of the first observation period, Jokowi had largely disappointed expectations placed in him by pluralist pro-democratic groups

– beginning with a lacking democratic agenda or reform ideas, the concessions to and arrangements with Indonesia's patronage networks as well as the unfoldment of a repressive course after the anti-Ahok protests. In addition, the political and electoral systems made it difficult for a pro-democratic opposition to mobilise and present a more democratic alternative to Jokowi themselves. Instead, in the 2019 presidential elections, pro-democratic groups again only had a limited choice between the populist authoritarian candidate Prabowo and an increasingly repressive acting Jokowi.

In the 2019 presidential elections, Jokowi eventually won by a rather small margin of eleven percent against Prabowo with 55.3 percent (see *Table 15*). In the simultaneous DPR-elections, Jokowi's PDI-P party was not able to considerably improve its result compared to the previous elections, but still clearly won with 19.33 percent. Prabowo's Gerindra party came in second with 12.57 percent and thus performed only slightly better than in 2014 (see *Table 14*). Golkar, in contrast, continued to see its result further deteriorate to 12.31 percent. The elections thereby further underlined the growing polarisation along the anti-pluralistic/pluralist cleavage as regional results showed a clear pattern with Jokowi winning provinces with a large non-Muslim population and provinces dominated by the more moderate Muslim Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organisation (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019, pp. 110, 113). Prabowo was, however, more successful among Muslim voters in general and especially in "Islamic strongholds outside Java" (ibid., p. 113).

After the 2019 elections and at the beginning of Jokowi's second term – that also marks the onset of the second observation period – Prabowo and his supporters challenged the election results with similar attempts as in 2014, including mass protests and claims that Prabowo had won. The protests by the Prabowo supporters after the announcement of the official election results even resulted in violent clashes with the police, which ended with at least eight deaths (ibid., pp. 114-115; Toha & Harish, 2020, pp. 346-347, 364-365). Despite the post-election conflicts and the persistent strong polarisation, Prabowo's Gerindra Party officially joined Jokowi's governing coalition at the end of 2019 with Prabowo entering Jokowi's current cabinet as minister of defence in October 2019 (Mujani & Liddle, 2021, p. 80). As a result, the legislative opposition – as well as checks on the government – is considerably weakened and now only consists of the PKS and the PD (ibid.). Jokowi's government majority, however, has grown even stronger with a new governing coalition comprised of the PDI-P, Golkar, Gerindra, Nasdem, PKB, PPP, PAN, the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), and the Indonesian Unity Party (Perindo) with 471 of the 575 parliamentary seats.[97] This also made it difficult for a pro-democratic opposition to position itself as a promising alternative in parliament – a further shift of pro-democratic opposition to civil society. The composition of the new governing coalition thereby also fits very well to the concept of 'party cartelisation Indonesian-style' (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 10), which describes the attempt of parties to join the governing coalition mainly to get access to state resources and protection from prosecution.

In regard to continuing democratic quality declines, shortly after the beginning of the second term, the Jokowi government introduced highly controversial new laws. They most prominently included a law that substantially interfered with the autonomy of the influential KPK – the key

[97] The PSI and Perindo Party did not win parliament seats in the last two DPR elections. The PAN party joined Jokowi's governing coalition in August 2021 (Jakarta Globe, 2021, August 25).

anti-corruption institution of the post-New Order era (Mujani & Liddle, 2021, p. 81). While "[o]fficials and businesspeople had been claiming that the KPK too often obstructed policy implementation and the ability to do business […] [t]he new law gives a presidentially appointed supervisory board power over the KPK" (ibid.). Furthermore, other controversial laws were initiated that "include a massive overhaul of the criminal code that penalizes dissent and invades privacy, as well as changes to the labor law and agrarian reform that improve ease of business for large corporations while diminishing legal protections for ordinary citizens" (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30). Especially the curtailment of autonomy of the KPK and the overhaul of the criminal code were heavily criticised by civil society actors and led to strong protests in September 2019 (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30; Mujani & Liddle, 2021, p. 81; Toha & Harish, 2020, p. 365). Following Jaffrey (2019, September 30), the student protests were actually the largest ones since the end of the Suharto regime and were accompanied by violent clashes with police and military forces. In contrast to the large scale protests of Jokowi's first term, it is important to note that the protests primarily emanated from groups of the pluralist pro-democratic camp that previously supported Jokowi (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30; Power, 2020, pp. 297-298). Nonetheless, the strategies used to disperse the pro-democratic protests followed the same repressive patterns as for previous protests by Islamist movements (Power, 2020, pp. 297-298). Besides the violent dispersal of protests, intimidation, arrestment, and criminalisation were part of that strategy. Despite the strong civil society backlash, the law restricting the autonomy of the KPK was passed at high speed and with a broad support in parliament (Jaffrey, 2019, September 30; Power, 2020, p. 298). However, a delay of the other laws and especially of the overhaul of the criminal code was reached. Following Jaffrey (2019, September 30), on the one hand, this "rapid mobilization by students who are relatively new to politics suggests that civil society still has the ability to check excesses by elected officials." On the other hand, with the strongly reduced legislative opposition and the curtailment of the autonomy of the KPK, the institutional checks on the government were substantially limited. In addition, the general securitisation of open criticism against the government as well as the use of force and repressive measures to disperse protests also impeded civil society activities (ibid.). As a result, the opposition's mobilisation capacity and the possibility of translating political interests through Indonesia's strongly tied legislative was highly restricted.

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, the Jokowi government mainly continued its suppressive course (Mietzner, 2020; Power, 2020, p. 298). While Jokowi's government initially followed the path of other populist governments with its Covid-19 strategy, trying to play down possible implications of the pandemic for Indonesia or even referring to a potential immunity of ethnic Malays and emphasising the beneficial effect of warm weather conditions, the government's policy response to rising Covid-19 cases was very limited in regard to health/containment measures and strongly focused on the economic consequences of the pandemic (Mietzner, 2020, pp. 229-233). This connects to Mietzner's (2020, pp. 231-232) assessment that the Jokowi government was mainly concerned about the economic implications of the crisis – a prioritisation that characterises Jokowi's entire time in office. Nevertheless, in contrast to other populist governments around the world, Jokowi did not try to increase the power of the executive branch through emergency measures (ibid.). However, his government reacted sensitively to open criticism against its policy response and again was actively trying to criminalise critics. In this sense, critical remarks were prosecuted as insults against the president

(Mietzner, 2020, p. 244; Power & Warburton, 2020, p. 2). Moreover, in the further course of the pandemic, the government's intensive use of the military to support the implementation of measures was associated by commentators with the role of the military during the New Order regime (Fealy, 2020, p. 307). Thus, the overall impact of the pandemic has mainly reinforced pre-existing trends.

In regard to the still pending overhaul of the criminal code, which implied controversial encroachments on various (personal) rights and further entailed changes criminalising criticism against the president and other state institutions, the law was passed on 6 December 2022 by the Indonesian parliament (Human Rights Watch, 2023; Root, 2023, February 13). Although the adoption was again accompanied by protests from student and civil society groups, Jaffrey and Warburton (2023) point out that the protests were substantially toned down due to previous intimidations by the government. This shows that the ability of the civil society to compensate for institutional checks on the government was severely degraded by ongoing restrictions of the civil space.

Although with the quite recent announcement of the election date for the next general elections in 2024 and repeated statements by Jokowi that he does not aim to run for an unlawful third term attempt, potential third term ambitions of Jokowi are regarded as highly unlikely (e.g. Dianti, 2022, January 25). Instead, however, his attempts to promote the political careers of family members are considered conspicuous by observers. Fealy (2020, pp. 315-318), for instance, labels Jokowi's efforts to promote his son's, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and his son-in-law's, Bobby Afif Nasution, political careers as "Jokowi's Dynasticism". In the 2020 Regional Head Election, Jokowi's son Gibran was eventually elected as mayor of Surakarta as his father before. With Jokowi's support of the political ambitions of his family members, at the same time, for other politicians, the support of their relatives is also encouraged, with as yet unforeseeable consequences (ibid., pp. 317-318).

Summing up, Jokowi's government continued its increasingly repressive course in its second term, while targeting more diverse social groups with repressive measures, which now included not only Islamist, but also pluralist groups from the pro-democratic camp that were previously supporting Jokowi's election. Furthermore, with the strongly reduced legislative opposition and the introduction of the highly controversial law restricting the autonomy of the KPK, the institutional checks on the government were substantially limited. The strong backlash and mass protests by pro-democratic pluralist groups show that civil society mobilisation is increasingly taking up the role of checks on the government, although the use of force and repressive measures by the government to disperse protests and criticism is clearly a restricting factor – as most recently during the Covid-19 pandemic and with the passing of the overhaul of the criminal code in December 2022. In addition, elements of increasing populism, polarisation, military involvement, and lately dynasticism coin the second observation period and term of the Jokowi government.

5.2.3.2 External factors

Indonesia's general political and economic foreign policy

To better assess Indonesia's political and economic foreign policy, I begin with a general contextualisation. Indonesia is located in a rapidly changing and contested world region, where several rising regional and great powers are actively seeking to project and expand their power (cf. Gindarsah, 2014, pp. 27-28). Indonesia's foreign policy, however, traditionally emphasises the importance of state sovereignty and independence, which becomes evident in the slogan and pursued foreign policy goal *bebas dan aktif* (independent and active) (ibid., p. 28). This particular emphasis can be related to "Indonesia's past experiences with dependence upon great foreign powers" (ibid.) and the state's colonial history. Following the *bebas dan aktif*-policy, Indonesian governments in the post-Second World War-period officially aimed to establish and maintain Indonesian sovereignty and independence from great powers – in the region and globally. Furthermore, Indonesia was and still is an important active member of the NAM during and after the Cold War (Hermawan, 2014, p. 62). However, the global struggle between the two competing world orders during the Cold War heavily influenced Indonesian politics in the Sukarno and Suharto eras (see, for example, the role of the Indonesian Communist Party) (Thompson, 2014).

A key element of Indonesia's foreign policy is its membership and often highlighted leadership role in ASEAN (Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014). Since the foundation of ASEAN, Indonesia is the main political and economic power in the institution. During the Suharto regime, "[t]he end of *konfrontasi* and Indonesia's willingness to join ASEAN were critical to ASEAN's formation, which served President Soeharto's goal of portraying Indonesia to the region as a constructive neighbour" (ibid., p. 107). Moreover, Indonesia is engaged in international treaties like the 'Declaration on the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality' (ZOPFAN) and the 'Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia', in order to enable peaceful conflict settlement in the region. In addition, Indonesia is promoting a nuclear-free region by supporting the 'Treaty on the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone' (SEAN-WFZ) and the 'Nuclear Proliferation Treaty' (NPT) (Gindarsah, 2014, p. 28). At the same time, Indonesia maintains military cooperation with various democratic and non-democratic states, including the U.S., European countries, Australia, Russia, South Korea, and China (ibid., pp. 29-31). Until today, the membership in ASEAN, implications of a changing world order with a rising China and a withdrawing U.S., global challenges such as climate change, and a general democratic decline at the global level affect Indonesian politics.

Although Indonesia can be classified more as a democratic latecomer in terms of its second democratic transition at the end of the third wave of democratisation, Indonesia has by now evolved into a perceived ideational leader and mediator in the region (Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014, p. 107). In this sense, Indonesia is highly engaged in propagating and distributing democratic values and norms in ASEAN (Gindarsah, 2014, p. 28; Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014, pp. 109-110). Indonesia, for instance, pushed for the inclusion of democratic ideals, rule of law,

and human rights in the ASEAN Charter that was adopted at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007 (Karim, 2017, p. 393; Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014, pp. 109-110). In regard to Indonesia's role as a regional mediator, the government recently engaged in mediation efforts of various conflicts such as the Cambodia-Thailand border tensions, South China Sea territorial disputes, and in Myanmar's (unsuccessful) democratisation process (Ichihara et al., 2016, pp. 2-3; Karim, 2017, pp. 397-400; Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014). Indonesia is further contributing to UN peacekeeping missions in the region and globally (see, for example, the UN missions in the Philippines, Vietnam, or Congo) (Hermawan, 2014, p. 63). This position of Indonesia as a democracy promoter and the state identity as a regional beacon of democracy, however, are threatened by recent democratic quality declines that might limit the credibility of Indonesia's international pro-democratic agenda.[98]

In addition to the political dimension, periods of political transformation in Indonesia were typically also closely interwoven with economic turbulences and transformations in Indonesia's economic system and trade policies (cf. Pangestu et al., 2015). The economic system, which before independence was strongly oriented toward the production of tropical goods and the extraction of resources for Western industries (Elson, 2009, p. 22), continued to concentrate on resource extraction and later on labour-intensive products until the end of the New Order regime (Felker, 2009, p. 51). During this period, the state was able to achieve visible economic successes, particularly in the fight against poverty (ibid.). Regarding Indonesia's trade policy, Pangestu et al. (2015) also describe a constant conflict between protectionism and openness. The 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, however, marked a sharp juncture in Indonesia's economic development (Felker, 2009, p. 51; Mishra, 2014, p. 11) and led Indonesia to request IMF assistance and undertake far-reaching deregulatory reforms (Pangestu et al., 2015, p. 248). The extent of the crisis is also clearly visible in Indonesia's historic GDP figures (see *Figure 35*). Although Indonesia's economy recovered quickly in the early 2000s with high growth rates (see also *Figure 35*) and a rapidly growing middle class, poverty reduction, inequality, international competitiveness, and the remnants of the elite-interwoven patronage system of the Suharto era are still major challenges (King, 2008, pp. 114-115; Mishra, 2014). In addition, the shift from labour- and resource-intensive production fields to more complex ones, which require higher human capital and are more skill-based, poses a challenge (Mishra, 2014, p. 14). Furthermore, the consequences of rapidly advancing urbanisation are playing a major role in Indonesia's development, with the majority of the population now living in urban areas (Mishra, 2014, p. 12; Yusuf & Sumner, 2015, p. 341).

Indonesia's domestic economic development is at the same time closely linked to trade relations. Today, Indonesia's comparatively weak integration into the world market is still a result of the historical development of the country's economic system and the conflict between protectionism and openness. This is also reflected in the comparatively low net imports and exports of goods and services as shares of GDP (see *Figure 36*) – which, however, increased considerably in absolute terms after the Asian financial crisis (see *Figure 35*).[99] The negative effects of

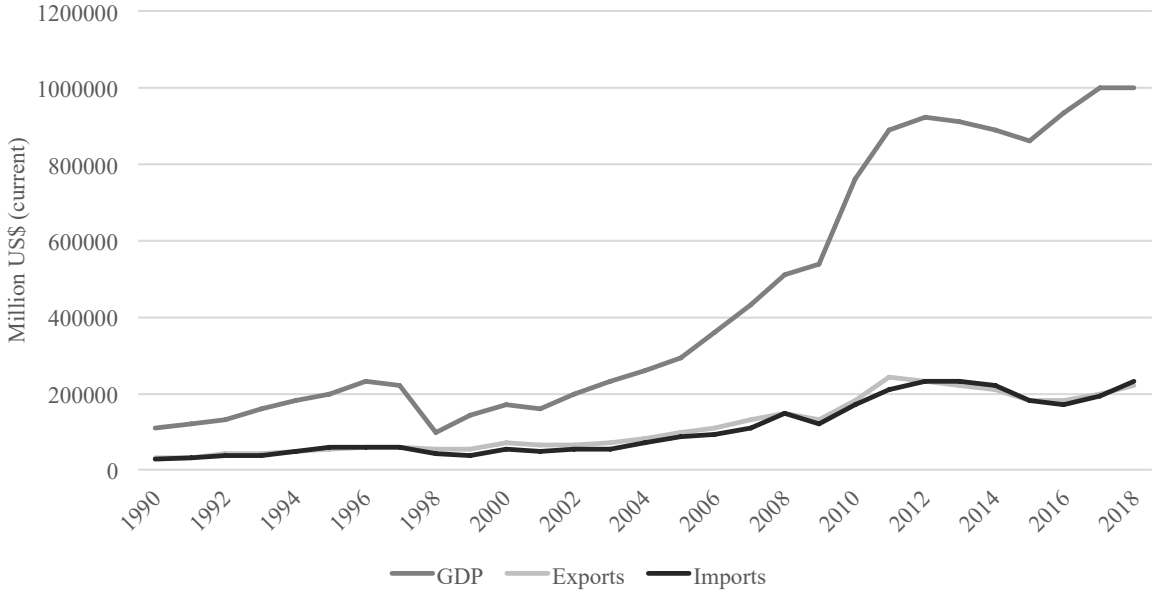
[98] Another issue that over time poses a stability threat are ongoing secessionist movements, which are, however, mainly inhibited by the different Indonesian governments. Furthermore, piracy and 'local' terrorism might further be accounted for as destabilising factors that also possess an international dimension (cf. de Haan, 2019). In regard to secessionist movements, e.g. Indonesia fears that external actors might interfere in on-going disputes.

[99] The relative increase of net imports and exports of goods and services as shares of GDP in the course of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis can be related to the sharp decline in absolute GDP values (see *Figure 35*).

the global financial crisis, beginning in 2007/8, are visible to a lesser extent (see *Figure 35 & 36*; see further Pangestu et al., 2015, p. 253). Also in regard to trade barriers, Indonesia is stepping up efforts to reduce barriers and "by January 2010 Indonesia found itself a signatory to several ASEAN Plus One FTAs, with six key trading partners: Australia, New Zealand, China, India, Japan, and Korea" (Pangestu et al., 2015, p. 252). In 2017, Indonesia's major trade partner was China with approx. 63 billion US$ (current), followed by Singapore (36 billion US$), Japan (34 billion US$), the U.S. (30 billion US$), and India (19 billion US$) (OEC, 2021). Trade with China has thus grown substantially in importance compared with other traditional trade relations (e.g. with Japan). Linked to the relatively low international competitiveness, a great share of exports are still primary commodities (Mishra, 2014, p. 14; Pangestu et al., 2015, pp. 253-254). In addition, the pegging of domestic food and fuel prices to world market values poses a challenge, especially for poorer households and social stability (Mishra, 2014, p. 12). In the context of Indonesia's general trade policies it is also noteworthy that Indonesian officials from the Jokowi government currently want to further develop Indonesia's harbour infrastructure and merchant fleet to strengthen the state's position as an important sea power that can profit from China's BRI (Senkyr, 2017; Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). The sea routes through Indonesian territorial waters are therefore considered to be highly important to extend Indonesia's role in the regional and global economy.

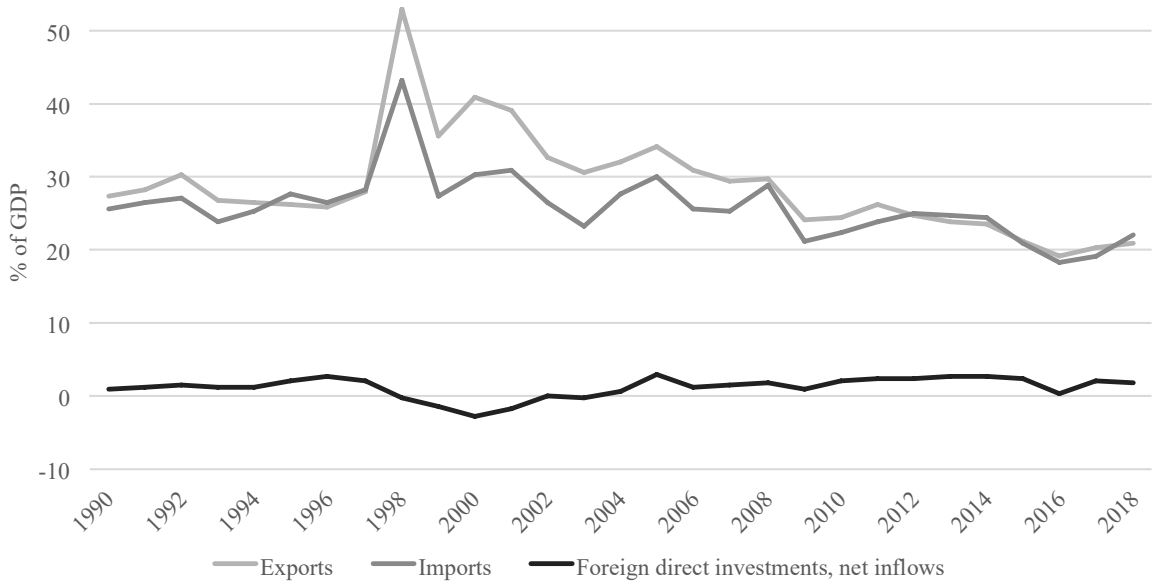
This first contextualisation of Indonesia's general political and economic foreign policy already points out Indonesia's pro-claimed aim to follow the *bebas dan aktif*-policy in turbulent geopolitical times, more recent initiatives to promote democracy and peace abroad, a multitude of challenges in the development of the Indonesian economic system, and a change in the importance of economic partners over time. Based on this, Indonesia's relations to specific partners and institutions as well as potential implications on Indonesia's democratic development (the executive's cost-benefit assessment) are now assessed in more detail. The selection of these partners and institutions was guided by first insights drawn from the contextualisation and the literature and covers Indonesia's relations to 1) the U.S., 2) Japan, 3) Europe, 4) neighbouring countries and ASEAN, 5) Australia, 6) China, and 7) the UN and international NGOs.

Figure 35: Indonesia's GDP, net export, and net import in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2018



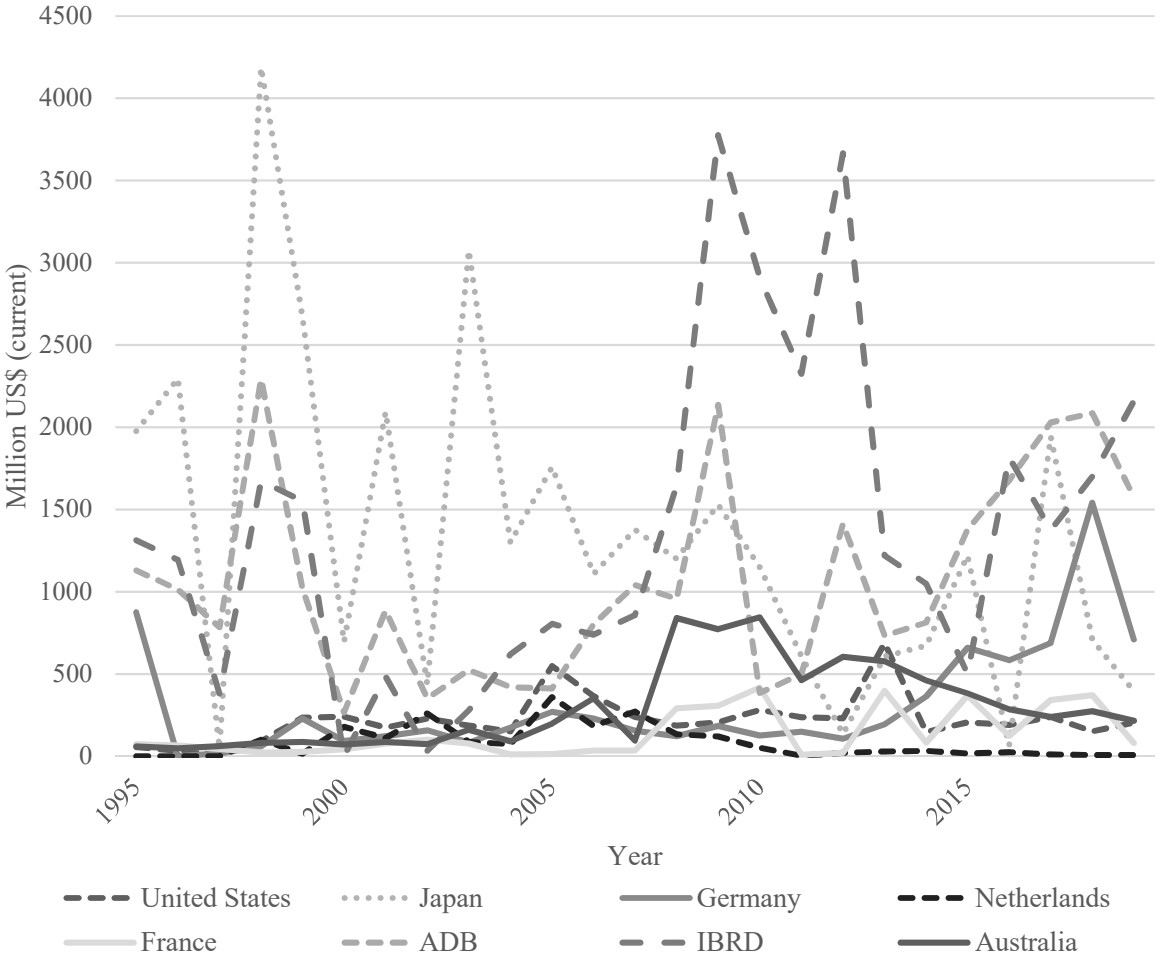
Source: World Bank database (2020).

Figure 36: Indonesia's net import of goods and services, net export of goods and services, and FDI, net inflows as % of GDP between 1990 and 2018



Source: World Bank database (2020).

Figure 37: ODA commitments (in million US$ current) from selected donor states for Indonesia between 1995 and 2019



Note: Displayed are the total amounts of ODA commitment values in million US$ (current) for a selection of donor states between 1995 and 2019 reported to the OECD's CRS. Aid data under the flow categories ODA grants, ODA loans, and Other Official Flows (non Export Credit) for all sector codes are considered. For more information about the OECD's CRS see *Chapter 3.2*. It is further important to note that a substantial amount of ODA is directed via international organisations and might therefore not be captured in this graph. *Source:* OECD's CRS (2021).

Relations to the U.S.

At the latest with the global redistribution of power structures due to the Second World War, the U.S. became a central player in the Southeast Asian region. After defeating Indonesia's short-term occupier Japan, a power vacuum allowed Sukarno to draft and proclaim a declaration of independence for the Republic of Indonesia (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 74-75). In the following struggles between the Dutch and the Indonesian republican forces, the U.S. administration was a central actor applying pressure on the Dutch to stop their attempt to forcefully reconquer the archipelago (ibid., pp. 79-81). Drakeley (2005, pp. 80-81) concludes that

> "[e]specially after the [Indonesian] republican government demonstrated its aversion to communism through crushing a PKI revolt in 1948, the United States concluded that supporting an independent Indonesia was a better policy than bankrolling the protracted and probably futile Dutch efforts to turn back the clock."

During the Cold War, when Indonesia was officially an important member of the NAM, Indonesia was already heavily influenced by the global power struggle between the West and the Soviet Union. In the course of the Cold War, in 1962, the U.S. administration supported Indonesia's aspirations to gain control over Papua from the Dutch – arguably to maintain influence on the state from a geostrategic perspective (ibid., p. 107). In addition, Sukarno's regime was able to manoeuvre in the global power struggles by playing "its Cold War suitors – Washington, Moscow, and Beijing – off against each other, acquiring thereby economic aid and arms supplies" (ibid.). The fact that an anti-communist regime prevailed with the New Order regime against the increasingly influential PKI at the end of the Sukarno era can also be assessed as being in the general interests of the U.S. (cf. Drakeley, 2005, pp. 109-111). Suharto's New Order regime was thus assessed very positively by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) Indonesia in 1972 (USAID Indonesia, 1972, p. 1), stating that the "'New Order' under General Suharto, who was made President in 1968, is a constructive mixture of army leadership working in cooperation with respected civilian intellectuals and technicians." With Suharto in power, Indonesia underwent a complete change of direction in foreign and economic policy. While "effectively becom[ing] a Washington ally in the Cold War" (Drakeley, 2005, p. 114), a reorientation of Indonesia's economic policy toward a Western form of capitalism was implemented (ibid., pp. 114, 121-128). Market liberalisation was, however, not fully embraced, as the "traditional *priyayi* disdain for commercial activity and a widespread Islamic association of capitalism with the West also support the persistence of statist inclinations in Indonesia" (ibid., p. 124).[100] Moreover, the U.S. was the most important donor in the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) that was founded in 1967 to coordinate international donor support for the recovery of the Indonesian economy after the Sukarno era and supported the long-term rescheduling of Indonesian debts in the 1966 formed Paris Club that consisted of Western creditor nations (USAID Indonesia, 1972, pp. 3-6). After the Cold War, the U.S. administration became considerably more reluctant concerning funding and supporting the autocratic New Order regime. Because of less external support/investment and domestic economic disturbances, the Suharto regime faced increasing economic and political instabilities in the 1990s, culminating in the collapse of the Suharto regime during the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis (Case, 2009, p. 102; Drakeley, 2005, pp. 138-140).

After the fall of the Suharto regime and with the onset of the pro-democratic reform process, the relations to the U.S. and other Western partners have gradually stabilised. During the democratisation period, Western partners actively promoted the establishment of core democratic structures, far-reaching processes of devolution, and good governance in Indonesia (Fritzen, 2009, pp. 87-88; Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 66-67). Actors from the U.S. such as USAID as well as non-governmental U.S.-based organisations such as the Carter Center and the Ford Foundation carried out large-scale activities (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 66-67). However, with the Indonesian military's violent appearance in the East Timor independence struggle, "Indonesia also paid a heavy price, losing considerable international goodwill and further alienating foreign investors for whom the unrestrained killings and the generally unrepentant attitude of the Indonesian elite and army signalled a continuing lack of accountability" (Drakeley, 2005, p. 149). As another result, military cooperation between the U.S. and Indonesia was impeded and arms sales stopped completely (Dosch, 2009, p. 230). In addition to the

[100] *Priyayi* is a Javanese word for (non-royal) noble people.

East Timor violence, disagreements over the IMF's support programme for Indonesia as well as the U.S.' wars in Afghanistan and Iraq remained challenging for the relations shortly after Indonesia's transition to democracy (Murphy, 2012, pp. 85, 98-99).

Over the next years, the U.S.-Indonesian relations improved, which can mainly be related to the progressive democratisation in Indonesia and the emphasis on shared values (ibid.). Adding on to this, the U.S.' ODA commitments between 1995 and 2019 are displayed in *Figure 37*, showing that the U.S. steadily increased its ODA commitments after the end of the New Order regime until 2005. In contrast to other donors' commitments, U.S.' commitments are, however, comparatively low (see, e.g. Japan). In the following years, the commitments decreased again, but reached its peak in 2013 with 687 million US$. In this context, Indonesia received a 474 million US$ five-year compact grant from the MCC that began in 2013 and was completed by 2018. Currently, the Board of Directors of the MCC and the Indonesian government are exploring new focus areas for a second compact (United States Department of State, 2022b).

While the U.S. via USAID continued – and still continues – to support Indonesia's efforts to develop inclusive democratic institutions and strengthen the countries democratic resilience (USAID Indonesia, 2022), Indonesia also began to actively promote democracy abroad (Murphy, 2012, pp. 89-93). Especially the creation of the Bali Democracy Forum as well as initiatives in ASEAN or to support Myanmar's (unsuccessful) democratisation are mentionable efforts in this context that were also supported by the U.S. (ibid., pp. 89, 94-95). In this sense, Murphy (2012, p. 101) concludes that "Indonesia's goal of serving as a bridge between the West and the Muslim world is also fully consistent with U.S. interests." Nevertheless, Indonesia emphasises that its activities abroad are different from the democracy promotion efforts by the U.S. and labels its activities more as "democracy projection" in contrast to 'Western' democracy promotion (ibid., p. 94). Especially in regard to the U.S.' Middle Eastern politics, however, challenges remain (ibid.). The improvement of U.S.-Indonesian relations eventually led to a Comprehensive Partnership agreement that was signed in November 2010 during a visit by U.S. President Barack Obama to Jakarta (ibid., p. 84). In 2015, the Comprehensive Partnership was further upgraded to a Strategic Partnership (United States Department of State, 2022b), which shows a steady deepening of the relations.

In the field of U.S.-Indonesian military cooperation, the "US administration lifted the [arms] embargo in November 2005 once it convinced itself that the Indonesian armed forces were now sufficiently placed under civilian control as the result of successful democratization" (Dosch, 2009, p. 230). In the following years, the U.S. subsequently offered Indonesia

> "to assist […] in the process of defence reform and enhance Indonesia's defence capabilities, especially with regard to its air force and navy. Indonesian commentators see the strengthening of military relations between the two countries primarily against the backdrop of an emerging China, thus providing further evidence for the existence of a containment and hedging strategy against Beijing" (ibid., pp. 230-231).

This assessment resonates very well with the U.S.' foreign policy reorientation of the spatial focus – or pivot to Asia strategy – that was introduced under Obama in 2012. With Trump's 'America first' policy and even more pronounced containment strategy against China, economic and security cooperation with Indonesia remained highly important. However, the U.S. administration paid considerably less attention to possible democratic quality declines in its

partner countries (cf. Carothers & Press, 2021). Today, the Biden administration is trying to re-emphasise and promote the importance of democracy and human rights more strongly in its foreign policy approach. Nevertheless, the administration is still confronted with the prevailing security-democracy dilemma that describes the balancing of foreign policy decisions between promoting democracy abroad and prioritising U.S. security interests (ibid.), which is also visible in the Biden administration's approach to democratic quality declines in Indonesia – as discussed further below in the context of short-term reactions.

The described trends are also visible in the trade data of the two states (see *Figure 38*). While in particular the export of Indonesian goods to the U.S. increased until the onset of the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, it took until 2005 for the increase to continue (see *Figure 38*). Shortly after, the negative effects of the global financial crisis beginning in 2007/8 are visible in the Indonesian export values to the U.S., but the increase continued and peaked in 2017. The imports of U.S. products to Indonesia, however, mainly increased in the time period from 2007-2012, thereby showing a different trend. This pattern might be related to the strong increase in imported products from China in recent years (see *Figure 38*). In addition, a general trade deficit with substantially higher Indonesian exports can be observed in *Figure 38*, peaking at the end of the considered period in 2017. For 2020, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (2022) still reports a goods trade deficit of 12.8 billion US$. In regard to the traded products, while in 2020 the U.S. was mainly importing products such as knit and woven apparel (3.6 billion US$), agricultural products (2.4 billion US$), electrical machinery (2.2 billion US$), or rubber (1.5 billion US$) (total U.S. goods imports were 20.2 billion US$ in 2020), Indonesia was mainly importing agricultural products (2.8 billion US$), mineral fuels (1.2 billion US$), and machinery (632 million US$) (total Indonesian goods imports were 7.4 billion US$ in 2020) (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2022). These trade data show the steady deepening of economic cooperation between the U.S. and Indonesia, but also highlight the growing imbalance in the relationship.

Shortly before the onset of the first observation period in 2014, U.S.-Indonesian relations thus reached a high point after the end of the New Order regime and Indonesia's successful democratisation. This is particularly evident in the upgrade of the Comprehensive Partnership to a Strategic Partnership in 2015 and the steadily deepening cooperation in the areas of trade and security. Furthermore, with the Trump presidency beginning in 2017, the foreign policy focus of the U.S. administration noticeably shifted and considerably less attention was directed to possible democratic quality declines in partner countries. Instead, there was a clear focus on the perceived security threat from China. It is therefore not surprising that no critical short-term reactions to the democratic quality declines in Jokowi's first term have been released or initiated by the Trump administration. Only to a lesser degree, some human rights violations were reported in the Human Rights Report 2019 (United States Department of State, 2020).

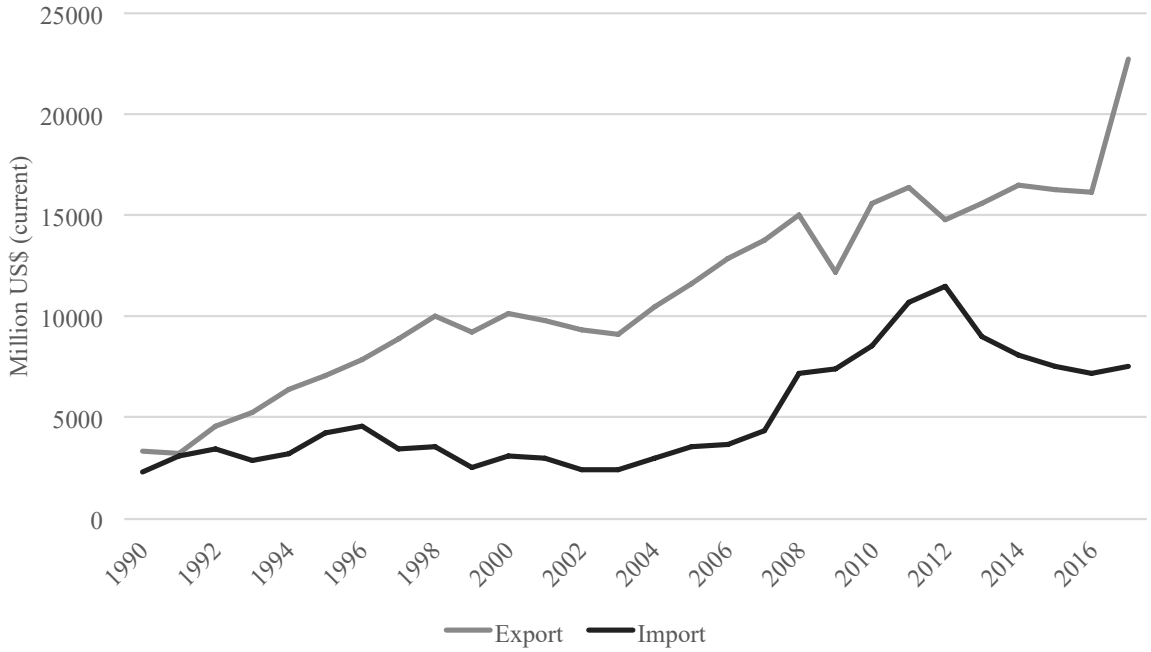
Despite the Biden administration's goal to pay closer attention to democratic backslidings and human rights abuses abroad, reactions to democratic quality declines in Indonesia have so far been mostly restrained. It is, however, noticeable that the last two official Human Rights Reports are more openly criticising the Indonesian government. Especially the most recent Human Rights Report 2021 (United States Department of State, 2022a) that was officially released by Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken on 12 April 2022 listed considerably more offenses and emphasised the Indonesian administration's responsibility more strongly (United States

Department of State, 2022, April 12).[101] The offenses include severe restrictions on fundamental rights, abuse by police and security forces as well as a restricted judiciary (United States Department of State, 2022a). The report also led to reactions from Indonesian officials, who rejected the allegations and instead pointed to deficiencies in the U.S. (Asia Pacific Report, 2022, April 21, the article first appeared in Indonesian on CNN Indonesia on 18 April 2022). However, the ongoing democratic quality declines in Indonesia do not appear to be having any negative effect on the general relations. As it seems, they were also not openly raised in the latest bilateral talks either (United States Department of State, 13.05.2022). This resonates with the point that Western criticism might be seen sceptical by domestic Indonesian actors, who, for example, condemn U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. As a result, open criticism might even lead to unintended side-effects and strengthen the domestic contra-democratic group. Instead, Indonesia participated in the 2021 and 2023 Summits for Democracy that were initiated by the Biden administration and with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, closing ranks with partners are becoming more important for the U.S. (see the tension between promoting democracy and security interests discussed above). In this context, Indonesia had a prominent role as G20 chair in 2022 and has offered to act as a mediator in Russia's war against Ukraine. For the preparation of the 2022 G20 meeting in Bali, Jokowi also visited Ukraine, Russia, and the 2022 G7 meeting in Germany.

In summary, the U.S. as well as global power struggles more in general historically played a substantial role in Indonesia's political development – with steady ups and downs in the relation between Indonesia and the U.S. Especially after the events around the turn of the millennium and with the deepening of democracy in Indonesia, U.S.-Indonesian relations improved considerably and reached a sustained high point with the conclusion of the Strategic Partnership in 2015. Short-term reactions from the Trump administration to the democratic quality declines in Jokowi's first term were very restrained and it was only with the new Biden administration that there was more direct U.S. criticism through the Human Rights Reports in the course of the second observation period. At the same time, however, cooperation in the field of security becomes more and more important, which was most recently demonstrated by Indonesia's participation in Biden's 2021 and 2023 Summits for Democracy as well as Indonesia's prominent role as 2022 G20 chair. As a result, U.S. pressure on the Jokowi administration can be categorised as comparatively low.

[101] Already in the executive summary the following points are listed: "unlawful or arbitrary killings by government security forces; torture by police; harsh and life-threatening prison conditions; arbitrary arrest or detention; political prisoners; serious problems with the independence of the judiciary; arbitrary and unlawful interference with privacy; serious abuses in the conflict in Papua and West Papua Provinces, including unlawful civilian harm, torture and physical abuses; serious restrictions on free expression and media, including unjustified arrests or prosecutions of journalists and religious figures, censorship, and the existence of criminal libel laws; serious restrictions on internet freedom; substantial interference with the freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; serious government corruption; lack of investigation of and accountability for gender-based violence; crimes involving violence or threats of violence targeting members of racial and ethnic minority groups; crimes involving violence or threats of violence against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or intersex persons; and the existence of laws criminalizing consensual same-sex sexual conduct between adults" (United States Department of State, 2022a, p. 1).

Figure 38: Indonesia's trade with the U.S. in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

Relations to Japan

Indonesia's political and trade relations to Japan are traditionally very close. Historically, Japan occupied the Indonesian territory during the Second World War, which was still a Dutch colony at that time and assured Indonesian independence (Drakeley, 2005, p. 74; Thompson, 2014, p. 3). During the short time of occupation, Japan began to restructure the Indonesian economy, trained military forces, and even initiated a committee to pave the way for independence when Japan's own defeat in the war was foreseeable (Macdonald, 2016, p. 107). After Japan's capitulation against the Allied forces in August 1945, the Indonesian forces were ordered to surrender territorial control back to the Netherlands. Local Japanese officers, however, ignored that order and allowed Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta to proclaim Indonesia's independence on 17 August 1945 (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 74-75). In the short period of a power vacuum before the Allied forces reached the Archipelago, Japan predominantly turned a blind eye on Indonesian efforts to gain control over state powers, but hindered this process, for example, by dissolving the Indonesian military forces (ibid., p. 76). In the following years, the U.S. considered Indonesia to be an important regional economic partner for Japan that could provide necessary resources for Japan's economic recovery and therefore provided aid to the region (Thompson, 2014, p. 3).

After Japan's prominent role in Indonesia's independence movement, in the 1950s, an agreement on war reparations was developed and thereby the establishment of official diplomatic relations made possible (Khoiriati, 2021, p. 17). In particular, Japanese interest in Indonesia's resource wealth as well as U.S.' aim to keep Indonesia away from Communism were decisive

for the newly started Indonesia-Japan relations (ibid.). The relations continued after the reparation payments were paid and Japan emerged as a central donor of ODA with even intensified support to Indonesia at the beginning of the New Order regime (ibid.). In the context of the coordinating IGGI, Japan was the second biggest donor between 1967 and 1972 (USAID Indonesia, 1972, pp. 4-6). Fearing a new form of economic domination, Japan's aid even sparked political riot in the Indonesian society, which eventually led to a gradual reorientation of Japan's foreign aid towards more non-economic interests as well as an emphasise of Japan's rejection of a military power role in the Fukuda Doctrine in 1977 (Gilson, 2009, p. 209; Khoiriati, 2021, p. 16).

Throughout the entire New Order period, Japan supported Indonesia with substantial ODA and private-sector investments – although a more general shift of Japan's foreign aid policy "towards political purposes such as supporting democracy and democratic values, humanitarian, security and human security" (Khoiriati, 2021, p. 17) took place in the 1990s after the end of the Cold War. With the end of the New Order regime in 1998 and the onset of the pro-democratic reform process, Japan also began promoting democratic development in Indonesia (ibid., pp. 17-18). However, according to Ichihara (2016, pp. 907-908)[102], with 1.4 percent Japan is only spending a very small amount of its ODA on democratic governance (in the considered time period from 1995-2012). Furthermore, Japan mainly concentrates its democracy aid on state institutions (95.5 percent) and is spending comparatively sparse aid to the civil society sector (1.2 percent), although the effectiveness of civil society support is considered to be more evident (ibid., pp. 908-909).[103] Accordingly, a rather economy-oriented ODA support can still be assumed. Japan's general committed ODA between 1995 and 2019 based on the OECD's CRS (2021) database is also displayed in *Figure 37*, showing Japan as Indonesia's most important bilateral ODA donor in the considered time frame. Commitments, however, steadily decreased after peaks in 1998 and 2003 – a trend that corresponds well with Indonesia's economic recovery after the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis. After Indonesia's recovery from the Asian financial crisis, Japan also continued to be Indonesia's main trading partner regarding export and import volumes in 2001 (Khoiriati, 2021, p. 18) (see also *Figure 39*). Indonesian export is still dominated by resource export, while Japan is exporting mainly manufacturing and industrial goods (ibid.). To further deepen and formalise trade relations, Japan and Indonesia negotiated the Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement between 2005 and 2007 that includes a far-reaching removal of tariffs and was signed in August 2007 (Gilson, 2009, p. 215; Khoiriati, 2021, p. 19). Increases in trade volumes shortly after the conclusion of the agreement are also visible in *Figure 39*. The sudden decreases in 2009 can very likely be related to the 2008/2009 economic and financial crisis. A short time later, however, trade values reached their peaks (in 2011 and 2012), followed by a general downward trend until 2015.

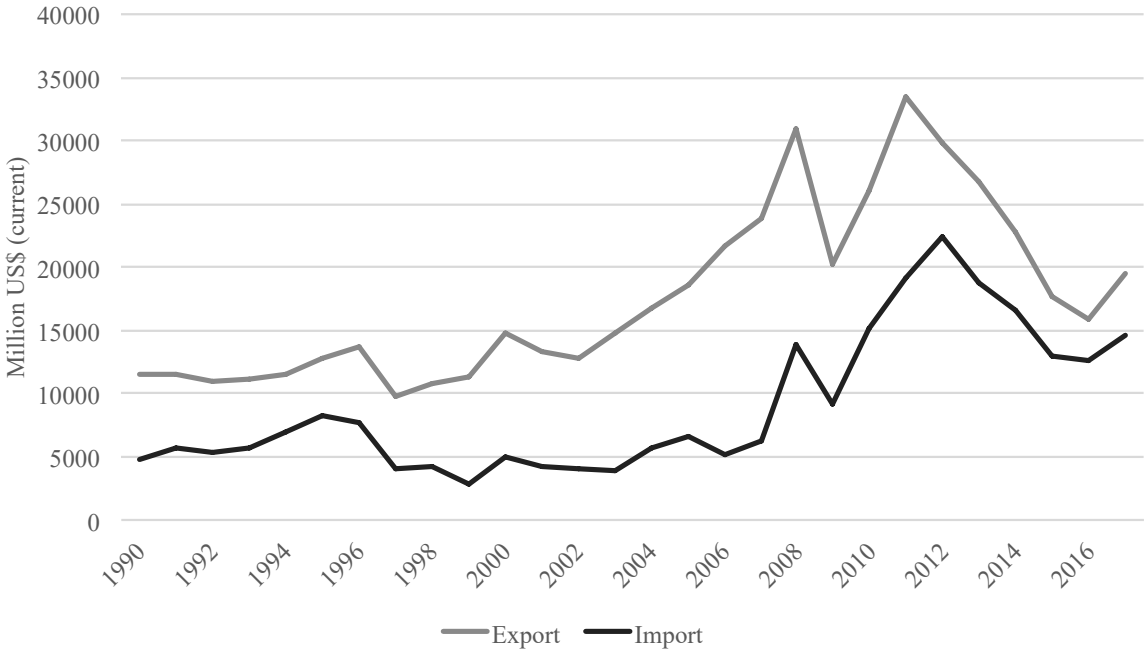
The described downward trends in ODA and trade also need to be assessed from a strategic angle. In 2007, under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan began to revise its ODA strategy, moving away from the Fukuda Doctrine and starting to include security and defence elements – mainly as a reaction to China's increasing role in the region. This shift was continued in 2015,

[102] Ichihara (2016, pp. 907-908) also draws upon the OECD CRS database.

[103] To compare, "[o]n average, between 1995 and 2012, 67.9% of Development Assistance Committee member countries' foreign aid for Indonesia's democratic governance was provided to the state institution sector, and 29.0% to the civil society sector" (Ichihara, 2016, p. 908).

with further emphasising the strategic role of Japanese ODA (Khoiriati, 2021, p. 18). While Japan's strategic shift initially tied in well with Indonesia's foreign policy interests under President Yudhoyono, the Jokowi administration is considerably less interested in closer strategic cooperation with Japan (ibid., pp. 18-19). Khoiriati (2021, p. 19) classified the "event when the Indonesian government chose China instead of Japan as the winner in a bid to build [a] high-speed railway from Jakarta to Bandung" as a turning point in the relation perceived by observers. Furthermore, under the Jokowi government, already planned Japanese ODA projects were cancelled – instead funded by Chinese investment – and "security and military cooperation that have been initiated by Japan during the SBY [Yudhoyono] government was subsequently discontinued (partially halted)" (ibid.). At the same time, economic cooperation between China and Indonesia is considerably increasing – indicating a gradual general shift in Indonesia's foreign policy away from Japan. However, the shift should not be seen as a complete departure, as cooperation between Indonesia and Japan is still being continued in several fields including security or infrastructure development.

Figure 39: Indonesia's trade with Japan in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

It can be assumed that the Indonesian-Japanese relations reached a continuing low point shortly before the onset of the first observation period. Although especially the economic cooperation remains important and varying ODA projects are continued, the increasingly prominent role of China comes to the fore. At the same time, no official Japanese short-term reactions to the democratic quality declines in Indonesia could be traced. In this context, it is exemplarily noteworthy that cooperation in the field of democratic development (or an exchange on) is hardly

ever mentioned at official bilateral meetings or in official strategy papers of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.[104] Instead, the importance of economic and strategic cooperation as well as people-to-people exchange is primarily emphasised. It can therefore not be assumed that there was any pressure from the Japanese government on the Jokowi administration with regard to the democratic quality declines.

Relations to Europe

The long colonial history very much shapes the basis of the relations between European states and Indonesia. After the initial appearance of the Portuguese as the first colonial power, which could only control the region to a very limited extent, a long period of Dutch influence and colonisation began (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 23-49). In this time, at first the Dutch East India Company and later the Dutch state were forcefully expanding their control over the archipelago, restructuring Indonesia's political and economic system to enable large-scale resource extraction. After the highly conflictive process of Indonesian independence and detachment from the Netherlands after the Second World War and the short period of Japanese occupation, a far-reaching shift away of Indonesia from its former colonial power as well as an emphasis on state sovereignty were decisive. Nevertheless, political and economic relations continued to exist (for instance, for a while with the Netherlands-Indonesia Union), which were at the same time strongly influenced by the global power struggles during the Cold War between the West and the Soviet Union – with a substantially more influential role of the U.S. in the Pacific region (see above).

The ongoing Cold War and Western fear of a communist expansion was also decisive in the East Timor independence movement and beginning period of Indonesian occupation of East Timor. In 1974, after the 1974 Portuguese revolution, Portugal started a sudden decolonisation process in East Timor that brought an end to European colonisation in the region (Drakeley, 2005, p. 134). With the Portuguese withdrawing, following Drakeley (2005, p. 134) a

> "left-leaning regime had been about to consolidate itself in East Timor, an outcome that was anathema to the new-order regime that had only just destroyed leftist political forces in Indonesia. Probably of more concern, though this was not emphasized publicly, was the possibility that an independent East Timor could encourage separatist sentiments in Indonesia."

With Indonesia's forceful invasion and annexation of East Timor in 1975/76, the international reputation of the New Order regime – also to European partners – was severely damaged for the rest of its existence (ibid.). Still, it took until the end of the Cold War and the onset of economic turbulences of the Asian financial crisis that the New Order regime could no longer hope for external support for its stabilisation.

Before the East Timor crisis, European and other mainly Western states – especially the U.S., Japan, Germany, and the Netherlands – as well as international organisations were providing

[104] See, for example, the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (s.a.) with minutes and summaries of official exchanges between Indonesia and Japan or the website of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (s.a.).

substantial development aid coordinated by the already mentioned IGGI that was established in 1967 and was active until 1992 (Anwar, 1994, pp. 160-161; USAID Indonesia, 1972, pp. 4 -6). It aimed to help Indonesia with its deficient economic system and massive debts after the Sukarno era. The Netherlands chaired the organisation, which led to disagreements in the post-Cold War period that were primarily linked to concerns about the human rights situation in East Timor and Dutch attempts to influence the New Order regime (Anwar, 1994, pp. 160-161). The disagreements eventually led to the dissolution and replacement of the IGGI group in 1992 by the World Bank chaired Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI) from which the Netherlands were explicitly excluded (ibid.).

After the fall of the Suharto regime, European donors were also engaged in promoting democracy, devolution, and good governance in Indonesia during the democratisation period (Case, 2009, pp. 96-97; Fritzen, 2009, pp. 78-80; Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 66-67). Actors such as the German Technical Co-operation (GTZ), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and the Stockholm based intergovernmental organisation International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) carried out activities in Indonesia (Hadiwinata & Agustin, 2011, pp. 66-67). The CGI coordinated the support until its dissolution in 2007 by President Yudhoyono, whose government, following Lindblad and Kian Wie (2007, p. 10), emphasised that "[i]t was time for Indonesians to become more self-reliant, by designing and deciding their own economic programs freely and independently, without outside involvement." This illustrates the attempted gradual detachment from Western donors' influence. In the following years, the importance of development aid further declined due to the strong Indonesian economic development. However, from 2019 to 2020, European countries such as Germany (second biggest donor for the 2019-2020 average with 563.5 million US$) and France (fourth biggest donor for the 2019-2020 average with 171.7 million US$) continued to be mentionable bilateral donors (OECD's CRS (2021); also compare with *Figure 37*), who actively promote democratic development. In this context, for instance, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is cooperating since 2007 with the influential KPK in the context of fighting corruption, currently in the 2019-2021 BMZ-financed project "Assistance in Preventing and Combating Corruption in Indonesia (APCC)" (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), s.a.). It can therefore be assumed that targeted development cooperation developed over long partnerships continues to play a role.

Although bilateral relations between European states and Indonesia continue to exist, the EU as an actor now plays an increasingly important role in the relations of European states with Indonesia, for example, on trade- or human rights-related issues. Especially the 'Partnership and Cooperation Agreement' that the EU and Indonesia decided on in November 2009 and that entered into force May 2014 is decisive for the relationship. One of the thematic priority areas of the agreement is 'human rights and democracy' (Council of the European Union, 2009), reflecting the Union's interest to cooperate in the areas of good governance, human rights, civil society, and democracy. In this context, the EU and Indonesia have established an annual 'Human Rights Dialogue' that was established in 2010 and is encompassed under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2019, November 8; European External Action Service (EEAS), 2020). Furthermore, the EU is active in Indonesia under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2012,

p. 34) and supports, among other initiatives, measures in the area of good governance reforms (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2016). As an exemplary programme, the EU supported the KPK, the Indonesian National Police (INP) as well as the Jakarta Centre for Law and Enforcement Cooperation (JCLEC) with 12 million € to help strengthening the Indonesian judicial sector (ibid.). In 2020, the partnership between Indonesia and the EU was further upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' (Josep Borrell, 05.06.2021), which illustrates the deepening of relations.

European Union member states are highly important trade partners for Indonesia – in the past and present –, although there is a considerable imbalance in the relationship. Thus, according to trade data provided by the Directorate-General for Trade of the European Commission (2022), the EU was Indonesia's 4th largest trade partner in 2021, while Indonesia was the 31st global trade partner for the EU. The total trade in goods volume amounted to 24.707 billion € in 2021, with the value of exported goods from Indonesia being more than twice as high as that of the EU (16.8 vs. 8.0 billion €). Exported goods from Indonesia mainly fall under the category of manufactures (10.3 billion €) that includes chemicals as well as machinery and transport equipment, while primary products – especially food products and live animals – amount to 6.4 billion €. The EU exports largely manufactures (6.2 billion €), mainly machinery and transport equipment (2.9 billion €) (ibid.). In addition, European Union member states are important investors in Indonesia with FDI stocks amounting to 25.8 billion € in 2019 (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2021). Since 2009, Indonesia is also having bilateral talks with the EU about a possible trade agreement. Initially it was unclear, whether instead a trade agreement between the EU and ASEAN could have been achieved – but after difficulties in the ASEAN trade agreement negotiations, the EU is currently actively pushing the negotiations with Indonesia for a bilateral agreement. According to the EU, the "ultimate objective is for bilateral trade agreements with individual ASEAN countries to serve as building blocks towards a future region-to-region agreement between the EU and ASEAN" (European Commission. Directorate-General for Trade, s.a.). However, a difficult negotiating issue that impedes progress is the ongoing conflict over palm oil and its import into EU countries for the production of biofuels (Deringer, Lee-Makiyama, & Murty, 2019, p. 3).[105]

In regard to short-term reactions during the observation periods, the European Parliament was one of the few actors who issued a resolution on 24 October 2019 criticising the Jokowi government for the initiated democratic quality declines and urging his government to take back the controversial law on the Indonesian corruption agency KPK (European Parliament, 2019). Although the resolution was also communicated to other institutional bodies of the EU (as well as various international organisations), it had no immediate implications for EU-Indonesian trade relations or the upgrade of the partnership to a Strategic Partnership in 2020.[106] Furthermore, the EU raised several critical issues in the annual Human Rights Dialogue. In the joint press statement of the 8th Annual Human Rights Dialogue that took place on 8 November 2019, two sections about the draft of the new Indonesian Penal Code and the protection of civil rights stand out:

[105] See also the statement/blog post on the 05.06.2021 by Josep Borrell (2021, June 5), High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission, on his visit in Jakarta in June 2021, where differences over palm oil exports were discussed.
[106] Official reactions by the Jokowi government to the resolution could not be identified.

> "The EU raised certain concerns in relation to some provisions of the draft and invited the Indonesian government to ensure their conformity with the country's international human rights obligations. […] The EU and Indonesia underlined that the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly is at the core of any democratic system. The EU furthermore underlined its opposition to any unjustified restriction, including the excessive use of force by public authorities, which could hamper the functioning of independent civil society and the capacity of individuals and groups to enjoy their right to participate in public life."

Although the criticism was rather toned down – and can in the second part only be interpreted as indirect criticism by bringing up the subject in the press statement –, the criticism still shows a general level of awareness of the EU. In 2021, at the 9th Annual Human Rights Dialogue on 27 May 2021 in Jakarta (but took place digitally due to Covid-19), the EU more directly framed the following issues as 'topics of concern': "the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, of religion and belief; human rights defenders; gender and LGBTI; trafficking in human beings; the death penalty, extra-judicial killings and the revision of the Criminal Code" (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2021, May 27).[107] Similar concerns about the human rights situation and democratic quality declines were also raised in the annual reports 'Human Rights and Democracy in the World (country reports)' of the EU (see, for example, the 2021 report released in 2022, EEAS (2022, pp. 202-203)). As other reactions by the EU or individual member states are not known, the reactions in the course of the second observation period can be categorised as clear signs of increasing awareness in the EU of critical political developments in Indonesia. However, since the deepening of trade relations and the upgrading of the partnership to a Strategic Partnership were not questioned, the overall reaction can at the same time be classified as restrained.

Moreover, building on the points that I have already highlighted in the section on Indonesia's relations to the U.S., it can be added that the geopolitical context has substantially shifted in the course of the second observation period, especially concerning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As Indonesia had a prominent role as G20 chair in 2022 and offered to act as a mediator in the war, close and good relations of the EU to Indonesia as democratic partners became even more important than before the war. In this context, for instance, Jokowi was also prominently invited to the 2022 G7 summit in Germany.[108]

To sum up, Indonesia's relations to Europe have traditionally been shaped by the colonial history and ongoing geopolitical developments. The importance of the European colonial powers steadily declined after the end of the Second World War, while other actors such as the U.S. have played a much stronger role in the region, especially against the backdrop of global power struggles during the Cold War. Nevertheless, economic relations and cooperation in the field of development cooperation with European states were continued. With Indonesia's successful

[107] It is important to note that the Indonesian side also used the Human Rights Dialogue to raise issues of concern about the human rights situation in European member states – mainly highlighting "the increasing trend of acts of racism, xenophobia, hate speech, discrimination based on religion or belief, and Islamophobia" (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2021, May 27), showing that the Human Rights Dialogue is not a format of one sided criticism.

[108] An invitation that came along with an unusual visit of the German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier to Jakarta in 2022 prior to the G7 summit.

second transition to democracy, cooperation in the field of democracy promotion was also established. Until the beginning of the observation periods, Indonesia's relations to the EU and its member states have developed steadily and were formalised in a joint Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that also included human rights and democracy as a thematic priority area. Furthermore, the importance of the EU as a major trading partner can be noted, although there is a great imbalance in the relationship.

As for short-term reactions to the decline in democratic quality in Indonesia, European reactions were relatively muted in the first observation period. However, the level of awareness and criticism increased steadily until the beginning of the second observation period. The current culmination of reactions represents the resolution by the European Parliament openly criticising the Jokowi government for the initiated democratic quality declines and urging his government to take back the controversial law on the Indonesian corruption agency KPK in October 2019. In addition, the raising of issues related to the protection of civil rights and the explicit addressing of concerns in the Annual Human Rights Dialogue as well as in the EU's reports on Human Rights and Democracy in the World can be seen as clear signs of increasing EU awareness of critical developments in Indonesia – and partly as open criticism. Nevertheless, the overall reaction needs to be classified as restrained, as the deepening of trade relations and the upgrading of the EU-Indonesia partnership to a Strategic Partnership continued and were not related to concerns about trends in Indonesia's democratic development.

Relations to neighbouring countries and ASEAN

Indonesia, the most populous country in Southeast Asia, has been an influential actor in the region since its independence. However, even despite the end of the colonial era, relations to other countries in the region such as Vietnam, Malaysia, or Singapore were very much affected by regional and great powers. The foundation of Malaysia, for instance, was seen by the Sukarno regime as the creation of a 'Western' imperialist vehicle in the region (Ryu, 2014, p. 99). The Sukarno regime, which was initially aiming to create the so-called Maphilindo (the Greater Malayan Confederation of Malaya, the Philippines, and Indonesia), therefore chose a confrontational course (*confrontasi*) against Malaysia (ibid.). At the same time, the relations of the regime to Singapore were dominated by mistrust and the relations to Vietnam were very much coined by the Cold War era and the outbreak of the Vietnam War (ibid., pp. 101 & 103).

Suspicion against Western influence in the region "was also the main reason that Sukarno rejected the Association of Southeast Asia (ASA), which he saw once again as serving the interests of Western imperialists" (ibid., p. 99). Under the new Suharto regime, the relations to neighbouring countries soon improved as "[w]ith the shift of political focus to domestic socioeconomic development under Suharto, Indonesia sought a stable and peaceful external environment" (ibid.; see also p. 103). In the following period, besides the shift to domestic socioeconomic development that was accompanied by a stronger economic and security cooperation in the region, the Suharto regime ended Indonesia's *confrontasi* policy and became a co-founder of ASEAN (ibid.). This closer cooperation with regional partners can also be seen early on as an expression of a new threat perception and strategy to counter increasing Chinese influence

and a spread of Communism – especially after China's intervention in Vietnam (Ryu, 2014). Accordingly, Indonesia's foreign policy realignment was strongly influenced by concerns that the region would be split in a communist and non-communist zone of influence (ibid., p. 101). Since the foundation of ASEAN, Indonesia is the main political and economic power in the institution and the promotion of ASEAN is a crucial element for Indonesia's foreign policy (Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014). The organisation thus also plays a key role in Indonesia's regional and geopolitical positioning. In addition, Indonesia has since taken on the role of mediator in numerous regional conflicts (ibid., p. 107).

After Indonesia's second successful transition to democracy, joint security cooperation with partners such as Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand continued, especially to improve regional maritime security in the Malacca Straits (Ryu, 2014, p. 100). Moreover, as a sign of Indonesia's aim to promote peaceful conflict resolution in the region, a dispute between Malaysia and Indonesia over two islands in the Celebes Sea was sent to the International Court of Justice. Although the court ruled in favour of Malaysia, the court ruling was accepted by Indonesia (ibid., p. 100), thereby sending a signal of acceptance of international conventions and jurisdiction. More recently, Indonesia is further promoting the institutionalisation of security cooperation among ASEAN member states by supporting the ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint (Gindarsah, 2014, p. 28). Furthermore, Indonesia's trade with ASEAN partners is of high importance to the country's economy. The combined volume of trade with the other ASEAN member countries substantially exceeds the volume of trade with other major bilateral trading partners such as the U.S. or Japan in the period from 1990-2017 (see also *Figure 40*) – with Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand as Indonesia's main bilateral trade partners in ASEAN. In addition, Singapore is also an important source for FDI (Ryu, 2014, p. 103). However, different challenges in the region remain, such as unresolved territorial disputes over contested oil and gas resources in the Ambalat block, dissent over maltreatment of migrant Indonesian workers in Malaysia as well as cross-border environmental challenges related to smoke haze due to wood burnings in Indonesia (ibid., pp. 100-101).

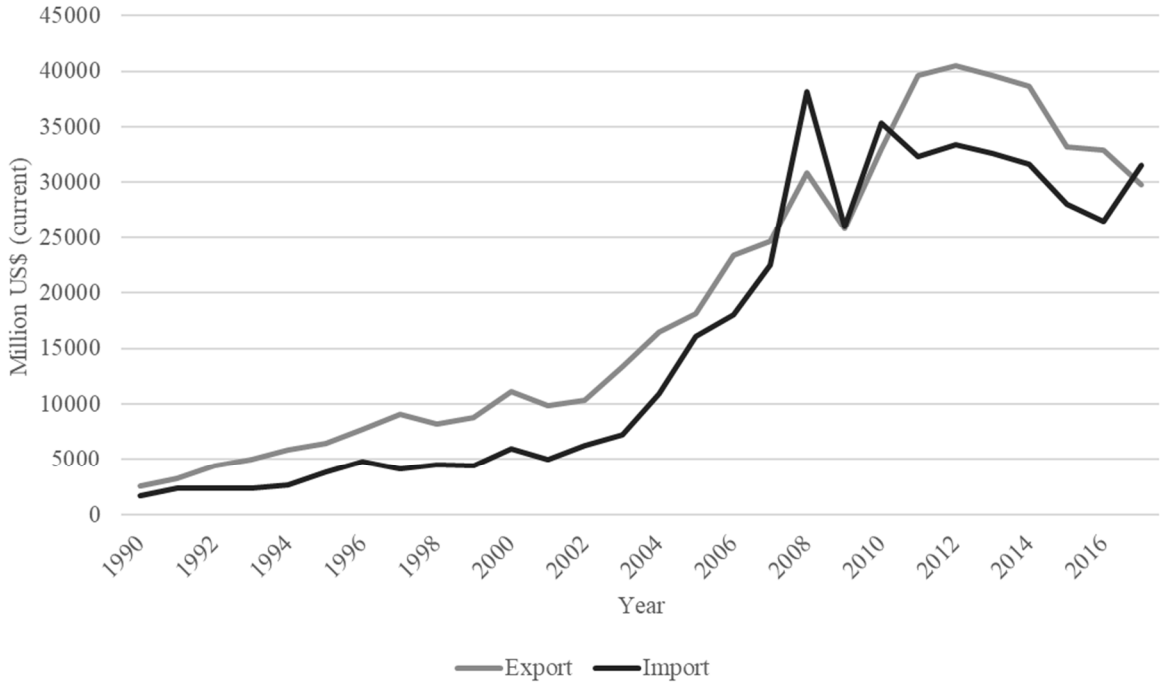
In addition to ASEAN's central economic and security-strategic role for Indonesia, after the country's successful transition to democracy, Indonesia proactively started to promote democratic values and norms in the organisation. For instance, Indonesia pushed for the inclusion of democratic ideals, rule of law, and human rights in the ASEAN Charter, which was adopted at the 13th ASEAN Summit in November 2007 (cf. Karim, 2017, p. 393; Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014, pp. 109-110) – despite the persistence of contra-democratic forces in ASEAN. In the same context, the Indonesian government initiated the foundation of the BDF in 2008 with the proclaimed aim of fostering the spread of democracy and human rights (cf. Karim, 2017, pp. 394-397). Furthermore, Indonesia's cautious supportive measures in Myanmar's recent (but unsuccessful) transition to democracy – mainly by advisory support and establishing the IDP as a platform for dialogue between former conflict parties – can be categorised as another example of Indonesia's pro-democratic engagement in the region (cf. Ichihara et al., 2016, pp. 2-3; Karim, 2017, pp. 397-400).[109]

[109] Although several pro-democratic actors wished for an even stronger commitment by the Indonesian government (cf. Ichihara et al., 2016, pp. 2-3; Karim, 2017, pp. 397-400).

Concerning international reactions to democratic quality declines introduced by the Jokowi government during the two observation periods, no reactions by other ASEAN member states could be observed. This is rather unsurprising, as democracy levels in Indonesia are still considerably higher than in the other ASEAN member states. In addition, there are simultaneous democratic regressions in other ASEAN member states taking place that are even more severe and visible. Following Power and Warburton (2020, p. 6), "Indonesia's democratic decline has (so far) been less dramatic and wide-reaching than those of the Philippines and Thailand, for instance, where incumbents have more openly attacked core democratic institutions, including elections, courts and media freedom." Accordingly, there was only limited critical attention in the neighbourhood to democratic developments in Indonesia. At the same time, however, it must be assumed that Indonesia's democratic regression is likely to affect Indonesia's credibility with regard to its pro-democratic international agenda, regional mediator role, and efforts to anchor democratic values in ASEAN.

Summing up, Indonesia is the main force promoting a spread of democratic values in ASEAN. The organisation and ASEAN partner countries are, however, not likely to criticise Indonesia's government for recent democratic quality declines. Nevertheless, by initiating democratic quality declines in Indonesia, the Jokowi government is also limiting the credibility of its own pro-democratic agenda concerning ASEAN as well as its mediator role in the region.

Figure 40: Indonesia's trade with ASEAN member countries in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Note: Vietnam is included from 1995, Laos and Myanmar from 1997, and Cambodia from 1999. For some country-years, no data was available for all ASEAN member countries in the OEC dataset. Especially in 2017, only bilateral trade data for Brunei, Myanmar, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore was available. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Relations to Australia

Although the distance between the two states is only 200 kilometres, they often seem worlds apart. These very unequal partners thus had very changeable relations with each other in the past (cf. Mackie, 2007). At the same time, Indonesia's relations to Australia are also rapidly changing in recent years. Whereas in the past Australia was usually the politically more stable, democratic and economically stronger neighbour, due to Indonesia's rapid economic development, "Indonesia is almost destined to become the more powerful partner in the Indonesia-Australia relationship" (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 87). These shifts are therefore characteristic of the development of the relation.

Historically, Australia was involved in many of the political events and developments already discussed in the context of Indonesia's foreign relations in the course of this chapter. Although Australia initially supported the UK and the other allied forces present in the region after the Second World War to reclaim the former Dutch East Indies colony for the Netherlands, Australia did not support Dutch attempts to reconquer the Archipelago by force in subsequent years. Instead, Australia pushed for a peaceful settlement between the Indonesian independence movement and the former Dutch colonial power with the involvement of the UN. In 1949, Australia was one of the first states to recognise Indonesia's independence, which provided a good starting point for the establishment of diplomatic relations with a high potential to build on in the future. In the following post-Second World War years, however, Indonesia-Australia relations were very much shaped by global and regional power struggles. During the *confrontasi* period, Australia supported Malaysian interests, and "[soon] Australian and Indonesian troops were […] clashing in northern Borneo" (Beeson, Bloomfield, & Wicaksana, 2021, p. 185). Accordingly, the relations between the two states reached an initial low point. Although the relations improved substantially after Sukarno's fall in 1965 and Australia emerged as one of Indonesia's main ODA donors during the New Order regime (USAID Indonesia, 1972, pp. 4-6), the 1975/76 East Timor crisis had again led to a strong deterioration of the relation and "many in the wider [Australian] public viewed Indonesia as Australia's primary strategic threat" (ibid.).[110] Nevertheless, the single-most critical moment for the relations marks the end of the New Order regime and the renewed flare-up of violence in East Timor prior to and following the East Timor referendum of 30 August 1999 (Beeson et al., 2021, pp. 185-186; Nabbs-Keller, 2020, p. 535). The Australian public followed the severe outbreaks of violence closely in the media and made their government intervene. In September 1999, Australian forces led the UN-peacekeeping mission (International Force for East Timor, INTERFET) in a highly volatile environment. Not only were diplomatic relations at a low point, as Nabbs-Keller (2020, p. 535) states, "[t]he events of September and October 1999, however, brought Indonesia and Australia dangerously close to armed conflict. It was a new nadir in a historically turbulent relationship." As a result, instead of working towards deepening cooperation in Indonesia's democratic transition phase, Indonesia-Australia relations were very much dominated by security concerns and the aftermaths of the violence in East Timor.

[110] A decisive moment was "the murder by Indonesian security forces of the so-called 'Balibo Five', Australian journalists reporting on Indonesia's 1975 East Timor invasion" (Beeson et al., 2021, p. 185).

Despite these difficult conditions of the relations at the beginning of Indonesia's second transition to democracy, at least diplomatic relations between the two countries improved (unexpectedly) quickly (Nabbs-Keller, 2020, pp. 535-356). Moreover, with some major events in the *reformasi* era, especially the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and severe terrorist attacks – 9/11 as well as the Bali bombings in 2002 that is often referred to as Australia's 9/11 – substantial shifts in the security agendas of the two states took place. These shifts, for instance, also led to overlapping interests in the fields of intelligence and counter-terrorism. As security concerns – especially related to Indonesian military actions – were often dominant in the course of the turbulent relations, the willingness to cooperate in the security field was not clear from the outset. In this context, especially the Lombok Treaty (Agreement Between Australia and the Republic of Indonesia on the Framework for Security Cooperation), which was signed in 2006, underlined a clear shift in the Indonesia-Australia relation. The security partnership was further upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in March 2010 (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 87). With cooperation sectors such as joint military training and coordinated maritime patrol, the Strategic Partnership agreement also went beyond cooperation in the fields of intelligence and counter-terrorism (ibid.). Adding on to this, with established formats such as the '2+2 meetings', an annual exchange between the foreign and defence ministers of both states, security cooperation was further institutionalised (ibid., p. 90). Furthermore, Indonesia was a main supporter of the admission of Australia to the East Asia Summit (ibid., p. 88) – thereby supporting Australia's access to a highly influential regional forum. These developments thus show the substantial improvement of the diplomatic Indonesia-Australia relations during Yudhoyono's terms in office.

However, the improving diplomatic relations including the security cooperation reached a recent low-point or even 'break' after leaks became public by Edward Snowden about tapped phones of Indonesian officials and individuals associated with President Yudhoyono by the U.S. and Australia in 2013 as well as leaked documents showing that Australia aimed to share information with the U.S. about disagreements between Indonesia and Australia in trade negotiations (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 90). Furthermore, the violation of Indonesian territorial waters by Australian ships added to these tensions (ibid.). The bilateral state relations only improved with the elections of President Jokowi and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and the development of a positive working relationship between the two (Troath, 2019, p. 136). As a visible result of the improvement, in the following years, the Strategic Partnership was further upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2018 (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018).

Apart from the general diplomatic relations, which were strongly dominated by security issues, the bilateral trade between Australia and Indonesia was rather restrained in the past (see also *Figure 41*) – especially in comparison to Indonesian trade with the U.S., Japan, or ASEAN partners. In 2018/19, for instance, Indonesia was Australia's 14th largest trade partner with a bilateral trade volume of 11.7 billion US$ (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023b). In contrast, Indonesian trade with the U.S. already reached a volume of 27.6 billion US$ in 2020 (Office of the United States Trade Representative, 2022). The Indonesia-Australia trade relations are very much coined by Australian exports of raw products to Indonesia, mainly coal, petroleum, and agricultural products (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023b). Indonesian export of primary products and

manufactures, which are key in Indonesia's trade relations to partners such as the U.S., Japan, or the EU, play only a comparatively minor role. Adding on to this, FDI spending can also be categorised as rather restrained and one-sided as "[t]wo-way investment between Australia and Indonesia was valued at $6.7 billion in 2018, with Australian investment in Indonesia at $5.6 billion and Indonesian investment in Australia at $1.1 billion" (ibid.). Accordingly, the Indonesia-Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (IA-CEPA) that was finalised in 2020, was developed in a context full of development potential. By reducing trade barriers and supporting economic relations in general it aims to boost the restrained Indonesia-Australia trade relations (ibid.).

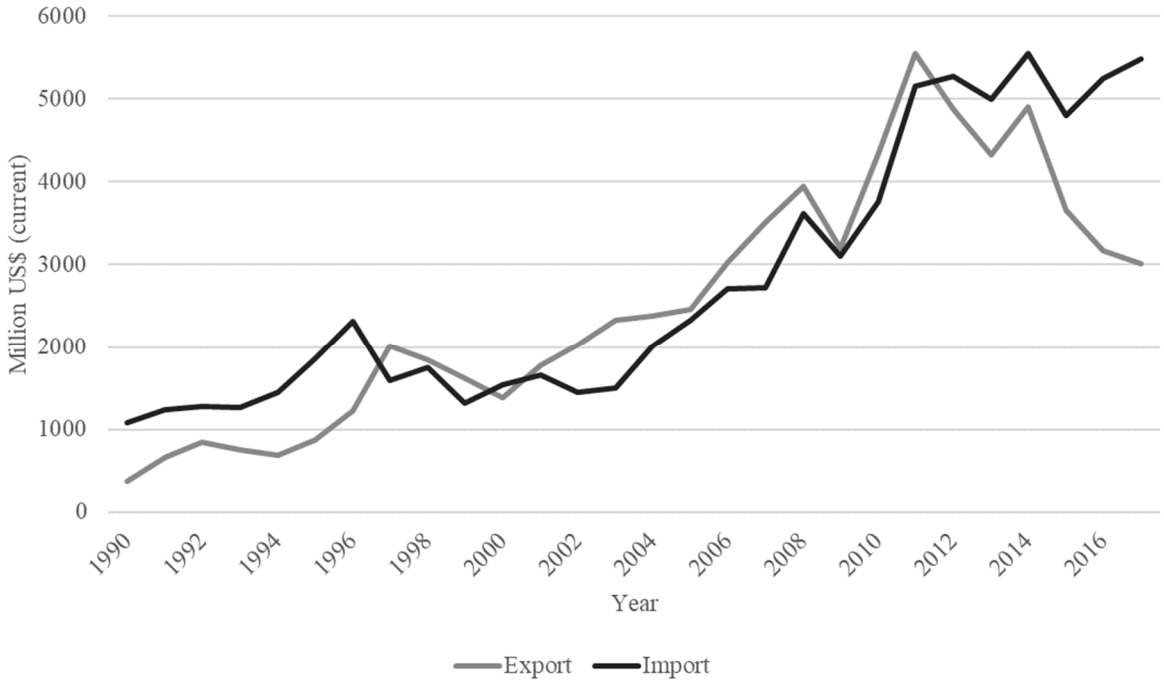
In contrast to the limited development of trade relations stand Australia's high bilateral ODA commitments (see *Figure 37*). Already in the historical context of the coordinating IGGI, Australia was an active donor country (USAID Indonesia, 1972, pp. 4-6). Similar to the field of security cooperation, also in the field of development cooperation the partnership between Australia and Indonesia deepened after Indonesia's successful transition to democracy during the Yudhoyono presidency (see *Figure 37*) – and also extended to thematic fields such as governance and democracy support to Indonesia. Thus, "[a]ccording to the OECD, between 1995 and 2012 Australia and the US were the largest donors to the governance and civil society of Indonesia, which aid can be assumed to have been provided for the country's democratic governance" (Ichihara, 2016, p. 907). ODA-projects covered a variety of topics, for instance, health, education, decentralisation, poverty reduction, regional and infrastructure development (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023c). Moreover, after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, reconstruction and disaster risk management projects became a central element of Australian development cooperation efforts to Indonesia under the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Reconstruction and Development (ibid.). Until today, Indonesia is still one of the main recipients of Australian ODA, with programmes set up around three thematic pillars: 'health security', 'stability', and 'economic recovery' (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2023a). Nevertheless, the importance of Australia's development cooperation programme for Indonesia has decreased, especially in view of Indonesia's rapid economic development in the last two decades. At the same time, the absence of democracy as a core thematic pillar of the Indonesia-Australia cooperation is noticeable.

Although "the consolidation of democracy in Indonesia has led to a convergence of certain social and political values" (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 88) and Indonesia is described as "a like-minded partner in many regional and global affairs including environmental activism (e.g. climate change), the promotion of interfaith dialogue, transnational crime and irregular migration (e.g. the Bali Process), the promotion of democracy and human rights (e.g. the Bali Democracy Forum), and its active and constructive diplomacy over highly volatile issues such as Iran" (ibid.), cooperation between Australia and Indonesia in the field of democracy is clearly underdeveloped. This aspect coincides with the low quality of inter-societal relations, which represents a clear barrier for societal exchange and civil society cooperation (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 91; Troath, 2019, p. 137). Ongoing distrust and a lack of knowledge on the Australian side become visible, for instance, by results of "the 2018 Lowy Poll [that] indicated that only 24% of Australians agree that Indonesia is a democracy (with 50% outright disagreeing and 26% unsure)" (Troath, 2019, p. 137). Furthermore, different surveys over the last years show that Australians were often not able to answer simple questions about their neighbour's political,

religious, or territorial reality, while studies were also pointing to structural deficiencies in the education and cultural studies sector (Roberts & Habir, 2014, p. 91; Troath, 2019, p. 137). More in general, misperceptions as well as a lack of trust and exchange are seen as challenging for the development of bilateral relations (Roberts & Habir, 2014, pp. 91-92; Troath, 2019, pp. 137-138).

Following on from this assessment, Australian reactions to democratic quality declines introduced by the Jokowi government in the course of the two observation periods were generally muted/not detectable. On the one hand, this applies to civil society actors, while on the other hand, "successive Australian governments have demonstrated a 'pragmatic' willingness to work with regional governments of all varieties when they judge it to be in the 'national interest' to do so" (Beeson et al., 2021, p. 187).[111] Instead of reactions by Australian officials to democratic quality declines in Indonesia, especially the strengthening of the bilateral relation in the fields of security and trade through agreements such as the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement in 2018 or the IA-CEPA in 2020 are apparent. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the development of the Indonesia-Australia relations, which are limited in many sectors anyway, remained relatively unaffected by democratic quality declines in Indonesia.

Figure 41: Indonesia's trade with Australia in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

[111] An assessment that also relates to more general democratic quality declines in other states in the broader region, e.g. in the Philippines, in India, or notably in Australia as well (Wijayanto, 2020, pp. 59-60).

Relations to China

Without doubt, Indonesia's relations to China have changed drastically over the course of time and were considerably influenced by geopolitical developments and security issues. While historical relations significantly pre-date the colonial period and were strongly shaped by connections through historical trade routes, the colonial period has exerted a lasting influence on Indonesia-China relations. During the colonial period, Chinese migration to (nowadays) Indonesia was actively promoted by Western actors (King, 2008, p. 12). Chinese migrants became active in fields such as tax collection, money-lending, trade, or entrepreneurship and for this often worked closely together with the Dutch (Drakeley, 2005, pp. 40-41; King, 2008, pp. 110-111). Over time, a quite influential and still existing Chinese businessmen group established itself, which, at the same time, was viewed very critically by indigenous communities and considered as collaborators of the Dutch.

After the end of the Second World War, Indonesia-China relations were very much shaped by the looming Cold War. As already mentioned in the ASEAN-sub-chapter, especially Suharto's New Order regime followed a drastic anti-communist course and perceived China's growing influence in the region as a clear threat (Ba, 2009, p. 194; Drakeley, 2005, p. 114; Ryu, 2014, p. 99). Indonesia's foreign policy realignment that ended *confrontasi* and included a cut of official Indonesian diplomatic relations to China as well as the foundation of ASEAN can therefore be categorised as a strategy to counter Chinese influence and the spread of Communism in the region. At the same time, ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia were strongly affected by 'anti-communist purges' initiated by the New Order regime (Ba, 2009, p. 194).

It took until 1990 for the Indonesia-China relations to normalise, which also allowed for a stepwise economic rapprochement in the 1990s between ASEAN states and China (Stromseth, 2019, p. 2) – a shift for the previously more Western orientated ASEAN economies (Ba, 2009, p. 195). With China's continuing rapid economic growth in the 1990s, China also evolved into a substantial economic competitor (ibid.). The 1997-98 Asian financial crisis and China entering the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 amplified this even further. During the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, the perception of international economic competition also came along with ongoing domestic conflict in Indonesia that erupted again in violent protest against Chinese business (King, 2008, p. 114; Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). However, China's role in the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis can actually be considered stabilising since China supported Indonesia and Thailand with economic assistance and decided not to devalue its own currency, what might have put further pressure on the struggling economies in the region (Ba, 2009, p. 197). Furthermore, China's and ASEAN's economic rapprochement eventually led to the successful conclusion of the ASEAN-China Free Trade Area (ACFTA) agreement in 2002 – an economic rapprochement that was also understood as a political process of Chinese rapprochement as an emerging regional power (ibid.).

The development of Indonesia-China trade relations between 1990 and 2017 are also displayed in *Figure 42*. While trade was slow to start in the 1990s, a steady growth of bilateral trade volume can be observed since the turn of the millennium and especially after the global 2007-2008 financial crisis. However, particularly since 2010, substantial trade imbalances are nota-

ble, with a strong import increase of Chinese goods. Only towards the end of the period, Indonesian exports increase again considerably. With the substantial increase of the general trade volume, in 2017, China was already Indonesia's main trade partner with an overall trade volume of approx. 63 billion US$ (current), replacing more traditional partners such as Singapore (36 billion US$), Japan (34 billion US$), and the U.S. (30 billion US$) (OEC, 2021). According to latest OEC (2023) data, China was still Indonesia's main trade partner in 2021 as well as the fastest growing import and export market from 2020 to 2021. That there is an actual shift in Indonesian economic cooperation towards more cooperation with China instead of traditional partners taking place, can also be visualised by taking the example of the building of a high-speed railway from Jakarta to Bandung into account again, where the Jokowi government chose a Chinese offer over an offer from Japan (Khoiriati, 2021, p. 19).[112] On that note, as already mentioned, further planned Japanese ODA projects were replaced by Chinese funded projects, what even led to discontinuations of Indonesian-Japanese security and military cooperation (ibid.).

This shift also fits to matching Chinese and Indonesian economic agendas under Xi Jinping and Jokowi. Given Indonesia's geopolitical location with important sea routes crossing Indonesian territorial waters, the Jokowi administration is increasingly interested in promoting Indonesia as a 'Global Maritime Axis' (Sambhi, 2015; Senkyr, 2017; Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). This vision that was first presented in 2014 proposes large-scale maritime infrastructure projects to develop Indonesia's harbour infrastructure, shipping and fishing industries. However, this development necessitates substantial foreign investments. In general, Jokowi's Global Maritime Axis-strategy thereby connects very well to China's BRI that was initiated in 2013. Following Stromseth's (2019, p. 7) assessment in 2019, so five years after the presentation of Indonesia's Global Maritime Axis-strategy, Indonesia

> "is now the largest recipient of Chinese infrastructure capital in Southeast Asia. In fact, Indonesia aims to channel multibillion-dollar BRI investments into four 'economic corridors' – North Sumatra, North Kalimantan, North Sulawesi, and Bali – to synchronize with the Jokowi's ambitious plan to develop outer areas and enhance the country's maritime connectivity. The Indonesian government is actively courting Chinese investment toward this end, signing 23 cooperation agreements China during the Second Belt and Road Form in Beijing in April [2019]."

Through this economic realignment, the Jokowi government is reducing existing dependencies from its traditional partners such as the U.S. and Japan, while simultaneously becoming more dependent on Chinese investments and trade with the autocratic regime.

Besides the deepening of (economic) relations, some conflictive topics remain, especially in the fields of maritime sovereignty, the Chinese Uyghur policy, and Indonesia's ethnic Chinese population, which also indicate challenges for further rapprochement. Although Indonesia frequently emphasised that there are no open territorial disputes between Beijing and Jakarta and that instead Indonesia is active as a mediator in the region (Stromseth, 2019, p. 7; Widyaningsih & Roberts, 2014, p. 108), the so-called nine-dash line presented by China overlaps with Indonesia's exclusive economic zone. Different incidents where Chinese ships entered these waters

[112] However, there are also some recent tensions about rising costs of the project and a delay in the finishing date (Lansford, 2021a, p. 10).

therefore led to Indonesian reactions. In 2019, for instance, "Chinese coast guard vessels entered waters near islands claimed by Indonesia, prompting Jakarta to lodge a formal protest with Beijing and dispatch four naval ships and 600 troops to the region in January 2020" (Lansford, 2021a, p. 10). This reaction by the Jokowi government can be categorised as rather strong, since in comparison in 2019, Stromseth's (2019, p. 7) assessment of Jakarta's approach towards violations of its territorial waters pointed out a more hesitant course, with the Jokowi government being "cautious in its official statements as the economies of the two countries become increasingly intertwined" (ibid.).

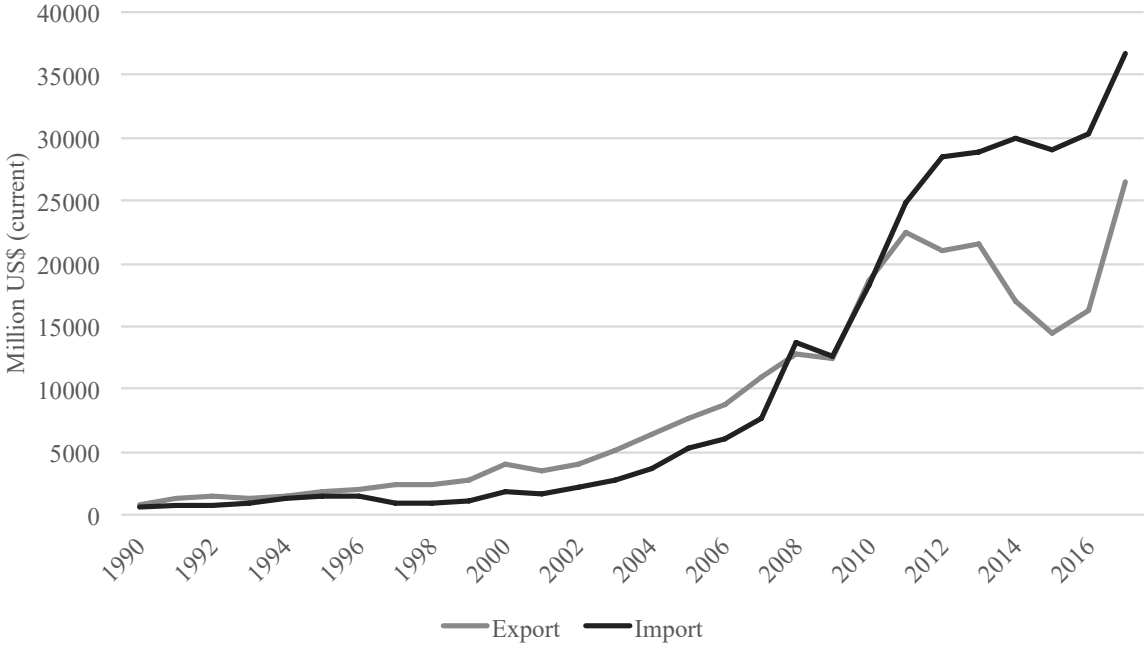
The current Chinese Uyghur policy that leads to severe human rights violations against the Uyghur people in the Xinjiang region including a system of arbitrary detention (United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2022) is another difficult topic for the relation – in particular because it coincides with ongoing religious tensions in Indonesia. Although Indonesia's administration is again not officially criticising China for applying measures of suppression, civilian protests organised by conservative Muslim groups were taking place in the Jakarta region in front of the Chinese embassy (Niniek, 2019, December 28). While protesters urged their government to take an active stand, the Indonesian government was again reportedly hesitant to openly criticise the Chinese government (ibid.).

A third (potentially) conflictive issue that connects to the discussed historic Chinese migration to Indonesia and the establishment of an influential Chinese businessmen group are prevalent anti-Chinese and anti-Communism sentiments in the Indonesian society (Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). With more than eight million ethnic Chinese living in Indonesia, which at the same time continue to be economically influential, there is a high potential for future conflict. Especially with the Chinese government's proclaimed aim to reconnect with its overseas population (ibid.), prevalent anti-Chinese and anti-Communism sentiments in the Indonesian society might lead to future tensions. The fact that an ethnic Chinese background also plays a role in the context of current political conflict is already evident, for example, in the case of religiously motivated mass protests against Governor Ahok in Jakarta in 2016, a Christian member of the ethnic-Chinese minority (cf. Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019, pp. 106-111). Against this background, Jokowi was also targeted by "a concerted social media campaign in the run-up to the April 2019 presidential elections, accusing him of being a handmaiden of both China and local Chinese interests" (Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). These examples illustrate the potential for domestic conflict – that, however, can easily also gain an international dimension within the already tense context of rising powers in the region.

In the context of Indonesia's and China's rapidly deepening economic relations with simultaneous existing/prevailing tensions in various political fields, direct Chinese reactions to Indonesia's democratic development and potential reactions to democratic quality declines introduced by the Jokowi government in the course of the two observation periods can be considered as very unlikely and were not detected in the course of the analysis. Due to prevailing anti-Chinese and anti-communist sentiments in the Indonesian public, it is further highly unlikely that an active political interference of China in sensitive Indonesian political developments in the field of democratisation and autocratisation would not be taken up by domestic political groups. It is, instead, much more reasonable to assume that there are indirect influences. Thus, through Indonesia's economic realignment, the Jokowi government is substantially reducing economic dependencies from its traditional democratic partners such as the U.S. and Japan,

while simultaneously becoming more dependent on autocratic China. This new dependence also shows in the previously discussed examples of conflictive issues between Beijing and Jakarta, where Jakarta was reluctant to openly criticise the Chinese government, very likely in order to not threaten the deepening trade relations and Chinese investments. This assessment also relates to the previously stated prioritisation of economic goals by the Jokowi government over the promotion of democratic values and norms in the domestic context. Instead, China was invited to Indonesia's BDF – a forum officially aimed to promote democratic development in the region, however, without clearly defining democracy (Karim, 2017, pp. 395-396). Critics therefore argue that the BDF provides a space for autocracies to showcase their own political system "without facing any serious pressure to meet universal democratic standards" (Carothers & Youngs, 2011, p. 14; see also Karim, 2017, p. 396). Accordingly, it can be assumed that a good relation with economic partners in the region is prioritised over the international promotion of democratic values. Lastly, in the context of Indonesia's democratic development and ongoing democratic erosion, the conflictive potential of prevailing anti-Chinese and anti-communist sentiments in combination with (religious) mobilisation against the Chinese community have to be taken into account as potential destabilising factors that might lead to social conflict. Furthermore, these domestic factors could easily take on an international dimension with a more pro-active Chinese government reconnecting to its overseas population.

Figure 42: Indonesia's trade with China in million US$ (current) between 1990 and 2017



Source: OEC (2020).

The UN and international NGOs

Over the course of time, different international NGOs and officials from the UN commented on or openly criticised political developments in the context of human rights violations and democratic quality declines in Indonesia. Most notable are reactions to the government's attempts

to limit the independence of the KPK and the overhaul of the criminal code between 2019 and 2023. Early in September 2019, these issues were, for instance, taken up by the international press (Cook, 2019, September 20) and Amnesty International with Chairwomen Delia Ferreira Rubio stating that "[a]ttempts to weaken the independence and authority of the KPK have serious potential to undermine its commendable anti-corruption efforts in recent years. […] The Government should be making greater efforts to tackle corruption and not do anything that might undermine them" (Transparency International, 2019). Furthermore, in the context of the overhaul of the criminal code in December 2022, different international NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) raised concerns over the Indonesian government's actions (Human Rights Watch, 2023; International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), 2022), thereby contributing to the general international awareness. The overhaul also brought the local UN office to openly raising concerns – a quite unusual action –, which the Indonesian foreign ministry criticised and underlined by summoning the local UN resident coordinator (Strangio, 2022, December 13). While it cannot be assumed that the emerging pressure from this international criticism was very high, the criticism, however, very likely contributed to raise the international awareness.

5.2.3.3 Overall account

The case of Indonesia with the two identified observation periods is an insightful case for analysing a very gradual, incremental autocratisation process initiated by an administrative around a president who was originally perceived as a clear representative of the pro-democratic group. The democratic erosion is taking place in a highly complex domestic political context with strong conservative and anti-pluralistic powers in a political system that, after Indonesia's second democratic transition phase, still integrates key contra-democratic authoritarian-era political and economic elites and is restrained by informal structures such as patronage networks and by a dominant pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage. Turning to the international level, Indonesia is manoeuvring in a volatile regional/geopolitical environment in which many external actors are actively trying to project power. In this international context, the restrained external short-term reactions to the democratic erosion in Indonesia are noticeable, while at the same time substantial structural shifts in Indonesia's trade relations are taking place. In the following overall account, I bring together the two strands of the analysis and weight against each other the different domestic and external factors influencing Jokowi's administration's key decision-making moments of possible autocratisation. Furthermore, I present and structure the results of my analysis in a summarising table (*Table 16*).

The first observation period

Initially, hopes in the pro-democratic camp were high that Jokowi as the first Indonesian president without a military or establishment political elite background would promote Indonesia's democratic development and not follow his predecessor's course of democratic stagnation.

Jokowi already had a good reputation from his previous posts as mayor of Surakarta and governor of the capital district of Jakarta and his campaign stood in stark contrast to his opponent Suianto Prabowo's campaign, who was openly announcing a cutback of democratic institutions. While Prabowo's campaign was backed by powerful conservative oligarchs as well as Islamist groups and thereby drew on authoritarian-era clientelist and patronage elements, Jokowi relied on a grassroots campaign and support from groups that are associated with the liberal pro-democratic camp. Despite Jokowi's clear ascribed role as initial candidate of the pro-democratic group, however, it must be put into perspective that Jokowi remained rather unspecific regarding his democratic ideas and instead emphasised elements of good governance in his campaign, including social justice and poverty reduction. This programmatic emphasis can be associated with the more general assessment in the analysis of the domestic factors that pro-democratic attitudes in the Indonesian society are closely linked to the satisfaction with the government and its socio-economic performance. Adding on to this, Jokowi won the presidential elections against Prabowo only by a small margin, which shows the strength of the contra-democratic group that is rooted in persistent influence and approval of former authoritarian-era military actors and patronage networks. Moreover, the elections highlight the vulnerability of the Indonesian political system to authoritarian-populism and the role good governance performance of the government plays in the system.

On the basis of the previous analysis of the external factors, the initial situation of Indonesia's international relations before the beginning of the first observation period can be assessed as decidedly positive and embedded in a rather fruitful environment for Indonesian democratic development (see *Table 16*). After the turbulent years of Indonesia's democratic transition and the strong rupture caused by Indonesian military forces' violent actions in East Timor, Indonesia's relations to international partners had largely stabilised. This is, for instance, reflected in deepened trade relations to both, democratic and non-democratic partners, as well as the successful negotiation of several partnership and security cooperation agreements – e.g. the EU-Indonesia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that was decided on in 2009 or the Japan-Indonesia Economic Partnership Agreement signed in 2007. Despite Indonesia's deepening trade relations and ever closer integration into the global market, Indonesia's economy was not so strongly affected by the global financial crisis – although the aftermaths were visible in Indonesia's trade statistics as well. Furthermore, during the Yudhoyono presidency, Indonesia began to shape its new role as a perceived ideational leader and mediator in the region. Especially close regional cooperation in the ASEAN format was – and still is – a key element of Indonesia's foreign policy in the post-New Order era, but also efforts to mediate in regional conflicts such as the South China Sea territorial disputes between ASEAN member states and China or the Cambodia-Thailand border tensions that flared up in 2008. Most notably, by advocating the inclusion of democratic principles, rule of law, and human rights in the ASEAN Charter as well as founding the Bali Democracy Forum and the IDP, Indonesia also actively engaged in the promotion of democratic norms and values abroad. At the same time, Indonesia aimed to play a bridging role between the 'West' and the 'Muslim' world, while referring to its international pro-democratic activities as democracy projection, in order to distinguish them from Western democracy promotion (Murphy, 2012, p. 94). In light of the international economic and political environment, the conditions for Indonesia's democratic deepening can thus be assessed as generally favourable. As limited relativisation, however, some actors criticised

Indonesia's pro-democratic activities as too restrained and mainly elite driven, for instance, in the context of the BDF, which explicitly allows autocratic regimes to present their political systems as democratic ones (Carothers & Youngs, 2011, p. 14; see also Karim, 2017, p. 396), or in regard to Indonesia's cautious engagement in Myanmar's unsuccessful democratisation (Karim, 2017, pp. 397-400). Towards the end of Yudhoyono's presidency, also some shifts in Indonesia's foreign relations become visible, which later intensified. Especially the diplomatic disgruntlements with Australia – although they mainly emanated from questionable Australian international actions – as well as an increasing (economic) distancing from Indonesia's traditional trade partner Japan are mentionable in this regard, while instead the economic cooperation with China was increasingly gathering momentum. Nevertheless, the conditions for democratic deepening or at least stabilisation remained generally favourable and beneficial in terms of the cost-benefit assessment.

Jokowi's early months in office that also mark the beginning of the first observation period (2014-2019) were very much shaped by his efforts to set up a functional governing coalition, consolidate power, and sketch out his economic programme. His administration, however, did not present an agenda or reform ideas for Indonesia's democratic development, although according to Warburton (2016, p. 313) "[t]here was thus an implicit sense of hope" that only after the consolidation of power Jokowi's administration would turn to justice, anti-corruption, and human rights issues as promised in the election campaign. Especially Jokowi's initial no-deal approach in regard to setting up his governing coalition, implying that support from all parties should be unconditional, as well as his invitation to the KPK to support the selection of ministers by checking for possible corruption offences were seen as signs of a pro-democratic course against the influential authoritarian-era clientelist and patronage structures. Despite Jokowi's success to convince and pressure other parties to join his governing coalition without making greater concessions to them, his administration showed no ambition in taking up anti-corruption efforts or addressing human rights issues after this first consolidation of power. Instead, as previously assessed in the course of the analysis, Jokowi's stance in a prominent corruption scandal, his refusal to intervene against radical Islamist groups' attacks against the Indonesian LGBTQI+ community, and the increased involvement of military figures in his administration already illustrate Jokowi's lacking interest in taking up his previously ascribed role of a pro-democratic reformer. Nevertheless, Jokowi's ambitious economic development and infrastructure agenda guaranteed him broad domestic public support despite his arrangements with the patronage system and reneging on election promises in the human rights, anti-corruption, and justice sectors, which were likely costly regarding decreasing support from the pro-democratic group.

Economic issues dominated not only at the domestic, but also at the international level. Particularly noteworthy in this context is Jokowi's administrations' vision of promoting Indonesia as a Global Maritime Axis, which was unveiled shortly after Jokowi's election in 2014 – with Indonesia at the intersection of key maritime trade routes (Sambhi, 2015; Senkyr, 2017; Stromseth, 2019, p. 7). As assessed before, this strategy connects very well to China's BRI presented in 2013, with Indonesia being reliant on substantial foreign investments to finance large-scale maritime infrastructure projects. Between 2014 and 2019, Indonesia quickly emerged to China's largest infrastructure capital recipient and Chinese funded projects more and more often replaced projects funded by Indonesia's traditional partners, especially Japan

(see, e.g. the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed railway bid). Jakarta's economic shift eventually led to a discontinuation of Indonesian-Japanese security and military cooperation. In the same time frame, however, the U.S. and Indonesia decided to upgrade their Comprehensive Partnership to a Strategic Partnership (United States Department of State, 2022b) and also the Indonesia-Australia relations improved again under Jokowi and Turnbull, leading to an upgrade of the Strategic Partnership to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2018 (Australian Government. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2018). Through substantially increasing trade with China and a more general economic realignment, the Jokowi government is thus reducing existing dependencies from its traditional partners, especially Japan, while simultaneously becoming more dependent on Chinese investments and trade. However, this shift only had a partially negative impact on strategic relations with other Western partners, as cooperation with the U.S. and Australia was even deepened. Moreover, explicit cooperation in the context of democracy remained largely unaffected, e.g. with the EU in the annual Human Rights Dialogues or through direct support programmes to the KPK under the EIDHR. With regard to the cost-benefit assessment, mainly stabilising international effects can thus be identified at the beginning and in the course of Jokowi's first term, which can be attributed to deepened trade and strategic cooperations.

At the latest with the religiously motivated mass protests that started in 2016 in Jakarta against Governor Ahok, the disputes along the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage heavily influenced further democratic development in Jokowi's first term. Although the protest initially erupted over a statement by Ahok and was aimed at preventing Ahok from running again for the post as governor of the capital district of Jakarta, the protests quickly became a threat to Jokowi's second term ambitions as well, who caused dissatisfaction among influential Islamic groups with his pluralist-centrist approach that included substantial cuts of patronage funds to Islamic organisations. The protests' extent thereby illustrates the existing mobilisation capacity along the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage and the strength of the anti-pluralistic group. The Jokowi administration responded with a two-pronged strategy of (unsuccessful) appeasing and repressive measures, while the latter included the misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus against prominent protest leaders, allowing non-state militias to target Islamist groups' gatherings and even banning prominent groups on the basis of a government regulation that was issued on short notice. The administration's decision to apply these illiberal measures can be categorised as the first main decision-making moment of the first observation period (see the second column in *Table 16*). Furthermore, the decision showcases that as the Islamist mobilisation and protest were likely perceived as a substantial *costly* threat to general political and economic stability, Indonesia's attractiveness for FDI, and Jokowi's ambitions for re-election – as the perceived benefits of suppressing the protests/mobilisation – were outweighing the perceived costs of a repressive course. As these measures were initially used against illiberal groups, who themselves were perceived as a threat to a pluralistic and democratic system, the potential costs in regard to loosing support of the pro-democratic group were comparatively low.

Table 16: Overview of actors and strategies of autocracy prevention in Indonesia

	First observation period (2014-2019)		*Second observation period (2019-2022)*	
Decision-maker	President Jokowi		President Jokowi	
Main decision-making moments	Misuse of legal and law enforcement apparatus against Islamist groups (2016/2017); executive regulation to ban organisations (2017); impeding the selection of candidates by introducing new appointment rule for presidential candidates (2017)	Misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus against more mainstream democratic opposition (e.g. 2019GP movement) prior to the 2019 elections (2018-2019)	Restriction of the autonomy of the KPK and first attempt to overhaul the criminal code (Sep 2019); use of repressive measures against protesters (2019-2022)	Ongoing repressive measures against protesters; second attempt to overhaul the criminal code (2022)
Domestic level				
Context conditions	Pol. system with basic separation of powers, however, with a strong position of the president (e.g. influence on legislative and judicative); fragmented multiparty system & 'party cartelisation Indonesian-style'; largely independent media; persistent influence of authoritarian-era clientelist and patronage elements			
Institutional pro-democratic opposition	No substantial, observable opposition	No substantial, observable opposition	No substantial, observable opposition	No substantial, observable opposition
Political pro-democratic opposition	Only partially applicable as most parties were already part of Jokowi's governing coalition & the main polarisation was between more anti-pluralistic pol. actors and the Ahok/Jokowi camps		After the 2019 elections, most parties joined the governing coalition (even Prabowo's Gerinda); no substantial parliamentary opposition	
Social pro-democratic opposition	Low social opposition despite disappointment of pro-democratic groups, instead dominance of the anti-pluralistic/pluralist cleavage	Low pro-democratic civil society mobilisation (e.g. 2019GP)	Strong backlash and protests by pro-democratic civil society groups	Continued protests, but substantially weaker reaction than in 2019/2020 due to prior repression
International level				
Context conditions	Indonesia has developed into a democratic role model in the region/in ASEAN with initiatives to promote democracy and peace; mediocre economic dependencies; good strategic positioning; *bebas dan aktif*-policy			
U.S.	Steadily deepening cooperation in the areas of trade and security; restrained criticism in Human Rights Report 2019		Stronger criticism in the Human Rights Reports, no substantial direct reactions	
Japan	Slow deterioration of relations despite close trade relations in the past; no substantial reaction			

Table 16: Overview of actors and strategies of autocracy prevention in Indonesia (*cont.*)

EU and individual member states	No substantial reaction (see U.S.)		Resolution of the European Parliament openly criticising the reforms (Oct 2019); issues were raised during Human Rights Dialogues and in EU reporting	Open criticism in Annual Human Rights Dialogues
Neighbouring states and ASEAN	ASEAN as an institution for Indonesia to pro-democratically engage in the region; envisaged deepening of relations; no reactions			
Australia	No substantial reaction		No substantial reaction	No substantial reaction
UN and international NGOs	Steady general criticism on Human Rights violations by international NGOs		Direct criticism by NGOs of the reforms and repressions (e.g. Amnesty International)	Direct criticism of the overhaul by different NGOs (e.g. ICJ) and the local UN office
Main opposition and interactions	No substantial opposition from pro-democratic domestic or external actors	Low domestic opposition in form of mobilised pro-democratic civil society groups	Strong civil society backlash and international reactions	Substantially less domestic opposition and international reactions
Decision/Outcome	Misuse of repressive instruments was continued; the parliament passed the executive regulation to ban organisations in 2017; new appointment rule was approved by the Constitutional Court	Misuse of repressive instruments prior to the 2019 elections; Jokowi was not penalised by the voters in the 2019 elections	Delay of the overhaul of the criminal code was reached, but the KPK reform was pushed through	Overhaul of the criminal code was adopted by the parliament in December 2022

This likely changed with the administration's continuing course of misusing the legal and law enforcement apparatus (including the KPK) and the extension of the use against political groups associated with the more mainstream democratic opposition in the run up to the 2019 presidential elections, which is categorised as the second major decision-making moment of the president (see the third column in *Table 16*). However, taken together with the newly introduced appointment rule of presidential candidates that impeded the selection of a promising opposition candidate and eventually led to another attempt by the authoritarian-populist Prabowo as Jokowi's main counter candidate, it was made difficult for the pluralist pro-democratic camp to penalise Jokowi in the elections and risk a victory of Prabowo. At least in the short-term regarding the upcoming 2019 presidential elections, the domestic costs of applying illiberal repressive measures were therefore comparatively low for the Jokowi administration. Nevertheless, the fact that Jokowi felt compelled to make concessions to the anti-pluralistic/conservative Islamic groups is illustrated by Jokowi's nomination of Ma'ruf Armin as his running mate. Without any noteworthy international reactions and a low probability of short-term consequences for international relations, no further costs from the international dimension came into play. This lack of reactions is not surprising, as other countries in the region and globally experienced similar or even stronger autocratisation processes in the same period, most notably the U.S. under Trump, but also Australia or the Philippines. Furthermore, some partner countries such as Japan are traditionally very restrained with the expression of criticism on Indonesian politics, while the growing influence of China might have led to an increased interest of the Jokowi administration in being perceived as an attractive, stable FDI receiver – without being too much concerned about how this stability was achieved.

In summary, it can be stated that at the end of his first term Jokowi had largely disappointed domestic pluralist pro-democratic groups' expectations placed in him. With a lacking democratic agenda, arrangements with Indonesia's patronage and clientelist networks as well as the stepwise unfoldment of a repressive course towards the end of his first term, Jokowi developed into a representative of the contra-democratic group – although he did not catch up with the even more illiberal groups, who called for a substantial dismantling of Indonesia's democratic institutions. In addition, the political and electoral systems that are dominated by the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage with a high vulnerability to authoritarian-populism made it difficult for a pro-democratic opposition to *sufficiently* mobilise and present a more democratic counter-candidate to Jokowi – which in the case of Senegal's 2012 presidential elections was identified as a *necessary condition* for the prevention of President Wade's third term and Senegal's further autocratisation. As a result, in Indonesia's 2019 presidential elections, pro-democratic groups again only had a limited choice between the authoritarian-populist candidate Prabowo and an increasingly repressive acting Jokowi. In addition, the domestic short-term costs for Jokowi's administration to use illiberal measures against anti-pluralist groups and later against more mainstream democratic oppositional groups before the 2019 presidential elections can be considered as comparatively low. Instead, it is likely that more long-term costs in the form of growing disappointments with Jokowi's course fed into the increased social protests after the elections in the second observation period. Adding on to this, international short-term reactions to Jokowi's course prior to the 2019 elections were largely absent, while levels of pro-democratic linkage and potential leverage are also comparatively mediocre. On the contrary,

the expansion of economic (e.g. China) and strategic partnerships (e.g. the U.S. and Australia) and a generally favourable benignant political environment can be classified as stabilising.

The second observation period

Although Jokowi and his PDI-P won the 2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, the results and immediate aftermaths very much reflect the difficult political climate in the run-up to the elections. Accordingly, Jokowi could only slightly improve his lead over Prabowo in comparison to the 2014 presidential elections and the PDI-P remained at 19 percent in the parliamentary elections. Prabowo and his supporters contested the close results (as in 2014) and their protests turned violent with at least eight people dying in clashes with the police. Thus, the starting point at the beginning of the second observation period (2019-2022) was again characterised by strong polarisation and tensions along the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage. It came therefore as a surprise to many observers that Jokowi appointed his former opponent Prabowo as minister of defence in his newly formed government shortly after the elections (cf. Mujani & Liddle, 2021, p. 80). With Prabowo's Gerindra and almost all the other parties joining the governing coalition, the newly formed coalition made up 471 of the total 575 parliamentary seats (ibid.) – a coalition that thus nearly neutralises the parliamentary political opposition and fits very well to the previously discussed concept of 'party cartelisation Indonesian-style' (cf. Bland, 2019, p. 10). It can be assumed that with the new government a better balance of interest between the groups along the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage was made possible – *inter alia*, by a potential allocation of patronage funds and access to state resources/power –, but at the same time, more disputes were likely to be carried out within the coalition itself. Furthermore, with the remaining parliamentary opposition very much diminished, the control function of the political opposition over the executive was highly limited, which in the following months eventually led to a shift of pro-democratic opposition control activities to civil society actors (see *Table 16*).

This shift became apparent shortly after the start of Jokowi's second term, when his government introduced a set of highly controversial new laws in September 2019, which, *inter alia*, were aimed at substantially restricting the autonomy of the KPK by introducing a presidentially appointed supervisory board and to overhaul Indonesia's criminal code (see the fourth column in *Table 16*) by giving in to demands of conservative religious groups opposed to pluralism (cf. Jaffrey & Warburton, 2023). As these laws strongly interfered with the political institutions that are basic prerequisites for Indonesia's democratic order and the protection of human rights, they also mark key decision-making moments of autocratisation that fit into the category of executive aggrandisement. Moreover, the introduction of these laws marks a substantial quality shift in the government's approach to proactively degrade the democratic quality of Indonesia's political institutions, which sets the second observation period apart from the first observation period, where most governmental actions in regard to democratic quality declines can be categorised as reactions to protest. Without much parliamentary political opposition, the initial costs of the reforms were likely perceived by the administration as not too high against the benefits of gaining more control over the KPK as well as the consequences of the overhaul of the criminal code. However, strong civil protest erupted directly after the announcement of the laws in

September 2019 that mainly emanated from groups of the pluralist pro-democratic camp – especially students – that had previously supported Jokowi, which also led to a sharp increase in the perceivable costs. The protests were accompanied by violent clashes of the protesting groups with police and military forces and the Jokowi administration decided to use similar measures to disperse the protest as previously in the context of the Islamist movement, including dispersal of protests, intimidation, and arrestment. For the first time, the reform efforts of the Jokowi administration now also led to reactions at the international level. Especially the European Parliament resolution issued on 24 October 2019 urged the government to revise the draft for the new criminal code and take back the controversial law restricting the autonomy of the KPK (European Parliament, 2019), but the issue was also brought up during the Annual Human Rights Dialogue in November 2019 (Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2019, November 8). It is, however, important to note that the criticism of the EU had no immediate implications for the EU-Indonesian trade relations or the upgrade of the partnership to a Strategic Partnership in 2020, thereby also putting the perceivable costs of this criticism/condemnation into perspective. In addition, the issue was taken up by international NGOs such as Amnesty International (Cook, 2019, September 20), which contributed to the general international awareness. Although the law restricting the KPK was pushed through by the government and passed the parliament in September 2019, the domestic protests and international criticism were partially successful in delaying the overhaul of the criminal code (see *Table 16*). This illustrates that the Indonesian government had actually taken the increased costs into account in the decision-making process and adjusted its course accordingly. While the pressure from the civil society actors can therefore be assessed as a *necessary* – and likely also as a *sufficient – condition* for the decision of the executive to delay the overhaul of the criminal code, it is not clear to which extent the additional international condemnation played a role.

Shortly after the climax of this political conflict, two events with global magnitude and with direct implications for Indonesia's democratic development occurred. In the beginning of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic forced governments worldwide to restrict the freedom of their citizens and other topics were pushed off the political agenda. Although the government's response to the pandemic introduced mainly economic relief packages and officials were trying to play down possible health implications of the pandemic for Indonesians, the government did not try to increase the power of the executive branch through emergency measures (Mietzner, 2020, pp. 229-233). However, in regard to democratic declines during the pandemic, open criticism against the government was further criminalised and the role of the military to support the implementation of measures against the spread of Covid-19 increased substantially (Fealy, 2020, p. 307; Mietzner, 2020, p. 244; Power & Warburton, 2020, p. 2). Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marks the second major event, although of Indonesia's regional distance. Nevertheless, as Jokowi's government held the G20 presidency in 2022, Jokowi actively tried to act as a mediator in the conflict. In addition, the growing global tensions between 'Western' democratic states, on the one side, and autocratic states (mainly Russia and China), on the other, are increasingly affecting Indonesian foreign policy. It is against the background of this changing geopolitical context that the continuing and intensifying criticism from the EU and Biden administration of Jokowi's planned overhaul of the criminal code and repressive course against

civil society actors needs to be classified. On the one hand, the EU's and the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Reports (2020-2022) increasingly pointed out the Indonesian government's misdeeds, while, on the other hand, economically and strategically, both actors' aim to deepen relations with Jakarta becomes visible. Accordingly, Indonesia was also invited to international fora such as the 2021 and 2023 Summits for Democracy and the 2022 G7 summit in Germany, which gave the Jokowi administration the opportunity to present Indonesia's democratic system as a model of success and relativises the perceived costs of international criticism. However, potential costs might be connected over time to credibility losses of the Indonesian government's pro-democratic international self-conception as well as its role as a mediator. When further taking into account the substantial role that trade and cooperation with China, Singapore, India, and other states in the region are already playing for Indonesia, while the relevance of traditional partners such as Japan or Australia is decreasing, Indonesia's cooperation with partners from Europe or the U.S. is certainly not without alternatives for the Jokowi administration. It remains, however, unlikely that China is able to exert considerable direct influence on Indonesia's domestic politics due to strong still-existing anti-Chinese and anti-communist resentments in the Indonesian society (cf. Stromseth, 2019, p. 7).

Both the domestic opposition against and international criticism of the overhaul of the criminal code eventually remained unsuccessful. On 6 December 2022, the new criminal code was passed by the Indonesian parliament (see the fifth column in *Table 16*), which has, *inter alia*, strong implications for the human rights situation and the dealing with criticism against the president and other state institutions (Human Rights Watch, 2023; Root, 2023, February 13). The adoption was again accompanied by domestic protest from student and civil society groups – although according to Jaffrey and Warburton (2023) the protest was substantially toned down due to previous intimidations and restriction of the civil space – as well as international criticism by different NGOs (e.g. Human Rights Watch and the International Commission of Jurists) (Human Rights Watch, 2023; International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), 2022). Rather unusual were also openly raised concerns by the local UN office, which led to the Indonesian foreign ministry summoning the local UN resident coordinator (Strangio, 2022, December 13). It is, however, noticeable that official EU and U.S. institutions were rather reluctant to voice open criticism against the new criminal code in December 2022 and did not, for example, adopt another resolution. This circumstance might be related to the toned down domestic protest and a shift in the EU's focus with Russia's war against Ukraine. Taken together, the perceivable domestic and external costs for the Jokowi administration must have declined *sufficiently* enough, while the benefits of restricting the civil society's ability to put checks on the executive now outweighed the costs. Lastly, with the upcoming 2024 presidential elections, it is noteworthy that Jokowi shows no interest in attempting a third term against existing laws. He is, however, actively involved in promoting the political careers of family members, which was already labelled as "Jokowi Dynasticism" (Fealy, 2020, pp. 315-318). Accordingly, his son Gibran Rakabuming Raka was successful in the 2020 elections for the mayorship of Surakarta. Nevertheless, this involvement of Jokowi cannot yet be interpreted as clear contra-democratic action against existing Indonesian law.

Summing up, the course of the Jokowi administration during the second observation period with the introduction of several restricting laws – most notably to limit the independence of the KPK and to overhaul the criminal code – as well as the continuation of the usage of increasingly

repressive measures against civil society groups marks a substantial quality shift from the first observation period in the government's approach to proactively degrade the democratic quality of Indonesia's political institutions and giving in to demands of the conservative religious groups opposed to pluralism. While at the beginning of Jokowi's second term with the severely reduced parliamentary political opposition the role of the civil society as a control body in the political system for the actions of the executive became strongly visible, the role has clearly deteriorated over time, as a result of the increasing repressions and restrictions of the civil space. Thus, strong civil society pressure can initially be identified as a costly *necessary condition* for delaying the overhaul of the criminal code and thereby preventing a more substantial democratic quality decline. But with the government's prevention of protests with repressive and intimidating measures over the course of the second observation period, the costs of getting the new criminal code passed in parliament in December 2022 were sufficiently limited. Another element that has contributed to the perceived costs for the Jokowi administration and which could not be observed in the first observation period has been the steadily increasing international criticism, especially from the EU and the U.S., against the backdrop of mediocre linkage. While both actors brought up human rights concerns and pointed out the Indonesian government's misdeeds, the more general international context (most recently with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and growing international tensions) rather motivated the EU and the U.S. to deepen their trade and security cooperation with Jakarta – which at the same time relativized potential leverage and perceivable costs. Costs associated with international democratic partners are thus more likely linked to potential credibility losses of the Indonesian government and to a lesser degree to their impact on trade or security cooperation. In addition, the strong expansion of trade relations between Indonesia and China as well as to other states in the region (especially ASEAN states) should be emphasised. Thus, taken together, the usage of democracy protective measures to prevent actions by the Jokowi government that weaken Indonesia's democratic institutions was very restrained, while pro-democratic leverage was also severely limited. Conclusions about the hypotheses can therefore be drawn more in contrast to the Senegal case study results (see *Chapter 6*). Adding on to this, it remains to be seen how events will further unfold in the final year of Jokowi's presidency.

6 Discussion of the results, generalisation, and limitations

This chapter summarises and discusses the findings from the different parts of the analysis, which investigate the influence of external autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations on autocratisation processes. For this, first, I bundle the empirical results in light of the hypotheses (*Chapter 6.1*) and, second, evaluate them in terms of their generalisability, while also pointing out limitations (*Chapter 6.2*).

6.1 Results

As described in detail in the methods section (*Chapter 3.1*), I use a two-pronged mixed-methods design approach that combines quantitative statistical and qualitative case study elements to triangulate the general conclusions drawn on the research question of *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation*. The quantitative statistical analysis, on the one hand, allows me to assess the relation between external autocracy prevention and autocratisation by testing for average effects of external factors over a large number of states and thus primarily provides results informing *Hypotheses 1* and *2a*. The qualitative case studies, on the other hand, contribute to assessing the mechanisms at work behind quantitatively captured influences of external factors on autocratisation and gaining more in-depth insights regarding *Hypotheses 2a* and *2b*. Along my theoretically derived hypotheses, I obtain the following results in *Chapter 4* and *5*[113]:

Hypothesis 1: External democracy protection measures, such as democratic sanctions, condemnation, aid conditionality, election monitoring, and democracy aid, understood as costs in the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive, make a gradual autocratisation in the targeted state less likely *c.p.*

Overall, the results of my thesis point to several effects of external democracy protection measures on gradual autocratisation ranging from more cooperative to more coercive ones. To begin with, the quantitative analysis reveals a robust positive effect of democracy aid as a cooperative linkage-instrument on democratic quality for the period from 1995-2017. In addition, my results indicate that impacts of democracy aid unfold in the course of time, as the coefficient of the two-year time-lagged democracy aid variable is even higher than the one-year lagged one, and can be found across regions. The democracy aid per capita-variable shows similar, but slightly less significant results, which makes sense in view of the population size control variable considered in the same model. Furthermore, in my additional attempt to capture effects on processes of *autocratisation* and *democratisation* more clearly by analysing effects of external factors on actual changes in the level of democracy, a linear positive effect of democracy aid

[113] Note that the null hypotheses are shown in *Chapter 2.2.4*.

on changes in the level of democracy stands out as well. This means that democracy aid is more likely to lead to positive changes in the level of democracy ('upshifts') and not to negative ones ('downshifts'), what can be interpreted as making a gradual autocratisation in the receiving state of democracy aid less likely. Taken together, these findings support *Hypothesis 1* regarding the positive effect of democracy aid as a cooperative linkage-instrument on democratic quality, which in turn can be interpreted as making gradual autocratisation less likely. The findings further correspond well with the general picture drawn in the literature that shows a positive influence of democracy aid on democratic quality (Gisselquist et al., 2021, pp. 15-16; Niño-Zarazúa et al., 2020, pp. 103-131).[114]

Moreover, the quantitative analysis reveals a strong quadratic relation of democratic arms sanctioning as a coercive democracy protection measure with democratic quality – especially during the post-Cold war era, where the usage of arms sanctions was more frequent than before. Thus, a strong positive relation of democratic arms sanctioning by democratic countries with democratic quality becomes visible when a large number of democratic countries apply arms sanctions against a country simultaneously. Based on the analysis of specific temporal and regional patterns, it can be further assumed that these results are mainly driven by sanctions imposed on countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in the post-Cold War era (1990-2017). Here, the effect of democratic arms sanctions imposed by democratic countries on democratic quality is initially negative, but has a turning point with the 33rd sanctioning democracy. The overall effect turns positive for 67 or more sanctioning democracies imposing sanctions simultaneously in the same year. Regarding the effect of democratic arms sanctioning on actual changes in the level of democracy, I find a linear positive effect, thus sanctioning makes a gradual autocratisation in the targeted state less likely. This indicates that democratic arms sanctioning as a coercive leverage-instrument actually contributes to the prevention of autocratisation, which also supports the hypothesised statement in *Hypothesis 1*. However, my results seem to be driven by democratic arms sanctions imposed on states in the Sub-Saharan Africa region in the post-Cold War era, while the results underline the importance of joint sanctioning by democratic states.

From a general linkage and leverage perspective going back to Levitsky and Way (2006, pp. 382-383), these findings make sense, as states in Sub-Saharan Africa are depicted as states with a comparatively high external vulnerability, especially in cases of high aid-dependency and weak governance. Furthermore, the results can be linked to the comparatively low level of democracy and high frequency with which sanctions are used in the Sub-Saharan Africa region (see Portela, 2022), as democracies tend to use sanctions more often against non-democratic regimes. More in general, these findings thus already point to the relevance of the international

[114] Note that Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020) also considered upshifts and downshifts of democratic quality in their study, but separately with two different dependent variables in contrast to my approach with one combined variable for the changes in the *Electoral Democracy Index*. For the downshift variable, which is intended to show the preventive effect of democracy aid on democratic backsliding, positive index changes are set to zero and are thus equated with a lack of change ('maintaining the status quo'). This approach operationalises prevention more narrowly and, in my view, inappropriately, as the promotion of upshifts should be assessed as a preventive measure of 'higher quality' compared to just maintaining the status quo. Accordingly, my work also categorises the strengthening of core democratic institutions as a preventive measure that can *contribute* to actual prevention (see *Chapter 2.2.1*). At the same time, the operationalisation of Niño-Zarazúa et al. (2020) is accompanied by an avoidable loss of information.

context that is assessed more in-depth in the subsequent step in the context of *Hypotheses 2a* and *2b*.

Adding on to this, my results on democratic sanctioning relate well to insights from earlier studies by von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 967-969) and Pospieszna and Weber (2017, pp. 13-14). Both studies have not yet performed tests for quadratic effects of democratic sanctions on democratic quality, but they have shown overall positive linear effects of democratic sanctions on the change in democratic quality in the post-Cold War era, which is consistent with my result for the effect of democratic arms sanctioning on actual changes in democratic quality. Moreover, my operationalisation of the sanction variables as count variables differed substantially from their earlier operationalisations. It was able to capture an important additional layer of joint sanctioning, as von Soest and Wahman's (2015)[115] use of a dummy variable for the sanctioning of a given state does not sufficiently capture the strength of joint sanctioning by multiple states. Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) use of the dyadic dataset of sanctioning by EU countries also captures less information about joint sanctioning by many democratic countries. It is further important to add that both studies did not exclusively focus on democratic *arms* sanctioning but considered broader/additional sanction categories.

Although not presented in more detail in *Chapter 4*, I have also tested for additional kinds of sanctions (e.g. trade sanctions) covered in the GSDB V2 (Felbermayr et al., 2020a, 2020b) dataset as well as for an interaction effect of democracy aid and democratic arms sanctioning on democratic quality in the course of the selection of my regression model. However, I found no significant results – which means that I did not find a comparable interaction effect to Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) finding for EU sanctioning and aid provision, which showed that general aid provision can decrease the effectiveness of sanctions regarding democratisation. This difference is likely related to the different operationalisations and sub-samples of our studies.

Hypothesis 2a: Strong pro-democratic international relations, understood as direct costs in the cost-benefit assessment of the contra-democratic executive, make a gradual autocratisation less likely *c.p.*

The regression analysis further provides results related to potential *direct* effects of strong pro-democratic international relations on autocratisation (*Hypothesis 2a*) by including trade relations with democratic countries in the model to capture the economic linkage of a country to democratic countries. The analysis shows a quadratic relation of trade relations with democratic countries in the most comprehensive model for the entire period (1972-2017) – a result that, however, could not be shown in any of the other model specifications and for the different subsamples along temporal and regional patterns and should thus be interpreted with caution. This not-robust result indicates that trade with democratic countries is significantly negatively related with democratic quality for trade volumes between zero and 1.618 trillion US$ and positively after the turning point. Nevertheless, the overall effect remains negative in the whole data

[115] In addition, von Soest and Wahman's (2015) only take into account a period from 1990 to 2010, while Pospieszna and Weber's (2017) consider a period from 1989 to 2015.

range considered. Arguably, trade as a potential economic linkage-instrument in itself is not a measure by which democratic countries unintentionally incentivise the prevention of autocratisation on their trading partners, which provides evidence in favour of rejecting *Hypothesis 2a*. This finding also corresponds well to von Soest and Wahman (2015, pp. 967-969), who controlled for general trade in their regression analysis that tested for the effects of sanctions on changes in the level of democracy. In their analysis, trade also did not show a significant effect. Moreover, the result does not contradict Levitsky and Way's (2006, pp. 383-386) understanding of the effect of linkage (in the context of democratisation), which is mainly based on diffuse and long-term effects. In the next step, however, it is interesting to see to which extent strong pro-democratic relations *indirectly* make a gradual autocratisation less likely by determining the strength of external democracy protection measures (*Hypothesis 2b*).

Taken together, the quantitative analysis reveals important results on general effects of democracy aid and democratic arms sanctions as two external democracy protection measures on autocratisation, while (structural) differences at the domestic level are largely excluded by the fixed effects approach. To provide essential additional insights into the mechanisms at work behind the quantitatively captured influences of democracy protection measures on autocratisation, the case studies of autocratisation processes in Senegal and Indonesia complement the results as the second component of the two-pronged mixed-methods design approach. They allow for a more in-depth understanding of interactions between the domestic and international level by focusing on key decision-making moments of the ruling contra-democratic groups and of *direct* (*Hypothesis 2a*) and *indirect* (*Hypothesis 2b*) effects of strong pro-democratic international relations on autocratisation.

Hypothesis 2b: Strong pro-democratic international relations make a gradual autocratisation less likely by indirectly determining the strength/effectiveness of external democracy protection measures *c.p.*

As assumed in the selection of the Senegal case as my *most likely case*, the importance of the complex interactions between the domestic and international level and of the context of strong pro-democratic international relations prove to be particularly visible during the two observation periods. Especially during the main decision-making moments of Wade's presidency, a very active pro-democratic opposition from political and social opposition actors is traceable on the domestic level. This opposition steadily increased to the end of Wade's second term until its peak before the 2012 presidential elections with Wade's third term attempt, in the form of active coalition building among political parties, strong civil society mobilisation, and the formation of powerful social movements.

On the international level, these domestic opposition actors were accompanied by a combination of different democracy protection measures used by pro-democratic external actors, which covered a broad range of measures from more cooperative to more coercive ones. These measures included long-term democracy promotion projects over the course of the observation periods and more short-term election monitoring, condemnation, and the threat/actual application of sanctions in specific decision-moments. Regarding many of these measures, the analysis

shows clear interactions between domestic and external actors, e.g. through international financial support of pro-democratic Senegalese groups in the context of long-term democracy promotion projects, through more short-term coercive international pressure on the regime to allow for peaceful protests, and through the implementation of election monitoring missions by the EU, ECOWAS, and AU (on invitation of the Wade government). Some measures were directly aimed at influencing the regime, such as the condemnation of Wade's actions – but mainly went hand in hand with the domestic pro-democratic mobilisation and formulation of criticism. The influences of these international activities have to be interpreted against the background of Senegal's strong linkage to pro-democratic actors (especially the U.S., France, and other EU member states) and high pro-democratic leverage during the first observation period – making them quite 'costly' for the Wade government. There are also clear indications that the Wade government actually perceived these external democracy protection measures as costly, which becomes clear, for example, when taking into account the commissioning of the U.S.-based law firm to influence the perception of the Wade government in the U.S. or the government's decision to give in to very specific international pressure to allow domestic protests. These results can be taken as supporting evidence for *Hypotheses 1* and *2b*, indicating that democracy protection measures used against the background of strong linkage to pro-democratic actors and high pro-democratic leverage were perceived as costly by the Wade government in an actual decision-making moment and thus made a gradual autocratisation less likely. This finding speaks very well to prior Senegal-specific democracy protection research (Leininger & Nowack, 2022; van Lit et al., 2023) and the previously presented and discussed quantitative results about the effect of democratic sanctioning as a coercive leverage-instrument that already pointed to the relevance of the international context (e.g. aid-dependency) and of joint approaches of international partners. Furthermore, the complex interactions between the domestic and international level already became well visible.

In comparison to the first observation period, there are clear differences to the Sall presidency that allow me to draw further conclusions about the role of domestic opposition actors and external democracy protection measures against the background of a changing international context. Quite early in Sall's second term, strong domestic opposition from political and social pro-democratic opposition actors is visible in form of strong civil society mobilisation and protest as well as cooperation among the opposition parties (e.g. in the 2022 local elections), especially with regard to preventing a potential third term of Sall and the ongoing legal case against Sonko. At the same time, however, the domestic political situation can be categorised as less clear, as Sall remained vague about his third term ambitions for most of his second term and the legal case against Sonko was difficult to assess from the outside.

Regarding Senegal's pro-democratic relations, international linkage to pro-democratic actors was still very high, although China's importance as a trading partner and alternative donor has grown considerably in recent years. Nevertheless, with the substantially changing international environment (military coups in Mali and Niger as well as Russia's war against Ukraine) and Sall's good relationships to pro-democratic international partners, pro-democratic leverage – and potential attention – was comparatively lower than during Wade's second term. In contrast to the first period, my analysis identifies little pro-democratic international reactions and almost no short-term democracy protection measures that were used to react to the regime's decision. It can therefore be assumed that a certain threshold for pro-democratic external actors to use

more short-term and coercive democracy protection measures was not exceeded that is likely related to the changing international environment, a lower leverage position of pro-democratic partners, and the less clear domestic political situation. Furthermore, this finding adds an interesting new layer to prior Senegal-specific democracy protection research, which has so far been primarily concerned with Wade's presidency (see Leininger & Nowack, 2022; van Lit et al., 2023). At the same time, there are no indications of a direct effect of the overall strong relations with pro-democratic international partners on Sall's decision-making processes (*Hypothesis 2a*) – which fits well with the previously discussed quantitative results on trade relations.

Further, I can draw evidence from the Indonesia case as a *medium likely case* with an autocratisation process initiated by the Jokowi government over the course of two observation periods. The case represents an interesting contrast to the Senegal case, with a very different domestic and international context. The Indonesian case displays a highly complex domestic political situation and substantially lower pro-democratic linkage and leverage than the Senegalese case. Particularly during Jokowi's first term, the domestic political situation was dominated by a political conflict that flared up along the previously hidden pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage, fuelled by conservative Islamist groups and influential opposition politicians around the former military actor Prabowo. As a result, Jokowi had to contend with strong headwinds from political and social actors, but these originated mainly from contra-democratic actors. In the analysis, I thus found that the Jokowi government's initial misuse of the legal and law enforcement apparatus as well as freedom-restricting measures therefore did not directly lead to pronounced domestic pro-democratic opposition. However, this situation changed early on in Jokowi's second term in office in which the government used repressive measures continuously against a broader range of civil society groups. Furthermore, the government introduced a series of freedom-restricting laws, including in particular an overhaul of the criminal code and the restriction of independence of the KPK. My analysis shows that most of the opposition parties joined the Jokowi government and potential political opposition was thus 'bound', leading to a crucial role of social opposition with a strong civil society backlash in forcing a delay of the overhaul of the criminal code.

Regarding the international level, opposition from social pro-democratic opposition actors was accompanied by different short-term democracy protection measures that mainly fall into cooperative categories of condemnation and open criticism and thus do not relate to more coercive measures using conditionality or sanctioning. The clearest form of condemnation came from the EU with the adoption of a resolution by the European Parliament in 2019, but also the Biden administration in the U.S. was more openly criticising the Jokowi government at the beginning of its term in 2021. These rather limited reactions need to be assessed against the background of Indonesia's comparatively medium pro-democratic linkage and rather low leverage of pro-democratic partners. My analysis suggests that Indonesia's relations with pro-democratic partners during the whole period observed were largely characterised by an expansion of economic and strategic relations, a good strategic positioning, broader geopolitical changes (e.g. China's role and Trump's presidency in the U.S.), a lack of perceived relevance (e.g. in the case of Australia), and a traditional reluctance (e.g. Japan). The effect of the democracy protection measures used on the decision to delay the overhaul of the criminal code was therefore probably very modest and cannot be clearly carved out, although it is apparent from the Jokowi govern-

ment's responses to parts of the international criticism that the measures were at least recognised. There were also no indications that the measures had a negative effect on the government's decision-making process or on the domestic resistance from social pro-democratic opposition actors. This finding can thus also be considered as supportive evidence for *Hypothesis 2b* consistent with the previous results, as it underlines the importance of the indirect effect of strong pro-democratic international relations for determining the strength of democracy protection measures. These results further connect well to the literature dealing with autocratisation processes in Indonesia, which primarily focuses on the domestic level and did not yet identify clear effects of democracy protection measures during the Jokowi presidency (see, e.g. Fealy, 2020; Power & Warburton, 2020). Especially against the backdrop of changing geopolitical conditions (e.g. Russia's war against Ukraine) and declining domestic opposition against the overhaul of the criminal code, finally, it came as no surprise that there were no further substantial international reactions towards the end of the observed period.

Consequently, the following results can be summarised that also answer my underlying research question of *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation*: My findings show that different democracy protection measures ranging from more cooperative to more coercive ones actually made gradual autocratisation in targeted states less likely (*Hypothesis 1*). However, there are important conditions regarding the domestic and international level that affect the actual use and effectiveness of these measures. Based on my findings, I can therefore assume a threshold for the use and effectiveness of different international democracy protection measures in response to contra-democratic incumbents. This threshold depends on the strength of domestic pro-democratic opposition, on the one hand, and the international context around high pro-democratic linkage and leverage (*Hypothesis 2b*), on the other. This means that international democracy protection measures can contribute to the prevention of autocratisation if used in critical decision-making moments such as the 2012 presidential elections in Senegal in conjunction with a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition, mobilisation, and/or protest as well as against the background of high pro-democratic linkage and leverage (*Hypotheses 1* and *2b*). My results thus highlight the important role of domestic pro-democratic factors as a *necessary condition* for preventing autocratisation – and that external influences cannot work as a single *sufficient condition*. At the same time, I can deduce that a cohesive international approach of pro-democratic actors is particularly important for the effective use of more coercive democracy protection measures (e.g. democratic sanctions). Lastly, my analysis does not reveal direct effects of overall strong pro-democratic international relations on autocratisation processes (*Hypothesis 2a*).

6.2 Generalisation and limitations

In this second step of my discussion, I evaluate the generalisability of the previously summarised results building on my methodological considerations in *Chapter 3* and point out limitations. To assess the generalisability, I reflect in this sub-chapter on implications of my mixed-methods approach, on specific limitations of the quantitative and the qualitative components, on the population of cases, and on temporal as well as regional limitations.

As described in the presentation of my two-pronged mixed-methods design approach (*Chapter 3.1*), I examined my research question from two different causal angels using a combination of a quantitative large-N statistical analysis together with a qualitative case study component. I consider both elements to be complementary to each other with a shared object of study – the relation between autocratisation as the main regime transformation process of interest and external autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection measures and pro-democratic international relations. While the quantitative analysis revealed insights on the average effects of different democracy protection measures on autocratisation, the qualitative case studies derived more context-specific additional insights into the mechanisms at work behind the quantitatively captured influences of democracy protection measures on autocratisation.

In general, the population of cases to which my results can be generalised differs between the two components of my mixed-methods approach. In the quantitative analysis, I considered a total of 7,711 country-years from 174 countries from all word regions and carried out most of the analyses from 1971 onwards – with the data coverage of individual variables as a limiting factor. The external validity of my quantitative study can therefore be categorised as high. I found my main results for the post-Cold War period, which makes sense regarding the occurrence of gradual autocratisation and the more frequent usage of democratic sanctioning in the post-Cold War era. Additionally, reliable democracy aid data was only available for the year 1995 and onwards. It is therefore important to point out that my quantitative findings on the relation between autocratisation and democracy protection measures can only be generalised to the post-Cold War era.

Adding on to this, regarding regional limitations for the generalisation of my quantitative results, I was able to show that the results for democratic arms sanctioning were largely driven by sanctions imposed on countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa region. I have already discussed this finding in the previous sub-chapter by assessing regional context factors (comparatively low democracy levels, high aid-dependency, and external vulnerability), the high number of sanctions used in the region, and by taking into account linkage and leverage considerations. At the same time, it is important to re-emphasise the regional limitation of my finding, as the effect of democratic arms sanctioning as a coercive measure did not show for all world regions in my analysis.

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis faces different limitations, which relate to the methodological challenges of examining the relation of external autocracy prevention and autocratisation quantitatively and thus to the study's internal validity. For one, the selection of the right dependent variable (including its operationalisation) and an appropriate statistical model to capture external effects on autocratisation – and especially its prevention – is challenging and leaves room for discussion and further development.[116] The decision to, first, interpret a positive relation between an external factor in the previous year and V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* level in the base year as an autocracy preventive effect and, second, consider a positive relation between an external factor in the previous year and the actual 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' as a preventive effect, fitted well to my underlying theoretical framework that focused on the *de-facto* changes in core democratic political institutions. Furthermore, this

[116] Note that I have already addressed some methodological challenges such as potential heterogeneity in the methods *Chapter 3.2.4.*

approach builds on the methods used in relevant previous studies. Especially in analyses of the impact of democracy aid on democracy (Gisselquist et al., 2021), but also in analyses of the effect of democratic sanctioning (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015), for example, it is a common approach to use the changes in democracy scores between country-years as dependent variables in the respective regression models.

However, in recent autocratisation literature there are ongoing discussions about measuring autocratisation in episodes (Boese et al., 2021; Pelke & Croissant, 2021). Against this background, it would not be sufficient to consider only the level or individual changes of an index variable such as the *Electoral Democracy Index* between country-years. Instead, change processes such as autocratisation must take place continuously over a pre-defined number of years (e.g. five years) to be categorised as episodes. Using an episodic approach would also imply that other statistical approaches and model designs could be considered such as two-step models (Boese et al., 2021). These might be helpful to better capture the preventive element of autocracy prevention in specific autocratisation stages or duration-based effects, which is why I already raise this point in the context of my limitations and consider it as a potential element for future research in the next step as well. However, episodic approaches would also entail caveats that should be addressed such as a substantially lower number of cases (the total of autocratisation episodes in the post-Cold War era) or the important and potentially restraining role of prior decisions for criteria to identify episodes of autocratisation, which different authors from the autocratisation literature still debate (see, e.g. Pelke & Croissant, 2021).

Certainly, not only is my selection and operationalisation of the DV subject to potential limitations, but my set of external democracy protection measures included in the quantitative analysis was limited to democracy aid and democratic arms sanctioning. Nevertheless, both democracy protection measures represent very different types of measures, one of which is more cooperative and the other clearly coercive. In addition, my tests for pro-democratic linkage were mainly focused on economic linkage to democratic countries and I only tested for one potential interaction between my main democracy protection measures – elements that I also take up again in the future research section. Despite these limitations, however, the results already provided valuable insights into the average effects of democracy protection measures with a high external validity.

Furthermore, the selection of my statistical model had implications regarding the non-consideration of possible interaction effects between the domestic and international level. While I assume in this study that external factors only have an effect via domestic factors, domestic factors are mainly excluded from the regression model – as structural domestic factors are controlled for by the fixed effects and more short-term domestic factors (e.g. actor-constellations) are seen as part of the causal chain and are thus not quantified in the model. Although this limitation can be categorised as a specific limitation of the quantitative approach, the advantage of the complementary two-pronged mixed-methods design approach becomes apparent at this point. With the two in-depth case studies on autocratisation processes in Senegal and Indonesia, I gained additional insights into the mechanisms at work behind the quantitatively captured influences of democracy protection measures on autocratisation. As an interim conclusion of the individual generalisability of the quantitative component of my mixed-methods approach, however, I can already assume that it was externally and to a sufficient degree internally valid.

For the case study component, I explicitly narrowed down the population of cases to country-cases where incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation processes are taking place, as I also took the occurrence of the phenomenon as the decisive criterion for my case selection. In principle, there is no need to assume a different underlying time period for the population than in the quantitative study. However, since the phenomenon of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation is seen more as a phenomenon of the third wave of autocratisation, it was reasonable to focus on autocratisation processes after 1994 for the case selection (thereby following Lührmann and Lindberg's (2019) classification of the beginning of the third wave of autocratisation). This time horizon also fits well with the period for which I found the main results in the quantitative part.

Regarding the transferability of my qualitative findings, my case studies focussed on four selected observation periods in two country cases (Senegal and Indonesia) from two different world regions following a 'most different system design' approach (cf. Sartori, 1991, p. 250). I selected Senegal, on the one hand, as my *most likely case* to clearly show and analyse the theoretically assumed relations. The case of Indonesia, on the other hand, I selected as my *medium likely case* in which external influences are weaker and less visible, e.g. due to lower linkage and leverage. This case helped to contrast the results from the most likely case and to make conditions for the usage and effectiveness of external democracy protection measures clearer. In my overall results, I thus point out a threshold for the use and effectiveness of different international democracy protection measures as reactions to contra-democratic incumbents, which, on the one hand, depends on the strength of domestic pro-democratic opposition actors and, on the other hand, the international context around high pro-democratic linkage and leverage. This domestic and international threshold is also a key finding for discussing the transferability of my results, because it provides important background information about the necessary context that should also be present in other cases of incremental, incumbent-driven autocratisation of the third wave of autocratisation (population) for the usage and effectiveness of international democracy protection measures. However, it is important to note that all autocratisation processes considered in my qualitative analysis took place in electoral democratic settings transitioning to electoral autocracies (see also Tomini et al., 2023). This very likely had an impact on which domestic and external actors were active in the respective episodes, e.g. with regard to the weak role of domestic institutional opposition actors, but relates well to the context sensitivity of my findings. Accordingly, this aspect is also taken up again in the future research chapter (*Chapter 7.2*). Nevertheless, despite the relatively small sample size, the case study delivered relevant results that are transferable to the wider population.

At the same time, I can draw a positive conclusion regarding the credibility of my results. With my actor-centred cost-benefit assessment approach, I was able to take into account a broad range of different sources that covered primary and selected grey literature, interviews, and relevant quantitative data, e.g. on trade relations, voting behaviour, and political attitudes. With a view to both country cases, however, it should be noted as a limitation that the second autocratisation episodes were still ongoing – partly against my initial expectation when selecting the cases. This may have had some influence on the accessibility of information, although news coverage for most recent events can be considered good in both cases. Moreover, the final outcome of the episodes remains unclear. However, based on my approach, I was able to assess the role of external democracy protection measures in interplay with the domestic factors to

determine their individual and/or combined costs on the contra-democratic executives' decision processes. This approach made processes of interplay between the different influencing factors visible and derived the previously stated transferable result about domestic and international thresholds. Furthermore, these qualitative results connected well to the case-specific, broader democracy protection, and instrument-specific literature (e.g. on democratic sanctioning) as well as to my prior quantitative findings. Taken together, I can therefore assess a good transferability and credibility of my qualitative results.

Finally, I can conclude positively in the final evaluation of my complete mixed-methods approach. It is precisely through combining the approaches with their specific advantages and limitations that I was able to increase the degree of generalisability of my overall results to answer my research question. Thus, the quantitative analysis provided relevant insights on the average effects of different democracy protection measures on autocratisation, which are associated with a high external and sufficient internal validity. With the qualitative case studies, I could derive context-specific additional insights into the mechanisms at work behind the quantitatively captured influences of democracy protection measures on autocratisation, which I lastly assessed as transferable and credible. In sum, my study provided a fitting approach to answer the underlying research question of *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation.*

7 Conclusion

In light of the current trend of far-reaching autocratisation processes in states all over the world, finding strategies and measures to prevent autocratisation and protect core democratic institutions and actors is a key element of interest for both pro-democratic national and foreign policy-makers. Through an international lens, there are not only similar patterns across current autocratisation processes around the world, but also different external factors that potentially influence autocratisation or even contribute to its prevention. However, there has been a lack of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical knowledge about the relation of autocratisation and external factors contributing to its prevention by protecting core democratic institutions and actors while taking into account the international and domestic contexts. This was also the point of departure for this thesis, which contributes to ongoing discussions at the intersection of CP and IR literature by answering the research question of *how do external factors contribute to the prevention of autocratisation*.

To *theoretically* explain autocratisation and link it to external autocracy prevention as a concept combining democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations, I have used an actor-centred approach, which focused on ruling elites' decision-making processes and considered external factors as perceived costs or benefits in interplay with domestic factors. Following this approach, external democracy protection measures can influence the domestic balance of power, e.g. by strengthening the pro-democratic opposition with a cooperative linkage-based measure such as democracy aid, or by coercively targeting the contra-democratic executive with 'costly' democratic sanctions. *Methodologically*, I applied a two-pronged mixed-methods design approach based on a quantitative and a qualitative component. Following a sequential approach, I first performed a longitudinal large-N quantitative analysis based on a fixed effects modelling approach to assess possible relations between autocratisation and external factors along different temporal and regional patterns. Furthermore, I presented two in-depth qualitative case studies on incremental processes of autocratisation in Senegal and Indonesia that focused on influences on decision-making moments of the contra-democratic executive in four observation periods to assess the mechanisms at work behind the relation of autocratisation and external autocracy prevention.

As an answer to my underlying research question, my overall results indicate that external factors matter for preventing autocratisation, both in terms of more cooperative democracy protection measures such as democracy aid as well as of more coercive measures such as democratic arms sanctions. Nevertheless, I identify a high threshold for the use and effectiveness of more coercive international democracy protection measures by external pro-democratic actors that relates to the domestic and international context. Regarding the interplay of the domestic and international level and underlying conditionalities of the effectiveness of democracy protection, my analysis of specific critical decision-making moments shows that *international democracy protection measures used in conjunction with a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition, mobilisation, and/or protest strengthened pro-democratic forces and contributed to the prevention of autocratisation*. In addition, the general effectiveness of international democracy protection measures depended on levels of linkage and leverage as well as on joint approaches by

pro-democratic external actors. This result also speaks to the novel conceptualisation of autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations introduced in this study.

7.1 Contribution

With my findings, I contribute to different strands of literature, in particular to the autocratisation, democracy promotion/protection, and the case specific literature on Senegal and Indonesia, as well as to ongoing policy discussions among pro-democratic foreign policy-makers. To begin with my contribution to the autocratisation literature more in general, which has so far concentrated heavily on explanatory approaches for autocratisation focusing on domestic factors and only lately on concepts of domestic democracy defence (van Lit et al., 2023) or autocratisation resistance (Tomini et al., 2023): my contribution is both *theoretical* through the explicit application of the actor-centred approach from democratisation literature to the process of autocratisation while further considering external factors as an element of theory-building, as well as *empirical* through the insights gained on the role of international democracy protection measures in a specific international environment that complement domestic resisters against autocratisation in the final stage of an autocratisation process. In this context, it is particularly important to note that international democracy protection measures used in conjunction with a strong domestic pro-democratic opposition, civil society mobilisation, and/or protest strengthened pro-democratic forces and contributed to the prevention of autocratisation. Different levels of linkage and leverage, however, influence the general use and effectiveness of international democracy protection measures. My findings thus strengthen our understanding of the complex interplay of international and domestic factors in autocratisation processes. These findings also support my novel conceptualisation of autocracy prevention as a combination of democracy protection and pro-democratic international relations, which can be pointed out as a specific *conceptual* contribution of my work. Accordingly, the findings of my study connect to a recent call by Samuels (2023) to address the international context of backsliding in general – or here even broader as the international context of autocratisation – and to rethink the role of pro-democratic global actors in the third wave of autocratisation. Furthermore, my study speaks to Lührmann's (2021) observation that international factors should be taken into account to explain autocratisation and its prevention from abroad.

Moreover, this study also complements the different strands of literature already dealing with the international dimension of autocratisation, e.g. framed around concepts such as democracy protection as a subtype of democracy promotion (Leininger, 2022) or focusing on specific measures such as democratic sanctions (Pospieszna & Weber, 2017; von Soest & Wahman, 2015), by bringing the different fields *theoretically* and *conceptually* closer together. Based on a coherent actor-centred theoretical approach, I derive findings on how different international measures of democracy protection can actually contribute to *preventing autocratisation*, while paying attention to international linkage and leverage as well as to the interplay between the domestic and international level in autocratisation processes. In this context and framed as a *methodological* contribution, I could provide valuable insights by combining the longitudinal

large-N quantitative analysis with the qualitative in-depth case studies on incremental autocratisation processes in Senegal and Indonesia to assess the processes at work behind the relation of autocratisation and external autocracy prevention. In this way, I was also able to address the methodological research gap identified at the beginning of this thesis. Hence, the quantitative and the qualitative elements worked complementary and allowed me to derive different insights into autocratisation and its prevention from abroad.

In addition to these contributions, I also contribute to the Senegal and Indonesia specific literature with my case study results. While the Senegal specific literature has pointed out the powerful position of presidents and challenges of growing personalism in Senegal's political system as well as the role of civil society mobilisation, economic challenges, and still existing corrupt networks of Franco-African authorities and business elites that are frequently subject to criticism in the past (Arieff, 2011; Kohnert & Marfaing, 2019, pp. 10-11; Mbow, 2008; Wienkoop, 2020), this study can further contribute by assessing the role of international democracy protection measures that were directly aimed at influencing the presidents' decision-making. Especially the role of pro-democratic external actors in Wade's third term attempt already sparked interest among democracy promotion research (see Leininger & Nowack, 2022), but these relations were not yet assessed over a longer time period taking into account Sall's presidency as well. In my analysis, the differences between the autocratisation processes during the presidencies of Wade and Sall become evident. Sall's substantially better relations to international pro-democratic partners and his unclear ambitions about a third term for most of his second term led to rather muted international reactions to his use of illiberal means against the strongly mobilised opposition despite high pro-democratic linkage and leverage.

In regard to the Indonesia specific literature, my case study results connect to the literature that has assessed the specific domestic context of Indonesia's autocratisation process. Authors have analysed the design flaws of *reformasi*, the integration of former authoritarian-era contra-democratic political elites/the highly elite-interwoven patronage system of the Suharto era that are eager to inhibit the democratic development in today's political system as well as the conflict along the pluralist/anti-pluralistic religious cleavage (see, for example, Bland, 2019; King, 2008, pp. 114-115; Warburton & Aspinall, 2019). My new results thus shed light on the external dimension of the autocratisation process, highlighting international pro-democratic partners' initial restrain to intervene in a low linkage and leverage context and the minor supportive role of international reactions regarding the overhaul of the criminal code and degradation of the KPK in conjunction with domestic civil society mobilisation and protest as democratic resisters. Furthermore, by going beyond the individual cases through the comparative element between the two case studies, the relevance of the domestic and different international pro-democratic linkage and leverage conditions between Indonesia and Senegal is emphasised.

Besides these contributions to current research, my findings are also highly relevant for ongoing policy discussions among pro-democratic foreign policy-makers, as they show that context-sensitive international democracy protection measures actually contribute to autocracy prevention. More specifically, the results reinforce previous findings that democracy aid as a cooperative measure strengthens democratic institutions and unfolds its effects over time, which also suggests its continued use for preventing autocratisation from abroad. In addition, the use of more coercive short-term democracy protection measures in specific decision-making moments, such as condemnation or the threat of sanctioning, had a preventive effect on contra-

democratic incumbents when used in conjunction with an active engagement of domestic opposition actors, a favourable international context, and international coordination of pro-democratic actors. Therefore, I also consider the cautious context-sensitive use of more coercive measures as a potential policy approach by pro-democratic policy-makers to prevent autocratisation from abroad. However, the actual use of more coercive measures should of course be based on thorough considerations.

To summarise, with this study I was able to derive theoretical, conceptual, and methodological contributions to various strands of literature at the intersection of CP and IR dealing with external influences on autocratisation processes as well as to the Senegal and Indonesia specific literature. I lastly pointed out the relevance of my findings for ongoing policy discussions among pro-democratic foreign policy-makers.

7.2 Future research

Building on my results and going beyond, there are several points of departure for future research on autocratisation and its prevention from abroad. As I very much focused on the *de-facto* autocratisation processes after the takeover of government by a contra-democratic group and thus on strategic decisions of actors, I only partly took into account initial socio-political changes in societies such as increasing polarisation or the erosion of trust in established political actors as relevant preliminary stages of autocratisation (see Lührmann, 2021). Assessing external influences on these processes in light of their role in broader autocratisation processes would be beneficial and can draw on already existing phenomena specific work (see, e.g. McCoy et al., 2018). It further also connects to Leininger's (2022) conceptual work on *institutional* access points of democracy protection that also implies different strategic approaches to democracy protection regarding the emphasis of different (cooperative vs. coercive) democracy protection instruments.

This also connects to several points of departure for future research in both quantitative and qualitative studies. Regarding future quantitative research, first, statistical analyses could focus on different dependent variables to capture external effects on autocratisation. V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* is a rather focused indicator, which, on the one hand, fits quite well to shed light on *de-facto* changes in core democratic political institutions in the last stage of an autocratisation sequence (Lührmann, 2021). On the other hand, other indicators that capture additional elements of a liberal democracy (such as V-Dem's *Liberal Democracy Index*) or indicators that are even more specific and focus on a phenomenon related to an early stage of the autocratisation sequence such as polarisation might lead to relevant results as well.

Secondly, future quantitative research could also consider different statistical approaches, e.g. (quasi-)experimental designs, multilevel models, episodic approaches, and/or two-step models, which might frame autocratisation around the resilience of regimes at specific stages of autocratisation following Boese et al.'s (2021) approach that assessed the role of domestic insti-

tutional safeguards in autocratisation processes. These analyses can also focus on certain subgroups of the overall population and thus, for example, obtain specific results for certain regime types or phases of autocratisation.

Thirdly, regarding external democracy protection measures, it would be fruitful to identify other quantitative variables that relate to the concept of autocracy prevention and refine the ones already tested.[117] In addition, even larger time lags and different variable specifications could be explored (e.g. rolling means over time for democracy aid). Furthermore, interactions between different external measures should be analysed in a more structured way, as demonstrated, for example, by Pospieszna and Weber (2017) for the interaction of democratic sanctions and democracy aid in relation to democratisation and in the course of the selection of my regression model for the same interaction in relation to autocratisation. Along these lines, the international linkage and susceptibility to leverage of states could also be interacted with other variables, thereby going beyond the more direct consideration of trade variables in my analysis.

The aspect of interaction effects is further directly linked to the fourth point: the quantitative consideration of possible interaction effects between the domestic and inter-/transnational level. While I assume in this study that external factors only have an effect via domestic factors, domestic factors are mainly excluded from the regression model – as structural factors are controlled for by the fixed effects and more short-term actor-constellations are seen as part of the causal chain and are thus not quantitatively included – and could be taken up more in-depth in future statistical analyses (e.g. in multilevel models).

Lastly, going even further, there are many more entry points to quantitatively analyse potential other external effects on autocratisation beyond autocracy prevention. Especially the field of autocracy promotion is still quantitatively understudied, which is not only due to the difficult data availability, but also to a lack of applicable concepts and established operationalisations of variables for quantitative research.

Either as stand-alone studies or as part of mixed-methods approaches, future qualitative research can contribute to a better understanding of the mechanisms and processes at work behind the relation of autocratisation and autocracy prevention. Since the presence of incumbent-driven autocratisation was a key criterion for the selection of the two cases for my case study, preliminary stages of autocratisation were not so much subject of my analysis. I also clearly focused on the incumbents as decision-makers, which would not necessarily be the right focus in the early phases of autocratisation. Accordingly, a different focus would also very likely result in a different qualitative approach that might, for example, emphasise the role of institutions or political culture. In addition, the autocratisation processes in all four observation periods can be classified as processes taking place in electoral democracies – in transition to electoral autocracies (see also Tomini et al., 2023). Further case studies, e.g. in more democratic or more autocratic contexts, may provide important additional insights into the role of autocracy prevention in other autocratisation phases and across other regime types. Another guiding element for identifying relevant cases for in-depth case studies could be so-called U-turn cases of countries 'bouncing back' after substantial autocratisation processes to their former democracy level,

[117] In this context, it should be noted again that I tested for some additional external factors (e.g. regional diffusion effects, trade, and other forms of sanctions) in the course of the selection of the right regression model, but these showed no results and were therefore dropped out of the final models presented in *Chapter 4*.

which were, for example, identified by V-Dem (Nord, Angiolillo, Lundstedt, Wiebrecht, & Lindberg, 2024; Papada et al., 2023).

Moreover, a new and worrying development has recently re-emerged, with an increase in the number of coups – especially in Francophone sub-Saharan Africa. Future research has to evaluate whether this trend is linked to a more general worldwide decline of democratic values and/or the growing global system rivalry between democratic and autocratic regimes, which might make it less important for contra-democratic groups initiating coups to maintain a democratic façade and reduce the perceived costs of being sanctioned. Lastly, a stronger connection of domestic democracy protection strategies in 'donor' and their partner countries are further points of departure from both a scientific-conceptual and a policy-shaping perspective.

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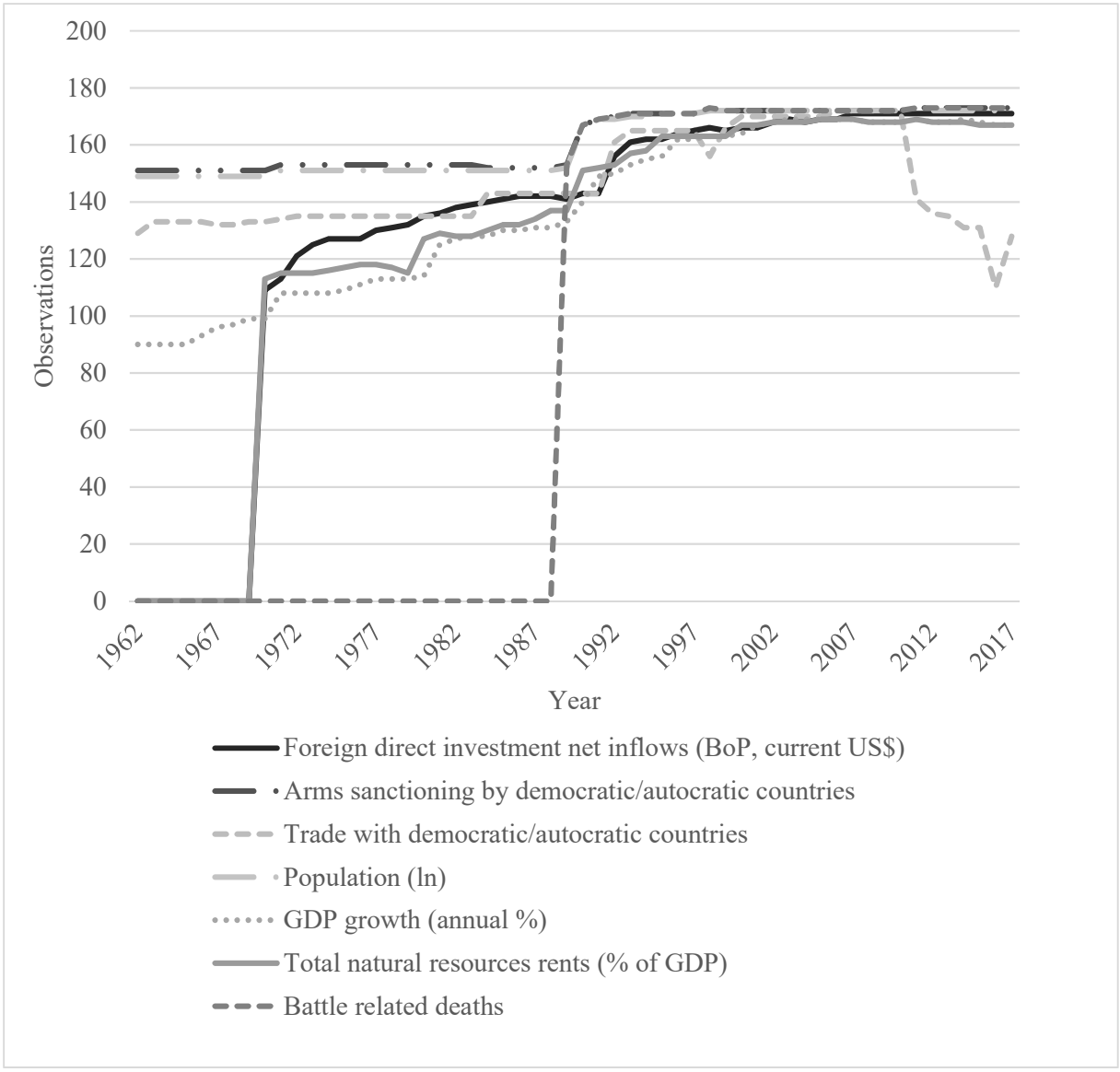
Appendix

Figure A1: Country-year data coverage for relevant indicators after data preparation



Note: Displayed is the data coverage for relevant indicators per country-year as used in the regression analysis. See *Table 1* for the sources of the individual datasets.

Explanation of other external factors taken into account that were not included in the final model but tested in the course of selecting the regression model

Regional diffusion effects: For the construction of the variable 'Mean democratic quality in neighbouring countries', V-Dem's *Electoral Democracy Index* as introduced before was used in combination with data on shared country borders from the Dist-cepii dataset. For each country, the mean value of the democratic quality of the neighbouring countries was calculated and then the difference to the country under consideration was taken. However, this approach has some disadvantages, as some countries may be regionally affected by other countries with which they have no direct border. No clear effects were visible.

Trade sanctions (countries imposing sanctions are separated in democratic and autocratic countries): No clear effects were visible.

Subdivision by regime type: In general, different variations of the independent variables were tested regarding the subdivision by regime type. Instead of using the categorisation of democratic and autocratic countries, a subdivision into the four RoW-subgroups was considered in the analysis – liberal democracy, electoral democracy, electoral autocracy, and closed autocracy as well as the deviation from the democratic value of the sanctioned country/trade partner. However, the results of the variable specification in the main analysis were the strongest.

Further considered controls that were tested but dropped out of the final model: Education variables and other GDP variants taken from the World Bank database (2020) were also controlled for. The main reason for dropping these controls was the poor data coverage of the variables. In addition, no clear effects were visible.

Table A1: Model comparison of different models exploring the influence of external factors on democratic quality

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	-0.0342***	-0.0163***	-0.0163***	-0.0163***
	(0.00350)	(0.00214)	(0.00214)	(0.00390)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) in the previous year	0.000290***	0.000182***	0.000182***	0.000182***
	(0.0000606)	(0.0000324)	(0.0000324)	(0.0000345)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	0.0423*	0.00146	0.00146	0.00146
	(0.0180)	(0.00909)	(0.00909)	(0.00906)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) in the previous year	-0.000410*	-0.0000414	-0.0000414	-0.0000414
	(0.000177)	(0.0000897)	(0.0000897)	(0.0000889)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.0000638	-0.000271	-0.000271	-0.000271
	(0.000456)	(0.000249)	(0.000249)	(0.000205)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00258***	-0.000903***	-0.000903***	-0.000903**
	(0.000159)	(0.000125)	(0.000125)	(0.000296)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	-0.00000102***	0.000000279***	0.000000279***	0.000000279*
	(8.63e-08)	(5.55e-08)	(5.55e-08)	(0.000000108)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.00203***	0.000343	0.000343	0.000343
	(0.000368)	(0.000244)	(0.000244)	(0.000589)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) in the previous year	0.00000139***	-0.000000181	-0.000000181	-0.000000181
	(0.000000412)	(0.000000236)	(0.000000236)	(0.000000399)
Population (ln)	-0.0263***	0.418***	0.418***	0.418**
	(0.00567)	(0.0334)	(0.0334)	(0.135)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.00240	-0.000307	-0.000307	-0.000307
	(0.00151)	(0.000800)	(0.000800)	(0.000970)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.0316***	0.00123	0.00123	0.00123
	(0.000805)	(0.000895)	(0.000895)	(0.00202)
Constant	4.238***	-4.012***	-3.248***	-3.248
	(0.0893)	(0.555)	(0.518)	(2.089)
N	6098	6098	6098	6098
Years	1972-2017	1972-2017	1972-2017	1972-2017
adj. R^2	0.291	0.838	0.419	0.419

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Model 1: OLS model; Model 2: OLS model with year and country dummies; Model 3: Standard FE model (without robust standard errors); Model 4: Standard FE model with robust standard errors; Model 5: First-Difference analysis. The DV for Model 1 to 4 is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before, for Model 5 the DV is the *Change in the Electoral Democracy Index* (ln).

Table A1: Model comparison of different models exploring the influence of external factors on democratic quality (*cont.*)

	Model 5
Change in arms sanctioning by democratic countries	-0.00354*
	(0.00156)
Change in arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared)	0.0000217
	(0.0000201)
Change in arms sanctioning by autocratic countries	-0.00142
	(0.00350)
Change in arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared)	0.0000163
	(0.0000345)
Change in Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$)	0.0000139
	(0.000113)
Change in trade with democratic countries (current billion US$)	-0.0000261
	(0.000157)
Change in trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared)	-2.71e-09
	(5.10e-08)
Change in trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$)	0.00000348
	(0.000314)
Change in trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared)	1.46e-08
	(0.000000212)
Change in population (ln)	0.558***
	(0.119)
Change in GDP growth (annual %)	0.0000829
	(0.000279)
Change in Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.000255
	(0.000501)
Constant	0.00428
	(0.00279)
N	5936
Years	1972-2017
adj. R^2	0.008

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Model 1: OLS model; Model 2: OLS model with year and country dummies; Model 3: Standard FE model (without robust standard errors); Model 4: Standard FE model with robust standard errors; Model 5: First-Difference analysis. The DV for Model 1 to 4 is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before, for Model 5 the DV is the *Change in the Electoral Democracy Index* (ln).

Questionnaire – the democratic development of Senegal

The democratic development of Senegal under President Macky Sall

1. **In general, what do you think about the current state of democracy in Senegal?**
2. **What challenges do you see?**
3. **Do you see institutional changes or actions and measures introduced by the administration of President Sall that have either strengthened or weakened democratic institutions in Senegal?**

Short-term reactions by international actors as well as general linkage/leverage

4. **In the time period from 2009 until 2012, international criticism about President Wade and especially his decision to run for a third term was unusually loud. Some international officials, for example from the U.S., were urging Wade to not run again and to not intervene in protests against his government. It is very likely that behind closed doors some international donors (U.S., France, the EU) threatened to stop development aid projects or the disbursement of funds.**
   a. In general, how strong would you rate the potential influence of Western countries (France, EU, U.S.) on the Senegalese government? Did this potential influence change in the last years during Sall's presidency?
   b. Senegal has an international reputation as an anchor of stability and democratic role model in the region. Do you think this ascription influences the actions of the government? How?
   c. Do you think that the international community/foreign donors are aware about current democratic developments in Senegal and activities by the Sall administration discussed before?
   d. Are there any international reactions that you know of?
   e. If yes, how did the Sall government react to that? How effective were these measures?
   f. How would you rate the importance of election observation missions?
   g. When looking at Senegal's foreign policy and trade relations in recent years, the strong increase in China's importance is particularly striking. How would you assess this development? Can it be understood as a conscious attempt to diversify Senegal's international donor and trade relations?

Civil society, mobilization, and the opposition

5. **Domestic factors are without doubt the central factors influencing democratic development. Senegal has a very active civil society with unique social movements as well as an active parliamentary opposition.**
   a. How would you assess the role of civil society in current democratic developments?
   b. Which domestic political groups or social movements would you identify as key pro-democracy actors in Senegal?

c. In my thesis, I identify the translation of political interests through social movements to the nomination and installation of competitive oppositional candidates (for instance for the presidential election) as a challenging process. How would you assess this statement in the context of Senegal?

d. In a second statement, I state that pro-democratic international influence against governmental actions is only feasible if there are strong and active domestic pro-democratic groups. On the one hand, external actors need these groups to legitimize their activities and are reluctant to take action without them, on the other hand activities would not be feasible. What do you think about this assessment (in the context of Senegal)?

e. To your knowledge, do international actors cooperate with pro-democratic civil society groups? Can you give examples?

f. In general, do you think voters are more likely to make decisions based on satisfaction with economic performance or democratic developments?

Closing

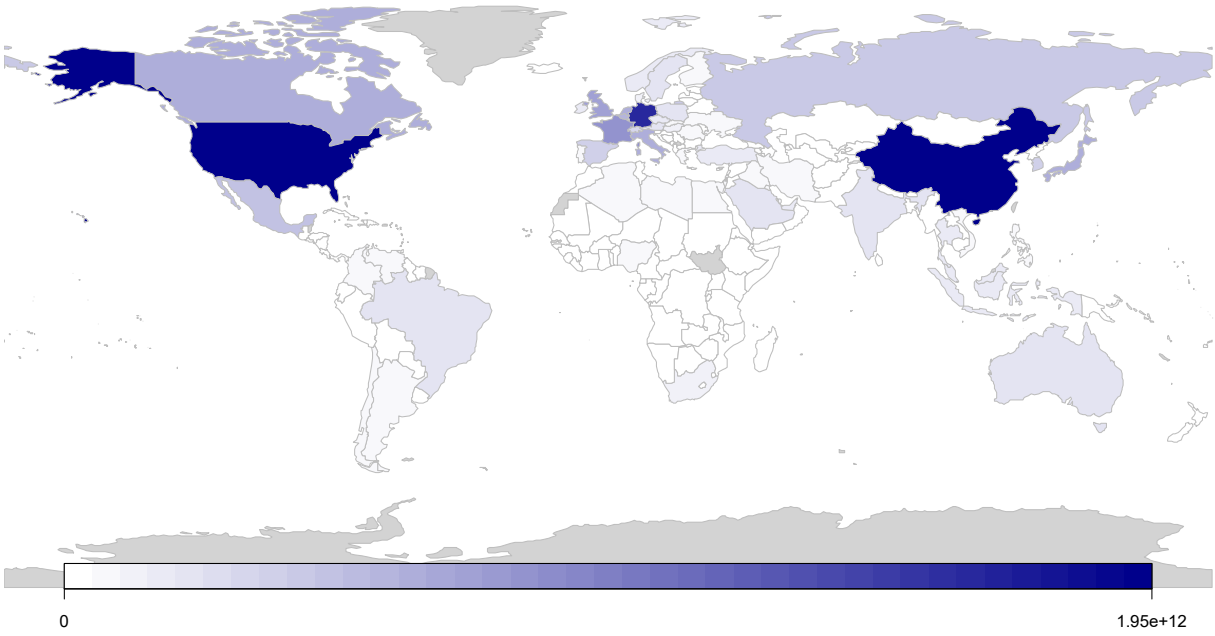
6. **Thank you so much for sharing all these valuable insights with me/us. We usually give interviewees the opportunity to let us know, whether we have covered all the important elements and questions. Is there anything else that you think we should know about or questions that you missed? – Also if you have questions for me.**

Table A2: Interview overview

Date	Interviewee	Category
08.11.2022	Local contact, research	Exchange
09.11.2022	Research, civil society	Interview
10.11.2022	Research, civil society	Interview
10.11.2022	Research, international civil society	Exchange
12.11.2022	Local contact, research	Exchange & site observations
15.11.2022	Research, civil society	Interview
15.11.2022	Research, international civil society	Interview
17.11.2022	Research, international civil society	Interview
18.11.2022	Civil society	Interview

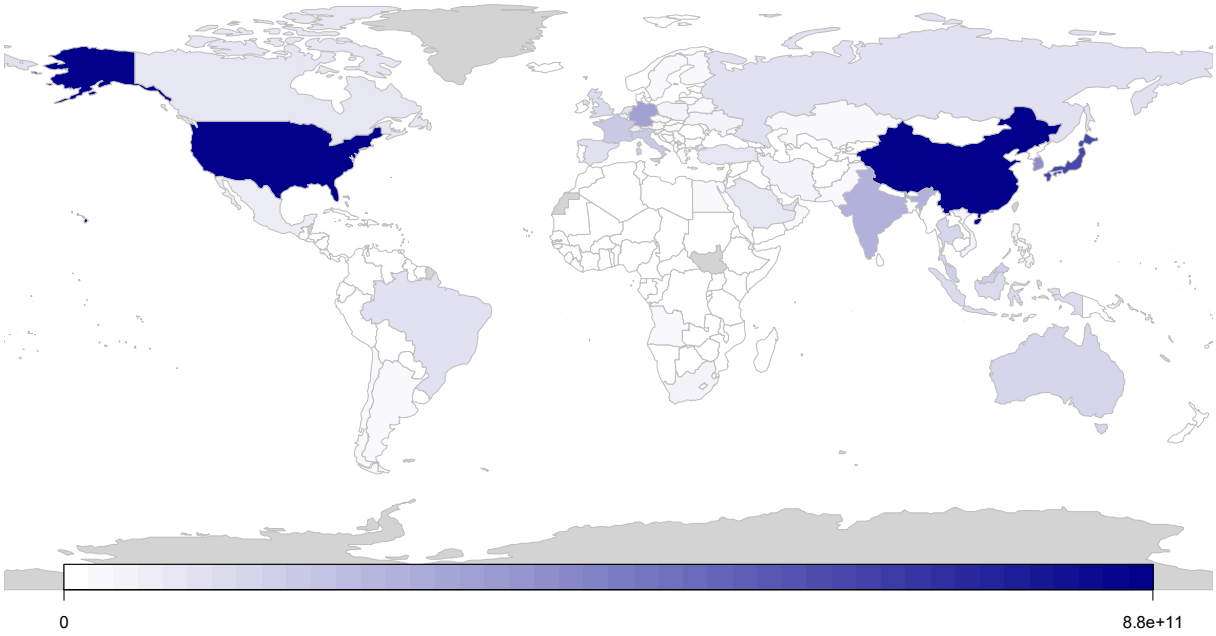
Note: The exchanges were less formalised, without recordings/transcripts as they took place in cafés/public places, but with memory logs written after the exchanges. The site observation included visits of the main protest areas in Dakar, which took place in March 2021 around the university district.

Figure A2: Worldwide trade with democratic countries in 2010



Note: Displayed are the trade volumes for states covered in the OEC database with democratic trade partners in 2010 in current US$. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Figure A3: Worldwide trade with autocratic countries in 2010



Note: Displayed are the trade volumes for states covered in the OEC database with autocratic trade partners in 2010 in current US$. *Source*: OEC (2020).

Explanation of the calculation of the real effects of arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the full FE model

For the model specification:

$f(x) = b0 + b1\ x + b2\ x^2 + \ldots + e$

First derivation: f‘(x) = b1 + 2*b2*x

Equation equal to zero: 0 = b1 + 2*b2*x

x0 = - b1/2*b2

Insertion of the values for arms sanctioning by democratic countries to identify the turning point:

x0=- (-0. 0163/2*0. 000182)

x0=44.780

The turning point is located in the value range [0; 95], therefore, the values before and after the turning point are inserted to determine the direction of the effect and strength at a specific point:

For 1: f‘(1) = -0. 0163+ 2*0. 000182*1 = -0.0159

For 10: f‘(10) = -0. 0163+ 2*0. 000182*10 = -0.0127

For 60: f‘(60) = -0. 0163+ 2*0. 000182*60 = 0.0055

For 70: f‘(70) = -0. 0163+ 2*0. 000182*70 = 0.0092

For 80: f‘(80) = -0. 0163+ 2*0. 000182*80 = 0.0128

Due to the log-linear specification of my model, the coefficient must be multiplied by 100 to get the percentage change in variable Y for a given value of variable X (cf. Stoetzer, 2017, p. 78, table 3.6) – but take into account that this is an approximation. To calculate the percentage change in the DV for an increase in variable X (arms sanctions by democratic countries) from 0 to 50, an example is given in the following:

-0.0163*100*50+100*0. 000182*50^2 = -36

For the log-log-model specification – in regard to the Population (ln) variable – cf. Stoetzer (2017, p. 78).

Table A3: The influence of external factors on democratic quality (FE model) lagged by two years

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries lagged by two years	-0.0110**			-0.0127***
	(0.00402)			(0.00378)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) lagged by two years	0.000139**			0.000140***
	(0.0000504)			(0.0000366)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries lagged by two years	0.0121			0.00572
	(0.0132)			(0.0110)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) lagged by two years	-0.000165			-0.0000823
	(0.000132)			(0.000111)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) lagged by two years		-0.00128***		-0.000189
		(0.000324)		(0.000204)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) lagged by two years			-0.00103***	-0.000946**
			(0.000290)	(0.000293)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) lagged by two years			0.000000331**	0.000000302**
			(0.000000108)	(0.000000108)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) lagged by two years			0.000414	0.000389
			(0.000604)	(0.000591)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) lagged by two years			-0.000000355	-0.000000254
			(0.000000406)	(0.000000399)
Population (ln)	0.497***	0.497***	0.368**	0.422**
	(0.117)	(0.123)	(0.130)	(0.136)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.000823	0.00113	0.000443	0.000874
	(0.00103)	(0.000952)	(0.00106)	(0.00105)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.00107	0.000735	0.00148	0.00154
	(0.00204)	(0.00217)	(0.00195)	(0.00208)
Constant	-4.496*	-4.512*	-2.554	-3.359
	(1.805)	(1.896)	(2.001)	(2.104)
N	6733	6301	6334	6022
Years	1971-2017	1973-2017	1971-2017	1973-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.399	0.399	0.415	0.416

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for all four models is the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before. All IVs are time-lagged by two years. The variables FDI and Total natural resources rents are the variables that limit the time period due to data availability.

Table A4: Regional patterns of external effects on democratic quality including democracy aid

	LCN	SSF	SAS
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)	0.0000819**	0.000316*	-0.000208
	(0.0000280)	(0.000131)	(0.000149)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (one year time lag)	0	-0.0144**	-0.0474
	(.)	(0.00451)	(0.143)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	0	0.000233***	-0.0248
	(.)	(0.0000507)	(0.0403)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (one year time lag)	0	-0.000987	2.626
	(.)	(0.00978)	(4.019)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	0	-0.0000885	0
	(.)	(0.000105)	(.)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) (one year time lag)	0.00429	-0.0116	0.0166
	(0.00253)	(0.00744)	(0.0138)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	0.0000851	-0.00263	-0.0260
	(0.00136)	(0.00277)	(0.0308)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	0.000000447	0.0000244	0.0000640
	(0.00000140)	(0.0000157)	(0.0000620)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	0.00204	0.00788	0.000456
	(0.00304)	(0.00845)	(0.0190)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	-0.0000338	-0.000115	-0.00000723
	(0.0000217)	(0.0000865)	(0.0000330)
Population (ln)	-1.083*	0.1000	1.221
	(0.406)	(0.221)	(0.858)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.00289	0.00297*	-0.00450
	(0.00233)	(0.00146)	(0.00314)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	0.00125	0.000660	0.160+
	(0.00301)	(0.00171)	(0.0687)
Battle related deaths	-0.0000534**	0.00000122	-0.0000338*
	(0.0000157)	(0.00000270)	(0.0000134)
Constant	21.19**	2.006	-17.03
	(6.392)	(3.450)	(14.56)
N	504	864	155
Years	1995-2017	1995-2017	1995-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.123	0.225	0.318

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The model specification is the same as model 1 in *Table 6*: FE model with the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable and the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before as the DV.

Table A4: Regional patterns of external effects on democratic quality including democracy aid (*cont.*)

	ECS	MENA	EAS
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)	0.000158^{+}	0.000127	0.000149^{+}
	(0.0000923)	(0.000169)	(0.0000824)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (one year time lag)	0.00402	0.103	-0.0165
	(0.00652)	(0.0677)	(0.0185)
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	-0.0000662	-0.00337^{+}	0.00119*
	(0.000195)	(0.00186)	(0.000495)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (one year time lag)	0.00319	0.0571	-1.271***
	(0.0123)	(0.135)	(0.177)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries (squared) (one year time lag)	-0.0000202	0.00205	0.265***
	(0.000169)	(0.00287)	(0.0395)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) (one year time lag)	0.0000342	-0.00904^{+}	-0.000523
	(0.0000639)	(0.00472)	(0.000727)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	0.000311	-0.00461	-0.000843
	(0.000356)	(0.00481)	(0.000698)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	3.19e-09	0.0000132	0.000000158
	(0.000000124)	(0.00000980)	(0.000000237)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (one year time lag)	-0.00269*	-0.00116	0.00147
	(0.00127)	(0.00999)	(0.00110)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) (squared) (one year time lag)	0.00000302	0.0000277	-0.000000609
	(0.00000195)	(0.0000355)	(0.000000657)
Population (ln)	0.0514	0.624*	1.351^{+}
	(0.223)	(0.255)	(0.740)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.00149	-0.00573	0.00802
	(0.00146)	(0.00491)	(0.00507)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.00788**	0.00144	0.00344
	(0.00294)	(0.00455)	(0.00326)
Battle related deaths	0.00000639	-0.0000273	0.0000765
	(0.0000258)	(0.0000161)	(0.000103)
Constant	3.357	-6.904^{+}	-18.59
	(3.536)	(3.955)	(12.19)
N	994	366	411
Years	1995-2017	1995-2017	1995-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.131	0.309	0.134

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The model specification is the same as model 1 in *Table 6*: FE model with the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable and the *Electoral Democracy Index* (ln) transformed as described before as the DV.

Table A5: Regional patterns of external effects on the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'

	LCN	SSF	SAS
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	0	0.00111*	-0.00389
	(.)	(0.000513)	(0.00297)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	0	-0.00108+	0.00420
	(.)	(0.000541)	(0.00319)
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)	0.00000613+	-0.00000131	0.000000275
	(0.00000335)	(0.0000220)	(0.0000192)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.0000647	-0.00149	-0.00183+
	(0.000146)	(0.00100)	(0.000931)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.0000350	0.000318*	0.000421
	(0.0000380)	(0.000134)	(0.000502)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00000801	-0.000393	-0.000287
	(0.000127)	(0.000243)	(0.000433)
Population (ln)	-0.0226	0.0224	-0.235**
	(0.0194)	(0.0301)	(0.0449)
GDP growth (annual %)	0.000453	0.000425	-0.00160+
	(0.000302)	(0.000333)	(0.000724)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.000439	0.000124	0.000968
	(0.000435)	(0.000340)	(0.00557)
Constant	0.367	-0.354	3.972**
	(0.305)	(0.469)	(0.758)
N	504	864	155
Years	1995-2017	1995-2017	1995-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.010	0.010	0.107

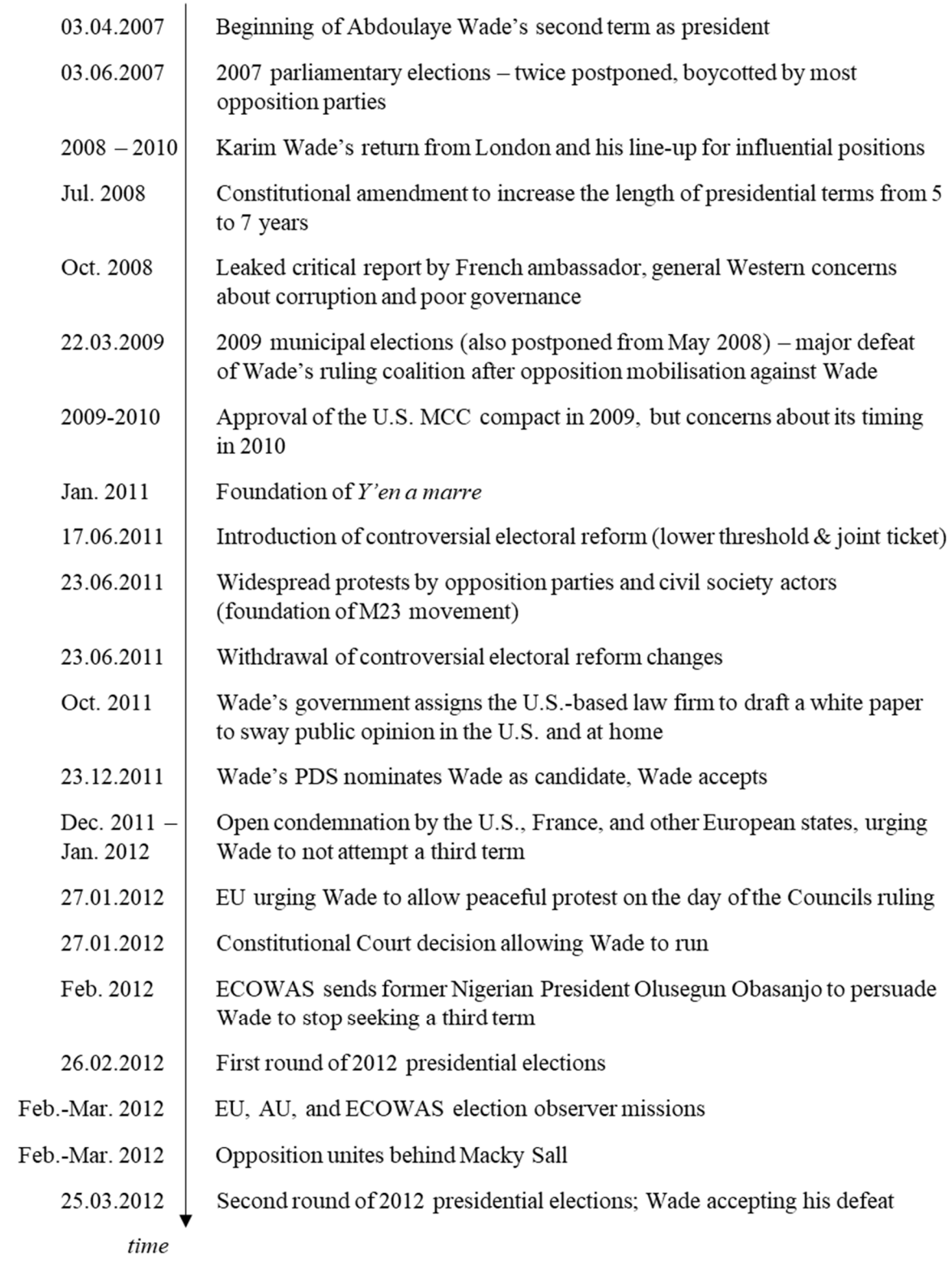
Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: + $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for the model is the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'. The model specification is the same as model 2 in *Table 7*: FE model with the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable and the limited time frame from 1995-2017.

Table A5: Regional patterns of external effects on the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*' (*cont.*)

	ECS	MENA	EAS
Arms sanctioning by democratic countries in the previous year	0.000580	-0.000376	0.00326^{+}
	(0.000362)	(0.000309)	(0.00165)
Arms sanctioning by autocratic countries in the previous year	-0.000000957	-0.000421	-0.0130^{+}
	(0.000256)	(0.000309)	(0.00727)
Democracy aid (current million US$) (one year time lag)	0.0000126	0.0000445**	0.0000163***
	(0.00000964)	(0.0000126)	(0.00000230)
Foreign direct investment net inflows (BoP, current billion US$) in the previous year	0.0000124^{+}	-0.0000418	-0.0000303
	(0.00000643)	(0.000325)	(0.0000609)
Trade with democratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	0.00000739	-0.0000826	-0.0000195
	(0.0000288)	(0.000142)	(0.0000152)
Trade with autocratic countries (current billion US$) in the previous year	-0.0000349	0.000228	0.00000359
	(0.000101)	(0.000174)	(0.0000403)
Population (ln)	-0.0160	-0.0133	-0.0144
	(0.0204)	(0.0159)	(0.0746)
GDP growth (annual %)	-0.000284	-0.000181	0.00109
	(0.000205)	(0.000664)	(0.00176)
Total natural resources rents (% of GDP)	-0.000179	0.000350	0.000773
	(0.000153)	(0.000384)	(0.000591)
Constant	0.252	0.211	0.222
	(0.323)	(0.246)	(1.221)
N	994	366	411
Years	1995-2017	1995-2017	1995-2017
Time and year fixed effects	*yes*	*yes*	*yes*
adj. R^2	0.044	0.082	0.031

Note: Robust standard errors in parentheses below the coefficients; levels of significance: $^{+}$ $p < 0.1$, * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. The DV for the model is the 'Change in the *Electoral Democracy Index*'. The model specification is the same as model 2 in *Table 7*: FE model with the one year time-lagged democracy aid variable and the limited time frame from 1995-2017.

Figure A4: Senegal – timeline of the first observation period



Note: The compilation in the timeline bundles the most important events during the first period under review. This means that only selected events are shown. *Sources:* (Chafer, 2013; Hartmann, 2010; Kelly, 2013; Leininger & Nowack, 2022; Melly, 2012; NSD/FARA Registration Unit, 2011 [2022]).

Figure A5: Senegal – timeline of the second observation period

02.04.2012	Beginning of Macky Sall's first term as president
01.07.2012	2012 parliamentary elections – Sall coalition wins majority
2014	Sall launches the PSE
Mar. 2016	Constitutional referendum to shorten the presidential term from 7 to 5 years, reform for the referendum introduced by the Sall government
30.07.2017	2017 parliamentary elections, Sall's BBY coalition wins 125 of 165 seats
Apr. 2018	Introduction of the *Parrainage*-system and pre-conditions for candidature
Nov. 2018 – Mar. 2019	Karim Wade and Khalifa Sall appeal to the ECOWAS Court of Justice, both appeals are rejected
Dec. 2018	Approval of the second compact under the U.S. MCC fund
Dec. 2018	Sall presenting second phase of the PSE and receives substantial financial support from international donors
24.02.2019	2019 presidential elections, Sall secures first round win, with Idrissa Seck reaching 20.51 percent and Sonko 15.67 percent of the votes
Feb. 2019	EU, AU, and ECOWAS election observer missions
02.04.2019	Beginning of Sall's second presidential term
2019-2023	Sall repeatedly does not rule out a third term attempt
Feb. 2021	First court case against Sonko over rape charges
Mar. 2021	Unexpected five day arrest of Sonko leads to outbreaks of violent protest
Dec. 2021	Sall participates in the Summit for Democracy 2021 initiated by the U.S.
23.01.2022	2022 municipal elections – major defeat of Sall's ruling coalition
05.02.2022	Sall is elected as chairperson of the AU for 2022
31.07.2022	2022 parliamentary elections – Sall's BBY loses majority (82 of 165 seats)
01.06.2023	Sonko is sentenced to two years in prison for 'corrupting youth', disqualifying him for the upcoming presidential elections
03.07.2023	Sall officially rules out a third term
29.07.2023	New charges against Sonko are brought up (including insurrection)
30.07.2023	Sonko is taken into custody and his PASTEF party is dissolved (and a high number of party members and supporters are arrested)

time ▼

Note: The compilation in the timeline bundles the most important events during the second period under review. This means that only selected events are shown. *Sources:* (BBC News, 2016, Januar 18, 2016, March 23, 2021, March 5; Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2020; France 24, 2023, July 29; Heyl & Llanos, 2020; Kane & Ngom, 2023, July 4; Klatt, 2019; Soumaré & Ba, 2021, March 26).

Figure A6: Indonesia – timeline

20.10.2014	Beginning of Jokowi's first term as president
Sep. 2016	Anti-Ahok protests start after Ahok makes controversial quote
02.12.2016	Biggest mass demonstration against Ahok in Jakarta, foundation of M212
2016 – 2017	Misuse of legal and law enforcement apparatus against Islamist groups
July 2017	Introduction of executive regulation to ban organisations
2017 – 2018	Ongoing discussion about presidential nomination requirements, ending with the Constitutional Court's decision on 25 October 2018 that confirmed the new election law enacted in mid-2017
2018 – 2019	Misuse of legal and law enforcement apparatus against more mainstream democratic opposition (e.g. the 2019GP movement)
09.08.2018	Jokowi announces Ma'ruf Amin as his running-mate for the 2019 elections
17.04.2019	2019 presidential and parliamentary elections, Jokowi wins with 55.3 percent and his party remains strongest party with 19.33 percent
Apr. 2019	Prabowo challenges the results and his supporters protest
Sep. 2019	Introduction of reforms restricting the autonomy of the KPK (05.09.2019) & first attempt to overhaul the criminal code
Sep. 2019	Largest pro-democratic protests since the end of the Suharto regime
Sep. 2019	KPK reform passes parliament with high speed and was ratified on 17.09.2019; other reforms are delayed
24.10.2019	Resolution of the European Parliament openly criticising the reforms
Oct. 2019	Prabowo's Gerindra joins Jokowi's coalition and Prabowo becomes minister of defence
2019 – 2022	Ongoing use of repressive measures against pro-democratic protesters, ending pro-democratic student protests in Oct. 2019, but also used against citizens opposing the government's Covid-19 pandemic handling
09.12.2020	Jokowi's son Gibran is elected as mayor of Surakarta
2021 – 2023	Human Rights Reports by the EU and U.S. increasingly point out the Jokowi government's misconducts, EU expresses concerns about civil rights curtailments in Annual Human Rights Dialogues (e.g. on 27.05.2021)
2021 – 2023	Jokowi is invited to prominent international summits (Summits for Democracy in 2021 and 2023 and 2022 G7 summit)
06.12.2022	Indonesian parliament passes controversial overhaul of the criminal code
Dec. 2022	Adoption is accompanied by protests, however, substantially toned down

time ▼

Note: The compilation in the timeline bundles the most important events during the first and second period under review. This means that only selected events are shown. *Sources:* (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019; Delegation of the European Union to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam, 2021, May 27; European Parliament, 2019; Jakarta Globe, 2019, May 21; Mietzner, 2018; Power, 2018, 2020).