Reform in Syria; a case of norm non diffusion
Why Syrian opposition groups seem to be unable to set up a democratic Syria

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Word count: 8.141

Abstract: Why did the overall attempt of Syrian opposition groups to democratize Syria, fail? The purpose of this study is to answer this question and identify this case as a case of norm non-diffusion in the broad framework of social constructivism. This is interesting because most theorists seek to explain norm diffusion in terms of success rather than failure. It does this by defining norms and the way they typically diffuse. The study identifies persuasion tactics as set out by Keck and Sikkink (1999) and combines these tactics with socialization mechanisms as provided by Risse, Ropp and Sikkink (1999). This leads to the exposure of constructivists' models, which will be discussed in the theoretical framework. During the analysis of this study four attempts of democratization are analyzed by these models. The focus of this analysis relies on the successful use of the tactics in a chronological way and stresses the importance of the presence of support by the Syrian state, the Syrian people and the U.S.

Introduction

In 2000 a young Basher Assad succeeded his deceased father as president of Syria (Barry 2007, 304). Basher Assad seemed to open doors for democracy in Syria as Ghadry, president of the Reform Party of Syria states[1]. Intellectuals, writers and journalists seized this change in power by uniting in public spaces to discuss change and democratization in Syria (2005, 64). This peaceful revolution is known as the 'Damascus Spring' and served as an opportunity for dissidents all over the country to establish reform movements. This attempt to bring democracy to Syria, among several others, failed. Not only did democratization not diffuse as a norm during 2000 and 2012, the current situation in Syria is getting worse every day. Other forms of opposition resulted in a violent conflict between now known rebellions and the Syrian government, turning into a civil war with thousands of civilians killed. The United Nations stated on the 18th of April 2013 that the situation in Syria is turning into a 'humanitarian catastrophe' where 'Syrian families have been burned in their own homes'[2]. Therefore, this thesis claims that the Syrian case can be seen as a case of norm non-diffusion.

Research question and an introduction to the research design

The thesis tries to provide new research on the theory of norm diffusion, because most theorists seek to explain norm diffusion in terms of success rather than failure. It does this by executing the thesis within the broad framework of social constructivism. It takes the Syrian case to explain norm non-diffusion by answering the following research question: Why did the overall attempt of Syrian opposition groups to democratize Syria, fail? The research argues that this is due to the Syrian state, the Syrian people and the U.S. This is made clear by highlighting different tactics and models, which will be described in the upcoming theoretical section.

This research argues that these models contain different stages which need to be met in order to make them successful. It combines persuasion tactics as identified by Keck and Sikkink (1999) and argues that these tactics need to be used in a chronological way. The research takes place in a time period from 2000 until 2012. 2000 is argued as the beginning of this research because the 'Damascus Spring' of 2000 seemingly gave dissidents hope to emerge peaceful discussion groups. 2012 is marked as the end of the timeframe because from then on, opposition groups turned reform attempts in to a civil war.

Four attempts over the time period 2000-2012 are analyzed. This is done by secondary literature study and an in-depth interview with a diplomat working in Syria during the time period of 2009-2012.

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[1] Ghadry is one of the most prominent opposition leaders in Syria who calls for democratic reform in this country. He writes freely in essays about opposition groups and democratic attempts. He is able to do this because he fled to the United States.

[2] Michelle Nichols. 'United Nations says Syria conflict a humanitarian catastrophe'. *United Nations on Reuters.com, edition: US*. Visited on 28th of April 2013. http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/04/19/us-syria-crisis-un-idUSBRE93H0ZI20130419

Secondary literature is foremost provided by Ghadry, as literature about opposition in Syria is mainly prohibited by the Syrian state. To maintain the objectiveness of this thesis, other experts like professors and analyzers are also referred to. This is described later on in the upcoming methods section of this thesis.

Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework is divided into five sections. Each section provides different information about the theory and models used to analyze the case. These are mentioned in short in the introduction of this thesis. In the first part it describes social constructivism and defines democracy as a norm. Norms and the way they diffuse are described in the second part. The third section of this theoretical framework describes who diffuses these norms and how. This is done by identifying the persuasion tactics by Keck and Sikkink (1999), as mentioned above. The last part consists of exposing different models. These are the so-called 'spiral model' and 'boomerang pattern'. Finally, the conclusion of this theoretical framework will be made, using a personally developed model. This model combines the persuasion tactics with the spiral model on a micro-structure level.

Social constructivism and norms

The thesis is written through the eyes of social constructivists. That is why it is important to emphasize what theorists state as 'social constructivism'. Constructivism became one of the leading schools in International Relations due to the end of the cold war (Barnett 2008, 162). As Michael Barnett states, constructivists are interested in how agents produce structures and how structures produce agents (2008, 168). In other words, social constructivism is concerned with the defining of the good life and how to get there (2008, 168). This usually involves diffusion and internationalization of certain (international) principles and ideas (2008, 168). These principles and ideas are called norms.

Norms typically embody a shared moral assessment according to Finnemore and Sikkink (1998, 893). Finnemore and Sikkink claim that norms do not emerge right away but are built, structured and propagated by actors known as 'norm entrepreneurs'. Norm entrepreneurs are defined later on. Finnemore and Sikkink state that these norm entrepreneurs try to convince a critical mass to embrace new norms (1998, 895). An example of such a norm is democracy. This ideal type can be defined as a political system in which citizens rule themselves and in which the governance is formed accordingly to the preferences and interests of these citizens (Held 2006, 21; Dahl 1971, 2). Democracy also contains the presence of a substantial array of political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House 2013, 29). Nowadays, not only states have the ability to create awareness of embracing a norm like democracy. Also other international actors are able to diffuse norms, as Barnett

(2008) highlights in describing politics through the eyes of constructivists.

Norm diffusion, TAN and norm life cycle

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) developed a model called the 'norm life cycle'. This model contains of different stages which describes the process of norm diffusion and eventually norm influence. The norm life cycle includes three critical stages. These stages are each characterized by different actors, motives and agreements (1998, 895). The first stage is a stage of power and persuasion by norm entrepreneurs to try to convince norm leaders to embrace the new norm. This process is called norm emergence (1998, 895). Agreement among a critical mass of (state) actors can create a tipping point. The tipping point is the moment at which the threshold of norm implementation has been reached (Gladwell 2000, 12). Stage two of the norm life cycle is called norm cascade. In this stage, norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers (Barnett 2008, 170). Whenever this is the case, the norm life cycle is completed and the norm reaches the stage of internalization; the norm has a 'taken-for-granted' quality, which makes conformance with the norm almost automatically (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 903).

Diffusion usually takes place when a group of actors wants to influence policy by their values or ideas. This group of actors is called norm entrepreneurs. If norm entrepreneurs work transnational with likeminded groups, their network is called a transnational advocacy network (hereafter named TAN), according to Keck and Sikkink (1999, 89). They seek to improve opportunities for dialogue and exchange by building new international resources available to actors on a domestic level (1999, 89). Such a network does not appear right away. It usually appears when channels between the domestic group and the government are hampered. Because these channels are unable to resolve conflict the influential characteristics of the networks are set in motion to call upon, what Keck and Sikkink state, a 'boomerang' pattern (1999, 90).

Persuasion tactics and the boomerang pattern

Keck and Sikkink state that TANs often use several kinds of persuasion tactics to diffuse norms. If the use of persuasion tactics happens in a successful way, a boomerang pattern will be exposed (1999, 95). Persuasion tactics include the following types of politics: information politics, symbolic politics, leverage politics and accountability politics (1999, 95). Each of them will be discussed briefly.

Information is crucial in a way that it links network members together and therefore improves the effectiveness of the network (1999, 95). Information politics refers to 'the ability to move politically usable information quickly and credibly to where it will have the most impact' (1999, 95). It can provide a platform for stories told by people whose lives have been affected. This can give domestic groups an opportunity to frame issues simply in terms of 'right' or 'wrong' so that people are

stimulated to take action (Keck and Sikkink 1999, 96). Without these individual cases, activists are not able to motivate people to change politics and international contact plays a big role in it; domestic groups largely depend on them to get information out (1999, 96).

According to Keck and Sikkink, symbolic politics can also be useful for activists to frame issues. But symbolic politics can never be that persuasive without the strong support of international actors. Therefore, domestic groups try to leverage these actors to gain influence. Keck and Sikkink define two types of leverage, namely; material leverage and moral leverage (1999, 96). Whilst moral leverage calls upon the so-called 'mobilization of shame', material leverage involves other methods by linking an issue such as human rights to the cut-off of military and economic aid (1999, 97).

Accountability politics refers to the eventual 'position swap', which domestic actors try to accomplish by campaigning. This 'position swap' can mean for example the swap of a state from opposing human rights to internalizing human rights and after that, adopting laws concerning these rights (1999, 97). Usually a state commits itself to the norm because of international pressure. This is marked as the end of persuasion. Actors can hold the state accountable for their actions because the state says it has committed itself to the norm. When a state still repeatedly defiles the norm, this can lead to public scrutiny (1999, 97). When all the above mentioned tactics are succeeded, a boomerang is complete. After one boomerang is reached, a spiral model can be set in motion.

The spiral model

Risse, Ropp and Sikkink outline the process by which international norms are internalized and implemented domestically. This process will eventually set a spiral model in motion and therefore reaches the last stages of the norm life cycle. The spiral model interrelates processes that influence and strengthen one another and recognizes the gradual progression of change (Shor 2008, 121). The norm reaches the stage of internalization; it has a 'taken-for-granted' quality (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 903). The spiral model is set up by different causal mechanisms. These mechanisms influence each other as Risse, Ropp and Sikkink argue (1999, 5). This is made clear by Figure 1. This process can be defined as a process of (norm) socialization (1999, 5). Risse, Ropp and Sikkink distinguish between

Figure 1. The influence of causal mechanisms - the process of norm socialization
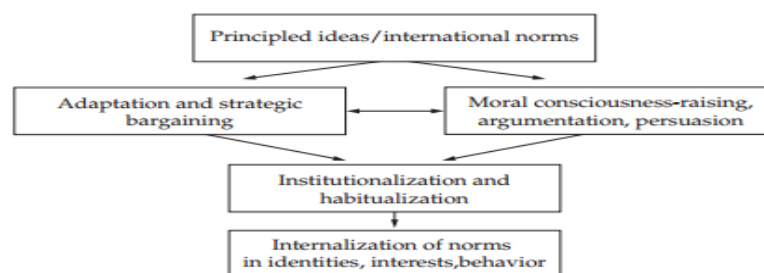
Source: Risse, T. et al. 1999. "The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change", *Cambridge University Press*, edited by Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp and Kathryn Sikkink (1).

three types of causal mechanisms. These are: the processes of instrumental adaption and strategic bargaining; the processes of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion and the processes of institutionalization and habitualization (1999, 5). The influence of one mechanism on the other is made clear by the links between the different processes, as seen in Figure 1.

The significance of each process varies within the different stages of the socialization process. Instrumental adaptation usually prevails in early stages of norms socialization (1999, 5). On the other hand, Figure 1 suggests that this can influence the mechanism of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion. Both mechanisms can lead to the third stage of the overall process of norm socialization, which can be stated as the end stage of the norm life cycle: institutionalization and habitualization. This thesis agrees with Risse and his colleagues that such a process (which will eventually set out a spiral model as described above) consist on a micro level of 'little boomerangs' (1999, 14). This thesis therefore assumes that persuasion tactics (the microstructure of a boomerang as mentioned above) can be linked in a chronological way to the causal mechanisms and socialization processes (the microstructure of a spiral model). This is outlined in the last section of this theoretical framework.

Combining microstructures of two models

Norm diffusion starts with the diffusion of a principle idea or international norm which is not present. At this premature phase of norm diffusion, the norm entrepreneurs emerge. This is described at the beginning of the theoretical framework. Finnemore and Sikkink state that these norm entrepreneurs try to convince a critical mass to embrace new norms (1998, 895). This thesis therefore argues that norm entrepreneurs need to make use of information politics as a persuasion tactic during the first phase of norm diffusion. It stimulates people to take action, according to Keck and Sikkink (1999, 96).

Figure 2 – Combining tactics and mechanism at a first point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing critical mass of embracing the new norm	Norm entrepreneurs	Information Politics	Instrumental adaption and strategic bargaining; moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion

This study claims that if a critical mass is convinced by the urge of the norm, a second persuasion tactic can be used. I argue that not merely because of information politics, moral consciousness-raising

is reached. Rather, if information politics is used in a successful way it can start a process of moral consciousness-raising which will influence the other mechanisms. The next step for the TAN (which the group of norm entrepreneurs at this point in time can be called) is to make use of symbolic politics as a persuasion tactic. As Keck and Sikkink state, it can create awareness among the people about the norm (1999, 96).

Figure 3 – Combining tactics and mechanism at a second point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing the people and the state of embracing the new norm	TAN	Symbolic politics	Instrumental adaption and strategic bargaining; moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, dialogue and persuasion

Note that this study assumes that diffusion of the norm ideal goes through a mechanism of moral consciousness-raising. However, as the theory presumes, instrumental adaption can also make people (or the state) diffuse the norm. Therefore this has also been taken as a part of a mechanism which can be set in motion. As an example, Risse and Sikkink set out tactical concessions made by governments to adjust to pressures. These might include the release of political prisoners or the signing of international agreements, mostly done to overcome international sanctions (1999, 12).

Leverage politics is assumed by this study as a persuasion tactic to strengthen the previous mentioned tactics. If information politics and symbolic politics are set in motion, leverage politics can be used to make the previous tactics even more persuasive. This claim is stressed by Keck and Sikkink (1999, 96), as they state that symbolic politics can never be that powerful without the strong support of international actors. This study claims that if leverage politics is used in a successful manner, this can lead to institutionalization and habitualization of the norm. This is made clear in Figure 4.

Figure 4 – Combining tactics and mechanism at a third point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing the people and the state of institutionalizing the new norm	TAN and international actor	Leverage politics	Institutionalization and habitualization

At the end phase of a successful boomerang, accountability politics can be used as a persuasion tactic. Because this study argues that at this phase institutionalization of the norm is set in motion, the TAN

can hold the state responsible for committing itself to the norm as mentioned before by the explanation of the tactic provided by Keck and Sikkink (1999, 96).

Figure 5 – Combining tactics and mechanism at a last point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Holding the state accountable for committing itself to the norm	TAN and international actor	Accountability politics	Internalization of norms in identities, interests, behavior

This study tried to make a theoretical attribution for the constructivists' theory of norm diffusion by combing the above mention tactics and mechanisms. Therefore it claims the following expectations;

- persuasion tactics need to be successfully used in a chronological way in order to set up a boomerang pattern

- by then 'little boomerangs' can make a successful spiral model

- the spiral model completes the norm life cycle so that the norm successfully diffuses

It combines these expectations into the following hypothesis: 'The persuasion tactics, set out by Keck and Sikkink, need to be met in a chronological way in order to make a successful boomerang and therefore lead to successful diffusion of a norm.'

Research design, Methods and Operationalization

This research consists of a single case approach done through the eyes of the constructivists. This is done by secondary literature study and an in-depth interview through e-mail correspondence with a Dutch diplomat who worked in Syria during the time period of 2000-2012. The diplomat wishes to remain anonymous. A justification of the secondary literature is already made in the introduction of the thesis. This method section will concentrate on the specification and justification of the choice of a single case approach, and especially the case of Syria as an explanation of norm non-diffusion. This section will therefore give an introduction to the attempts examined in the analysis. Finally, an explanation will be given on how these attempts are examined in the upcoming analysis section. This includes the operationalization of the variables used in the analysis.

Case selection

As Hague and Harrop state in their 'Introduction to Comperative Politics and Government', case studies possess broader significance by definition but this added value can be acquired in various ways (2010, 44). They outline five types of case studies: representative, prototypical, deviant, exemplary and critical cases (2010, 45: See Box. 3.2). I argue that this case is a deviant case. The Syrian case

(2000-2012) is argued to be the exception (norm non-diffusion) to the rule (norm diffusion). According to Hague and Harrop the deviant case study enhances our understanding of typical examples by providing a contrast with the norm (2010, 45). This study argues that therefore the Syrian case is an excellent case to study norm non-diffusion and claims that it does not only enhances our understanding of typical examples, but the Syrian case can even contribute to the theory about norm diffusion. The unit of analysis are the attempts made by the Syrian opposition TAN. The timeframe chosen is 2000-2012. Mentioned in short in the introduction of this thesis, this choice of timeframe can be justified by the opening for democratization with the Damascus Spring (2000) and the beginning of a civil war in 2012, when attempts for democratization are no longer peaceful.

An introduction to the attempts

The research takes four attempts of the Syrian opposition TAN to analyze norm non-diffusion in the case of democratization in Syria. The TAN consists of Syrian opposition actors named; theAl-Kawakibi Forum, Naeesah, the Reform Party of Syria and the Syrian Democratic Coalition. This study analyses these attempts in-depth and justifies this approach because by in-depth analysis, the analysis can exposure the tactics and causal mechanisms. This is called a qualitative approach.

The Al-Kawakibi Forum emerged from the Damascus Spring in 2000. According to Ghadry, it is one of the most prominent discussion groups and served as an inspiration for his Reform Party of Syria (2005, 63). This is why this research takes the Al-Kawakibi Forum as its first actor to examining attempts of democratization in Syria. Although not much information about this actor is available, the Al-Kawakibi Forum attempted to talk about oppression, freedom and justice as stated in Ghadry' essays about this first wave of democratization which he calls 'a false dawn' (2005, 63). After the shutdown of this forum, made by the State Security Department in order of Assad, a few dissidents remained.

One of them is called Naeesah, and his attempt leads to the introduction of the second actor which this research examines. According to Nir Boms, a researcher at Tel Aviv University and a specialist on Middle Eastern affairs, Naeesah started a petition against the Baath Party[3]. This petition was signed by 7,000 Syrians in March 2004. Naeesah was arrested after handing the petition over. This research argues that Naeesah' attempt is crucial to analyze because it received a lot of international attention. International attention may lead to change in state behavior as mentioned in the theoretical framework. But because Naeesah' petition also did not bring democracy to Syria this research continues by analyzing the attempts of the Reform Party of Syria and the 'Syrian Democratic Coalition' which emerged in 2003 until now.

In 2003, the Reform Party of Syria was established. Ghadry set up a US-based Syrian opposition party which consisted of peace committed Syrian-Americans, Euro-Americans and native

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[3] Nir Boms, "A Syrian Struggle: This Is No Democracy," *National Review Online*, May 26, 2004.

Syrians who were determined to 'see that a New Syria will be reborn and embraces real democratic and economic reforms', as stated in their manifest[4]. According to Ghadry, working closely with the U.S. enabled the party to set up initiatives like a radio station to inform the Syrian people about democracy (2005, 64). The last actor which this research examines was also born out of these initiatives. The 'Syrian Democratic Coalition' (2004) is a united front of thirteen civic and democratization organizations (Ghadry 2005, 64). One of their attempts, which is the last examined effect in this research, was a letter from 'the Syrian Democratic Coalition' to Barack Obama. The letter asks for support to bring a peaceful and democratic outcome of the conflict in Syria[5]. The research examines this letter because it is the last known peaceful struggle, dated from August 2012.

Process tracing and operationalization

These attempts are analyzed via process tracing. According to Hague and Harrop, process tracing involves identifying and describing the historical sequences linking a cause to an effect (2010, 54). They give the example question; through what mechanisms do defeat in war lead to a change of regime? This study provides a similar inquiry as it questions what tactics explains the failure attempts for democratization. I also argue that these tactics are need to be used in a chronological way. This is analyzed by sequencing an order, according to Hague and Harrop, in which events unfold. This helps to account for process tracing (2010, 56). Hague and Harrop claim that 'process tracing reconnects political science with history and provides a mode of explanation based on causal chains, rather than general laws or statistical relationships' (2010, 54). I argue that this case can be examined via process tracing as the process of norm socialization depends on the right choice of tactics' used in the Syrian case. The 'right choice' is operationalized as 'successes'.

Success and failure are crucial concepts in terms of the analysis. Therefore they are operationalized in this section as followed:
- 'Success of tactics' is defined as setting up a boomerang
- 'Success of a boomerang' is defined as setting up a spiral model
- 'Success of a spiral model' is defined as completing the norm life cycle
Failure is operationalized as 'a lack of diffusion of democratization as a norm'. Success of the attempt is identified as the dependent variable during the analysis. Support of the Syrian state, the Syrian people and the U.S. are identified as the independent variables during the analysis. 'Support' can be defined as stressing the attempt by means of action. The actors are operationalized as followed:
- 'the Syrian state' is defined as the Baath Party of Assad
- 'the Syrian people' is defined as the people (in other words, they are not intellectuals)

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[4] Reform Party of Syria "About the Reform Party of Syria". January, 2005.
http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/dv/about%20reform%20party%20of%20syria/about%20refo
rm%20party%20of%20syriaen.pdf, visited at 26th of April, 2013.
[5] Appendix A. Source: www.americansyriancoalition.org

- 'the U.S.' is defined by the U.S. president (depends on the moment in time whether this is Bush or Obama) and influential U.S. politicians.

Analysis & results: four attempts of norm non-diffusion

The attempts are defined in persuasion tactics, provided by the theory of Keck and Sikkink (1999). The analysis continues with exposing the causal mechanism in terms of the socialization process. It does this by linking the tactics to mechanisms of the socialization process as described in the theoretical framework. The research argues that a successful spiral model was not reached, and therefore the norm life cycle of democratization failed to complete. The analysis is made by examining the dependent variable (success of the attempt) in relation with the independent variables; support of the Syrian state, the Syrian people and the U.S.

The Al-Kawakibi Forum (2000-2002)

According to Ghadry' essay on Syrian reform (2005), The Al-Kawakibi Forum talked about justice, oppression and freedom. This linked the network members together and improved the effectiveness of the network. Although the forum attracted mainly intellectuals, it served as an open discussion room so it was accessible also to the people. But as Ghadry states, the intellectuals were unable to continue these discussions due to the omnipresent role of the State Security Department (2005, 63). In 2002 the Al-Kawakibi Forum was shut down. A campaign of harassment was set up by the Syrian government against the Al-Kawakibi Forum and its board members, mainly to slander the participating reformists against the Syrian people. Ghadry contends that due to slandering, Assad kept his legitimacy towards the people (2005, 63). This study argues that even though information politics could not successfully been used because of the shutdown, it can still be seen as an attempt towards the use of this tactic. During this first attempt, no clear evidence of international help was shown. This attempt is analyzed as the first stage in the norm life cycle.

Combining tactics and mechanism at a first point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing critical mass of embracing the new norm	Norm entrepreneurs	Information Politics	Instrumental adaption and strategic bargaining; moral consciousness-raising, argumentation and dialogue

Figure 6 - The Al-Kawakibi Forum (2000-2002)

	Boomerang tactic: Information politics	*Spiral mechanism (try to) set in motion by this attempt*: Moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, persuasion	*Is next step reached for a boomeramg set in motion by this attempt?*
(Support of) Syrian state	No	No	No
(Support of) Syrian people	No	No	No
(Support of) U.S.	No	-	No

As seen in Figure 6, success of information politics did not take place and therefore this attempt can be marked as a failure. There was no support from the Syrian state, people and the U.S. I argued from the top table (which is also provided in the theoretical section) that if information politics is successfully used as a tactic, then a mechanism of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, and persuasion is tried to set in motion. But since the successful use of information politics as a persuasion tactic did not take place, this mechanism was not set in motion. The attempt was not persuasive enough.

I argue that if the use of a persuasion tactic failed and a mechanism was not set in motion, the next step of a boomerang is not reached. With regarding to the three variables, this is the explanation:
- Syrian state: No - Suppressed the forum by shutting the forum down
- Syrian people: No - Were not persuade by the forum due to the harassment campaign
- the U.S.: No - According to Ghadry, were not in the picture during this attempt

Naeesah and his petition against the Baath Party of Assad (2004)

Naeesah handed over his petition against the Baath Party to the Syrian state in March 2004. Naeesah framed democracy into a symbolic event by peacefully setting up this petition and hand it over to the Baath Party. The petition is therefore marked as an attempt towards democratization. He received the human rights prize by the Ludovic-Trarieux International Human Rights Prize Committee in Brussels. Due to the attention his arrest gained, Syrian authorities granted Naeesah permission to travel to Brussels to accept his prize in fear of a public relation nightmare (Ghadry 2005, 64).

Combining tactics and mechanism at a second point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing the people and the state of embracing the new norm	TAN	Symbolic politics	Instrumental adaption and strategic bargaining; moral consciousness-raising.

Figure 7 - Naeesah and his petition against the Baath Party of Assad (2004)

	Tactic: Symbolic politics	*Spiral mechanism (try to) set in motion by this attempt*: Adaptation and strategic bargaining	*Is next step reached for a boomerang set in motion by this attempt?*
(Support of) Syrian state	No	Yes	No
(Support of) Syrian people	Yes	-	No
(Support of) U.S.	Yes	-	Yes

This attempt is analyzed as the second stage in the norm life cycle as Naeesah was influenced by the Al-Kawakibi Forum, according to Ghadry. Figure 7 shows partial success of the use of symbolic politics as a persuasion tactic. I argue that it sets a mechanism of adaptation and strategic bargaining in motion because Naeesah did attend a prize ceremony because of his petition, but no clear democratic legislation was made due to the petition. There was still no moral driven action taken by the Syrian state as one could argue that only the mechanism of adaptation and strategic bargaining was set in motion. The theory suggests that even from a mechanism as adaptation and strategic bargaining, institutionalization of democracy as a norm can be reached. But this was not the case for Syria. I argue that this is because information politics in the first stage was not successfully used as a persuasion tactic, as tactics need to be used in a chronological manner. Moreover, raising moral public support for the acceptation of the norm is important for successful diffusion.

Regarding the explanation of the three variables and the boomerang pattern not set in motion, the next claims are made:

- Syrian state: No - Only released Naeesah on bail; no democratic legislation
- Syrian people: No - Only 7,000 Syrians signed the petition
- the U.S: Yes - Tried to release Naeesah by diplomatic sources, but failed

U.S. foreign policy during the time period of 2000-2012

The U.S. was involved in three out of four examined attempts. Their support did not contribute to successful diffuse of democracy in Syria. Therefore I highlight their actions in short. This thesis suggests that the U.S. tried to diffuse democracy in Syria by moral leverage and material leverage. Claude Salhani, a political analyst on Middle East issues, states that President Bush signed an act called the 'Syria Accountability Act' in 2003 (2004, 2). It concerned 'a more aggressive policy towards Damascus' and included economic sanctions together with diplomatic pressure. According to Salhani, Bush signed the act because he wanted 'to get rid of all the failed political and economic doctrines in the Middle East' (2004, 2). Because Naeesah was not released and neither did Syria democratizes on account of the Act, the efforts made by the U.S. failed. Moreover this study argues that the hardline approach of the U.S. backfired against the reformists as it addresses the hate against

the West. Anders Strindberg, a United Nations correspondent, states that due to the lack of a strong Syrian-based wing of the RPS, rumors about the insincerely purpose of the RPS continue to rise so that the party is facing a lot of contempt amongst Syrian people (2004, 64). As a result, the last examined actors, the Reform Party of Syria and the Syrian Democratic Coalition, could not complete a successful spiral.

Radio initiative of the Reform Party of Syria (2003-2012)

The Reform Party of Syria and the Syrian Democratic Coalition were set up in 2003 but their attempts date from later on in this time period. That is why they are analyzed as attempt three and four. Ghadry states in his essays that the knowledge (and therefore acceptation) about democracy within Syria is limited (2005, 64). By launching a radio station, called Radio Free Syria, Ghadry and his Reform Party of Syria wanted to educate the Syrian people about democracy. This claim is also made by a Dutch diplomat working in Syria in the time period of 2000-2012. He states that 'Syrian people could not embrace such a norm as democracy because the Syrian state holds on to a zero tolerance policy regarding democratization. Therefore education of democracy is important'[6]. The work of mass media was banned in Syria (Kostyaev 2013, 67). But The Reform Party of Syria was able to launch the radio station illegally during the summer of 2004 because they worked in the U.S. and had access to sources like money and information (Ghadry 2005, 64).

Combining tactics and mechanism at a third point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Convincing the people and the state of institutionalizing the new norm	TAN and international actor	Leverage politics	Institutionalization and habitualization

Figure 8 - Radio initiative of the Reform Party of Syria (2003-2012)

	Tactic*: Information politics	*Spiral mechanism (try to) set in motion by this attempt*: Moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, persuasion	*Is next step reached for a boomerang set in motion by this attempt?*
(Support of*) Syrian state	No	No	No
(Support of*) Syrian people	No	No	No
(Support of*) U.S.	Yes	-	No

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[6] Quoted interview with a Dutch diplomat who worked in Syria during the time period of 2000-2012. He experienced closely how Assad works. He wishes to remain anonymous.

At this point, the analysis of the attempt does not match with the theoretical model. I argued that at the third stage of the norm life cycle, successful use of leverage politics as a tactic sets a mechanism of institutionalization and habitualization in motion. However, the radio initiative needed to use information politics instead of leverage politics as a persuasion tactic because the Syrian people were not well informed about democracy at this point. Due to the use of information politics as a persuasion tactic, the TAN still needed to diffuse the norm by mechanism of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, and persuasion. But as Figure 8 shows this mechanism was also not set in motion.

I argue that if the use of information politics as a persuasion tactic failed and a mechanism was not set in motion, the next step of a boomerang is not reached. With regarding to the three variables, this is the explanation for the third attempt:

- Syrian state: No – Did not taken over democracy by means of the radio initiative
- Syrian people: No – Did not taken action by means of the radio initiative
- the U.S: No – Even though they supported the initiative by means of money, no leverage was made because of it

A letter to Barack Obama written by the Syrian Democratic Coalition (2003-2012)

In a letter sent on the 29th of August 2012 directed to president Obama, the 'Syrian Democratic Coalition', under the management of Mahmoud Khattab, called upon support to bring a peaceful and democratic outcome on the conflict in Syria. This letter is admitted in Appendix A of this thesis. In this stage civil war in Syria already started. The letter is still part of the analysis because it calls upon a democratic outcome and was written by a democratic opposition group. The letter asked Obama to 'fund efforts to create democratic institutions'[7]. This study argues that this attempt can therefore be seen as an attempt towards persuasion by leverage politics.

Figure 5 – Combining tactics and mechanism at a last point in the norm life cycle

Phase	Actor	Tactic necessary (Boomerang pattern)	Mechanism set in motion if tactic is used successfully (Spiral model)
Holding the state accountable for committing itself to the norm	TAN and international actor	Accountability politics	Internalization of norms in identities, interests, behavior

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[7] Appendix A. Source: www.americansyriancoalition.org

Figure 9 - A letter to Barack Obama written by the Syrian Democratic Coalition (2003-2012)

	Tactic*: Leverage politics	*Spiral mechanism (try to) set in motion by this attempt:* Moral consciousness-raising, argumentation, persuasion	*Is next step reached for a boomerang set in motion by this attempt?*
(Support of*) Syrian state	No	No	No
(Support of*) Syrian people	-	No	No
(Support of*) U.S.	-	-	No

The letter is seen as the last attempt and is therefore analyzed as the last stage of the norm life cycle of democratization in Syria. According to the thesis' theoretical model, if persuasion tactics are successfully used in a chronological way this leads to the last stage of the norm life cycle. Therefore a mechanism of internalization of norms in identities, interests, behavior is set in motion by making use of accountability politics as a persuasion tactic. However, leverage politics as a tactic is used during this attempt. I argue that this was not successful because there was no support and no spiral mechanism and boomerang was set in motion. Therefore the chronological use of tactics did not happen in the diffusion of democratization in Syria.

I argue that if the use of information politics as a persuasion tactic failed and a mechanism was not set in motion, the next step of a boomerang is not reached. With regarding to the three variables, this is the explanation for the last attempt examined:

- the Syrian state: No - Did not taken over democracy or any democratic institutions by means of the letter
- the Syrian people: No – Did not take democratic action by means of the letter
- the U.S.: Did not take action by means of the letter

Findings of Syrian democratization attempts and the norm life cycle

Whilst summarizing these findings, three claims concerning the spiral model can be made. First, the examined attempts did not use all of the persuasion tactics set out by Keck and Sikkink. This study claims that this is due to the fact that information politics as a persuasion tactic failed at the first attempt. Even though the first attempt was followed by persuasion of symbolic politics, the study argues that this was just a false dawn. The release of Naeesah was an instrumental adaptation to international pressure by the Syrian state. No democratic legislation was made because of the petition. Therefore, the study claims that failure of use of information politics leads to adaptation and strategic bargaining. Even though the spiral model suggests that adaptation and strategic bargaining may also lead to institutionalization of a norm, for the Syrian case it did not open a window of opportunity.

This leads to the second claim that the mechanism of moral consciousness-raising, argumentation and persuasion needs to be met to continue successful norm diffusion. The study

suggests that this can be done by successful use of information politics as a persuasion tactic. Examined as a case of non-diffusion, and therefore a failure instead of success, the Syrian case stresses this claim as supported mainly by the analysis of the Al-Kawakibi Forum and the Reform Party of Syria. At this phase, the process of norm socialization does not go further than stage two of the norm life cycle model by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998). This is emphasized with a schematic view of the results, at the end of this section.

The last claim concerns the support of international actors. Keck and Sikkink argue that persuasion tactics can never be powerful without the strong support of international actors (1990, 96). The analyses of three out of four attempts supports this claim as the inefficient support of the U.S. seems to play a role in the non-diffusion of democracy as a norm in Syria. Support of the U.S. was not only inefficient (as it leveraged by moral and material means) but this study also suggests that it harmed further attempts as hate towards Western oriented ideas like democracy increases among the Syrian people. This is also stressed by the Dutch diplomat, whom I have interviewed for this study. He states that 'effective help from a powerful actor like the U.S. is needed to raise awareness about the need for democracy towards the Syrian people as well as the Syrian state'[8]. This claim concludes the analysis section because this hate hampers successful use of information politics, a condition which successful norm diffusion relies on according to this analysis. A schematic account for the norm life cycle of democracy in Syria is shown in Figure 10, including the tactics, mechanisms and therefore the absent of a boomerang pattern and a spiral model to complete the norm life cycle.

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[8] Quoted interview with a Dutch diplomat who worked in Syria during the time period of 2000-2012. He experienced closely how Assad works. He wishes to remain anonymous.

Figure 10 - Non diffusion of democratization in Syria, as defined by the mechanism of the spiral model and the persuasion tactics
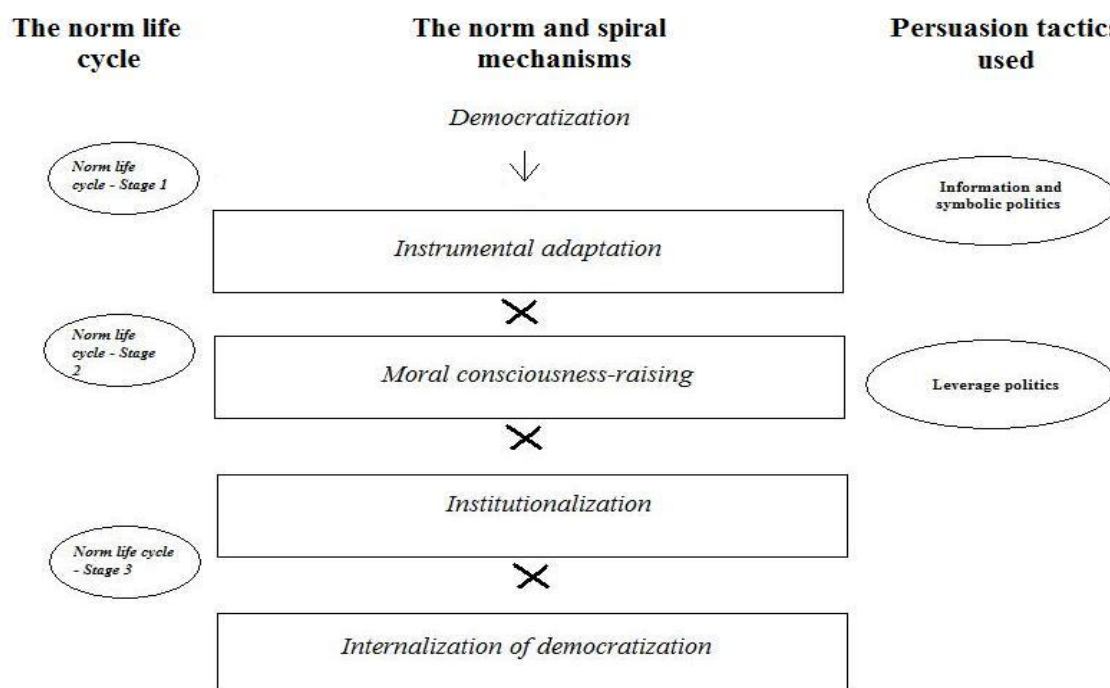
Conclusion and discussion

This study showed that, whilst some diffusion took place during the time period of 2000-2012, democracy as a norm was not taken over by the Syrian government. Why did the overall attempt of Syrian opposition groups to democratize Syria, fail? By analyzing four attempts of democratization, (executed by four actors who can be defined as the democratic TAN of Syria) this research tried to explain a case of norm non-diffusion. As examined all of these attempts failed to set up a successful spiral model in which democratization in Syria would succeed. The study claims that this is due to a lack of support from the Syrian state, the Syrian people and the U.S. regarding the use of persuasion tactics as defined by Keck and Sikkink (1999). Therefore, this study argues that democracy as a norm could not complete the norm life cycle as defined by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998).

Information politics and support of the people

The analysis took the norm life cycle as a broad model within the theory of social constructivism and norm diffusion. It claimed that within the norm life cycle, different tactics are used in different stages during the diffusion of a norm. Unlike most studies, this study took the tactics as a method to examine non-diffusion instead of diffusion. It resulted in several outcomes who can lead to theoretical discussion about conditions of the theory and models. It examined the hypothesis: 'The persuasion

tactics, set out by Keck and Sikkink, need to be met in a chronological way in order to make a successful boomerang and therefore lead to successful diffusion of a norm.' The Syrian case did not meet these conditions as information politics failed two times as a persuasion tactic.

This study discussed that the successful use of information politics as a persuasion tactic is crucial in setting up a boomerang which will eventually lead to successful diffusing of a norm. As Keck and Sikkink mentioned, information politics provides a platform for people whose lives have been affected. This stimulates people to take action. In 2004 7,000 people signed the petition of Naeesah against the Baath Party of Assad but suspicions against Western oriented ideas like democracy remained. One could argue that if diffusion domestically does not work, the TAN needs to use leverage politics as a persuasion tactic. I examined pressure and support by an international actor, but argued that in this case this only sets a mechanism of instrumental adaption in motion. This contributed for non-diffusion of democracy in Syria. However, this thesis argues that if support by an international actor sets a mechanism of moral consciousness-raising in motion this might lead to diffusion.

Support of an international actor

Study on norm diffusion showed that state leaders can be taught new values and interests. Jeffrey Checkel (1997), an American academic associated with the theory of constructivist school, uses the example of Ukraine. Here new laws concerning human rights were implemented, strongly supported by a powerful international actor like the European Union (1997, 482). Nongovernmental organizations and other domestic actors had long been ignored due to a poor and weak organization. However, the efficient role of the European Union in terms of implementing the norm was crucial (1997, 482). On the contrary, in terms of non-diffusion, this study highlights Checkel his claim. It highlights the inefficient role played by the U.S in terms of diffusing democracy and therefore states that success of an attempt indeed relies heavily on support of an international actor. As argued in the paragraph above, this leads to a mechanism of moral consciousness-raising and states that this is crucial in diffusing a norm like democracy. Diffusion driven by moral consciousness increases the acceptation of the norm, as I argued during the analysis that the 'hardline approach' by the U.S. backfired against the domestic opposition groups in Syria. This claim goes back to the premature phase of the norm life cycle and the use of persuasion tactics in a chronological order, as the people first need to be aware of the urge of the norm (in this case the Western oriented norm, democracy) by information politics. This is why this thesis argues that the overall attempt for democratization in Syria, during the years of 2000-2012, failed.

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APPENDIX A – LETTER TO OBAMA, AUGUST 29th 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama

President of the United States of America

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20005

August 29, 2012

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the Coalition for a Democratic Syria, a partnership of Syrian American groups seeking to end the bloodshed and foster a transition to a free and democratic Syria, I write with respect to your views on this important issue.

We believe that the conflict in Syria has reached a critical point. As you know, the Assad regime has consistently defied the international community's efforts to bring about a diplomatic resolution, instead engaging in a campaign of brutality against the Syrian people that has resulted in over 23,000 dead, created more than 250,000 refugees, and caused a humanitarian crisis that affects some 2.5 million people. Just this past weekend, hundreds of bodies were discovered in Daraya as the result of a concerted effort by the regime to target civilian populations with airpower, artillery and mass executions.

The United States has a vital national security interest in ending the bloodshed and supporting efforts to build a free and democratic society in Syria. We believe that by working with regional partners to strengthen support for vetted members of the Syrian opposition, America can hasten the end of the Assad regime and ultimately save lives, reduce the risk of regional instability, and increase our nation's ability to shape the outcome in a critical region where we have major interests and crucial allies.

We appreciate your administration's strong support for diplomatic initiatives to facilitate a democratic transition in Syria, and for your efforts to address the dire humanitarian situation within Syria and for refugees in neighboring countries. With so much at stake, we would now

be interested in learning more about your administration's Syria policy going forward.
Specifically, we advocate the following three steps to bring about a peaceful, democratic
outcome, and ask that you clarify the degree to which you support:

(1) Working closely with regional partners to significantly increase the supply of key
defensive arms – including anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons – and strengthen
intelligence, training and funding support to carefully vetted elements of the Free Syrian
Army;
(2) Providing robust diplomatic support for tougher measures necessary to protect
civilians and enforce the broadly supported goal of a democratic transition in Syria,
including creation of no-fly zones; and
(3) Funding efforts by local governance councils operating in liberated areas to provide
basic services to the people, create democratic institutions, and enhance the rule of
law.

We will be sending a similar request to Governor Romney. We appreciate your interest in this
important issue, and look forward to hearing your views
.
Sincerely,
Mahmoud Khattab
Chairman, Coalition for a Democratic Syria