WORKING
PAPERS

Democracy

Assistance and

 NGO Strategies

 in

Post-Communist

 Societies

**SARAH E.
MENDELSON**

**AND JOHN K.
GLENN**

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT
for International Peace

Carnegie Endowment Working Papers

Carnegie Endowment Working Papers present new research by Endowment associates and their collaborators from other institutions. The series includes new time-sensitive research and key excerpts from larger works in progress. Comments from readers are most welcome; please reply to the authors at the address above or by e-mail to pubs@ceip.org.

* * *

About the Authors

Sarah E. Mendelson served as director of research for this project. She is Assistant Professor of International Politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and was a resident associate at the Carnegie Endowment in 1997–1998. Her research focuses on political change in Russia and U.S.-Russian security relations.

John K. Glenn is the European Union Center of New York postdoctoral fellow at New York University. His main area of research is civil society and democracy transition in Eastern Europe. He served as project manager for this project.

About the Carnegie Endowment

THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing cooperation between nations and promoting active international engagement by the United States. Founded in 1910, its work is nonpartisan and dedicated to achieving practical results. Through research, publishing, convening and, on occasion, creating new institutions and international networks, Endowment associates shape fresh policy approaches. Their interests span geographic regions and the relations among governments, business, international organizations, and civil society, focusing on the economic, political, and technological forces driving global change. Through its Carnegie Moscow Center, the Endowment helps develop a tradition of public policy analysis in the states of the former Soviet Union and improve relations between Russia and the United States. The Endowment publishes *Foreign Policy,* one of the world's leading journals of international politics and economics, which reaches readers in more than 120 countries and several languages.

The Global Policy Program addresses the policy challenges arising from globalizing processes of economic, political, and technological change. Research projects span many areas, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the increased international movement of people, the consequences of the information revolution, democracy building and the rule of law, inequality and economic reform, and the changing international role of private business.

The program recognizes that globalization, though by nature a universalizing phenomenon, extends around the world unevenly, producing sharply varied effects, both positive and negative. The program focuses on integrating the emerging global policy agenda with traditional security concerns, and also seeks to increase public understanding of globalization.

Carnegie Working Papers

01   *No More Secrets? Policy Implications of Commercial Remote Sensing Satellites*
        Ann M. Florini and Yahya A. Dehqanzada (1999)

02   *Politics at the Heart: The Architecture of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan*
        Paula R. Newberg (1999)

03   *Intergenerational Mobility in Latin America: Deeper Markets and Better Schools Make a Difference*
        Jere R. Behrman, Nancy Birdsall, and Miguel Székely (1999)

04   *The Campaign for the Unpaid Wages Prohibition Act: Latino Immigrants Change New York Wage Law*
        Jennifer Gordon (1999)

05   *Putting Education to Work in Egypt*
        Nancy Birdsall and Lesley O'Connell (1999)

06   *The Rise and Fall of START II: The Russian View*
        Alexander A. Pikayev (1999)

07   *The Challenge of Semi-Authoritarianism*
        Marina Ottaway and Martha Brill Olcott (1999)

08   ***Democracy Assistance and NGO Strategies in Post-Communist Societies***
        Sarah E. Mendelson and John K. Glenn (2000)

09   *Natural Resources, Human Capital, and Growth*
        Nancy Birdsall, Thomas Pinckney, and Richard Sabot (2000)

10   *Naturalization in the Wake of Anti-Immigrant Legislation: Dominicans in New York City*
        Audrey Singer and Greta Gilbertson (2000)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the end of the Cold War, Eastern Europe and Eurasia have been host to a virtual army of Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—from the United States, Britain, Germany, and elsewhere in Europe—all working on various aspects of institutional development, such as helping to establish competitive political parties and elections, independent media, and civic advocacy groups, as well as trying to reduce ethnic conflict. Little is *known*—although much good and bad is *believed*—about the impact of this assistance, carried out on a transnational level in cooperation with local political and social activists. This study, based at Columbia University, was designed to address this gap.

Funded by the Carnegie Corporation, the project involved seventeen investigators with social science and regional expertise who followed a common research design for sixteen case studies in twelve countries. Many of them had worked in or previously evaluated democracy assistance projects. The case studies they examined included: political parties and elections in Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia; independent media in Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia; women's NGOs in Russia, Poland, and Hungary; environmental NGOs in Russia and Kazakhstan; civic education NGOs in Romania, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan; and the reduction of ethnic conflict in Bosnia, Estonia, and the states that are home to the ethnic Hungarian and Roma diasporas.

To assess the impact of Western NGO strategies, investigators interviewed both Western NGO and local activists, as well as activists who had not received direct outside assistance. The investigators compared developments in specific sectors, such as political parties, in the late 1990s with what the sector looked like when the communist regime in the country fell out of power. Case selection included strategically important regions, such as Russia, as well as parts of Central Europe widely viewed as successfully democratizing. The cases also address the types of institutions—parties and elections, media, and civic advocacy groups— that are commonly thought to be integral to democratic states and that received considerable attention from Western NGOs. Research for the project was carried out in 1997 and 1998.

The study finds that the impact of the strategies used by Western NGOs on developments in specific sectors in these regions has been *mixed*. With a relatively small amount of money, these NGOs have played a large and important role in many formerly communist states helping to *design and build* institutions associated with democratic states. They have done little as yet to affect how these institutions actually *function*.

Political parties, regular elections, independent media, and local NGOs are all now part of the political landscape in many states across East-Central Europe and Eurasia, and their links with foreign groups are robust. In Russia and Ukraine, Western NGOs have had an impressive impact in presenting practical menus of problem-solving skills for elections (such as how to use research in designing a campaign). In the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Russia, foreign assistance has helped launch self-sustaining media organizations and support the creation of local commercially independent television stations. In Poland, Hungary, and Russia, Western groups have been central to forming networks of women's organizations.

In every case examined, however, these very institutions function poorly with weak links to their own societies. For example, in Russia and Ukraine, Western NGOs have influenced the electoral activities of new political parties and the organization of media watch groups, but they have done little to help make parties responsive to constituents or major media outlets in any way independent from the narrow political interests of owners. In Poland,

Hungary, and Russia, women's groups have mushroomed at the same time they have grown increasingly "ghettoized"—closer to their transnational partners than the constituents they are meant to represent or the governments they claim to be influencing. In terms of ethnic conflict, Western NGOs have been limited at best in their ability to affect conditions inside states with high amounts of strife, especially when they fail to coordinate with governmental and international organizations.

Historical legacies left by decades of communist rule account in part for the poor functioning of these institutions, but this study finds that these results are also, in part, a consequence of the strategies of Western NGOs. Western groups have tended to rely on practitioners with little knowledge of the region (social activists from the American Midwest, parliamentary staffers from Europe, political campaigners from Britain) to implement strategies—*blueprints* for building democratic institutions—developed in Western capitals. These technicians are poorly prepared for anticipating the reception of their recommendations by local activists given historical legacy. In short, the political culture of different local organizations determines how they have responded to Western assistance.

The study's recommendations—that Western NGO strategies be driven more by local context and that funders create incentives for NGOs to do so—point to policy choices: adjust NGO strategies and increase funding for democracy assistance or stay home. Business as usual will support the development of institutions that are not sustainable. Donors should let Western NGOs do their job, but they can also help them be more responsive to the conditions in which they are working. An important way to do this is to provide adequate funding to hire regional and local experts *as well as* foreign practitioners.

The introduction to this report lays out the method of evaluation. The report then summarizes the findings of the sixteen cases and draws general lessons about how ideas and practices took hold and under what conditions. After a synopsis of the cases, the final section of the report makes a series of recommendations geared toward donors and NGOs working in these regions on issues relating to democratization and the reduction of ethnic conflict.

CONTENTS

FOREWORD

For over ten years now, the United States and many West European countries have actively supported transitions to democracy in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Of the various tools employed in this effort, assistance programs designed to facilitate democratic institutions and processes have become the most pervasive. The amount of such aid is never as large as the high-flying rhetoric behind it implies. Nonetheless, the aid is often substantial and it generates hundreds, even thousands, of projects and initiatives.

Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a central role in Western democracy aid. In every category of the democracy agenda that aid providers pursue, from strengthening legislatures, judiciaries, and local government to bolstering independent media, labor unions, and civic education, Western NGOs are deeply involved. Expectations for NGO assistance in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union have been high. Many people have hoped that because NGOs are smaller and more flexible than governmental aid agencies, they will be more nimble on the ground and better able to penetrate the socio-political complexities of transitional societies.

Despite the huge number of NGO projects, surprisingly few studies address what such activities are really accomplishing and how they can be made more effective. Aid organizations produce reports on their programs, but these are rarely of a searching nature. Journalists write the occasional story on the subject, usually full of arresting local color, but with little systematic analysis. Scholars still concentrate most of their attention on more theoretical questions, such as how to conceptualize the role of NGOs in international relations. In short, a significant gap exists.

A few years ago, a team of researchers at Columbia University, consisting of several professors and over a dozen graduate students, set out to assess Western NGO assistance for democracy promotion and conflict reduction in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. By dint of careful analytic groundwork and diligent field research, they have come up with important findings about the value, limits, and implications of the burgeoning new domain of aid. Throughout, they hewed to a usefully nuanced philosophy: while sympathetic to the overall enterprise of NGO assistance, they questioned basic assumptions, asked hard questions, and challenged easy dogmas.

The results of this work are summarized in this report. The Carnegie Endowment, which in recent years has itself devoted considerable attention to the strengths and weaknesses of democracy assistance all around the world, is delighted to publish this report. I am certain that it will be of genuine interest and utility to aid providers and aid recipients alike, as well as to the much wider circle of persons who follow the attempted political transitions in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and care about their outcome.

Thomas Carothers
Vice President for Studies

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

1. INTRODUCTION

Ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and eight years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is important to assess the impact of Western efforts at helping to build democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Initial hopes and much enthusiasm for a rapid and smooth transition toward democracy have long since given way to the reality that the process is incremental, uneven and will likely continue to be so for decades. To date, the mechanisms driving change remain poorly understood, although the political trajectory of these states is central to peace and stability in Europe. If a state such as Russia descends into authoritarianism, it will affect not only its immediate neighbors, but Western Europe and the United States. Policy makers, donors, and NGOs therefore need to understand, for example, to what extent the political and social transitions are mainly domestic phenomena. What role have international and transnational organizations played in assisting them? What institutional designs common to Europe and North America have been transplanted to these regions in ways that are likely to be sustainable? Have Western efforts helped, hurt, or been irrelevant to the transitions? Have they been poor investments? What have been the unintended consequences? This report provides some answers to these questions.

A better sense of the power and limits of external support is important because of the changing—some say eroding—nature of state sovereignty. Foreign policy increasingly involves non-state actors. For example, while the promotion of democracy has been a central plank of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War, it is actually non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have implemented this policy on the ground across the formerly communist countries. Like the "transnational advocacy networks" that political scientists Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink describe in their book, *Activists Beyond Borders*, U.S. and European NGOs have been at the center of a democracy assistance campaign.[1]

In theory, NGOs are part of a remarkably *unregulated* third sector of international activity, driven mainly for good or bad by principled ideas and values. The strategies that Western NGOs have used for pursuing their goals, with some exceptions, have been composed and carried out with relatively minimal interference or supervision from government bureaucracies (or market interests), although certainly the interests of donors have helped shape NGO activities. In practice, it makes sense to look closely at the work of these NGOs since they are the groups that provide the external support on the ground. By exploring how NGOs develop transnational networks, by examining what strategies have worked in helping build institutions associated with democratic states, and by analyzing how best to coordinate efforts, we believe we can add to a better understanding of the power and limits of NGOs in affecting change inside states. The lessons are hardly academic; if followed, they could help make Western engagement with the democratization process more effective and sustainable.

Because the trajectory of the formerly communist states of East-Central Europe and Eurasia is a high-stakes issue in international relations, and indeed in international security,

---

[1] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

assessments of the scope and pace of democratization should ideally be driven by detailed research. To date, the opposite has been true. Particularly in the United States, assessments have in fact been partisan for much of the 1990s. Officials from the Clinton administration, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and U.S.-based NGOs working in the regions have tended to *overestimate* the role that democracy assistance has played in change, and have thus created expectations that contrast negatively with conditions on the ground. They have tended to talk *only* about "success stories" for fear of losing funding from a hostile Congress if they detail the difficulties associated with democratization, and the limited role that assistance plays in the process. In fact, these officials have seen USAID budgets decline from $14.1 billion in 1993 to $12.6 billion in 2000, making the United States the largest industrialized nation with the smallest foreign assistance budget.[2]

Partly in response to this approach, there has been a backlash in policy journals arguing that such assistance is a waste of money, and that it is even dangerous. In an article now frequently cited, Fareed Zakaria, managing editor of *Foreign Affairs*, implies that assistance has helped promote what he calls "illiberal democracy," where elections occur but rulers ignore constitutionally guaranteed freedoms.[3] It would be remiss not to note, however, that critics typically see themselves not as partisan, but as responding to events in the regions. Russia-watchers' criticisms of assistance became increasingly frequent following, among other manifestations of arbitrariness, Boris Yeltsin's firing of several prime ministers, another war in Chechnya, and money laundering scandals that appear to involve both Western assistance and the Kremlin.[4] Commentary on assistance is fodder for election campaigns: in the United States, the "who lost Russia" debate is a topic in presidential candidates' discussions of foreign policy.

Few champions or critics of democracy assistance have systematically grounded their discussion in detailed analysis of contemporary efforts at democracy promotion.[5] This study does. It draws on sixteen case studies that examine developments in four sectors of activity across twelve countries, and provides a portrait of the mechanisms by which ideas and

---

[2] See Appendix A for details on assistance to Eastern Europe and Eurasia. USAID regularly requests the NGOs they fund to supply them with "success stories" which are then used in testimony before Congress. See for example, "Russia's Economic and Political Transformation: Some Results of USAID Support to Date," USAID Report, Spring 1995. See also Strobe Talbott, "Spreading Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 75 (November/December 1996), pp. 47–63.

[3] Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76 (November/December 1997), pp. 22–43.

[4] On problems associated with economic assistance to the regions, see Janine Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe, 1989–1998* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

[5] Exceptions include Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Nancy Lubin, "U.S. Assistance to the NIS," in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Post-Communist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1997), 350–78; Thomas Carothers, *Assessing Democracy Assistance: The Case of Romania* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1996); Mark S. Johnson, "An Evaluation of Strengthening Russian Democracy through Civic Education," an assessment prepared for the National Endowment for Democracy, September 1998; Sarah Henderson, "Importing Civil Society: Western Funding and the Women's Movement in Russia," paper delivered at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, (Boston, September 3–6, 1998); Matthew Lantz, "The Democratic Presumption: An Assessment of Democratization in Russia, 1994–1998," Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project, Harvard University, September 1998.

practices commonly associated with political parties and elections, independent media, and civic advocacy have both diffused to and taken hold inside formerly communist states, as well as the conditions that inhibit diffusion and development. It also details the role Western NGOs have played in trying to reduce ethnic conflict, which in many cases has negatively affected democratization. Beyond an assessment of which strategies have worked and how, the report addresses *why* we find variations in outcomes. This critical aspect of analysis—one that acknowledges the *mixed* nature of outcomes—has largely been ignored by both proponents and critics of assistance.

This report proceeds by briefly discussing the history of this project and its participants. We then present the research design and method of evaluation our investigators used in researching and writing the case studies. We discuss the main findings of the study before providing a brief summary of each case.[6] The cases are grouped into four chapters: 1) political parties and elections in Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, 2) developments in independent media in Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, 3) civic advocacy groups, including those addressing women's issues in Russia, Poland, and Hungary, environmental issues in Russia and Kazakhstan, and the promotion of civil society in Romania, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan, and 4) attempts by Western NGOs to reduce ethnic conflict in Bosnia, Estonia, and the states of Central Europe that are home to the Hungarian and Roma diasporas. In the conclusion, we compare and contrast our findings in different sectors and regions and make suggestions for changes in strategies in order to enhance the sustainability of these institutions.

About the Project and the Investigators

In May 1997, Jack Snyder, the chair of Columbia University's Political Science department, invited us (the authors), along with a group of experts on formerly communist states and democracy assistance practitioners, to explore different ways of assessing Western efforts at helping to build democratic institutions in East-Central Europe and Eurasia.[7] Through the spring of 1998, investigators in the study gathered data following a research design that we developed drawing on the May 1997 conference. The case studies—each researched and written up by the investigators—were delivered to us in the fall of 1998 and winter of 1999; in this report, we provide a *synopsis* of each case study. The investigators are listed in Appendix B with their research topics and contact information.

The investigators in the study combine regional expertise with social science training. Each speaks the language of the country he or she studied and has extensive experience in that country. The group includes individuals with degrees in political science and sociology, and several have worked on or evaluated NGO projects in the region. Some of the

---

[6] The case studies and research guidelines are available at: http://www.ceip.org/programs/democr/democ.htm

[7] The Institute of War and Peace Studies and the Harriman Institute of Columbia University obtained funding from the Carnegie Corporation for this project, overseen by Jack Snyder and other faculty, in October 1996. Sarah Mendelson was the director of research for the project, and John Glenn, who shared in the planning and direction of the research, was its post-doctoral fellow. Also present at the May 1997 conference, in addition to the study's participants, were Tom Carothers from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Larry Diamond and Michael McFaul from Stanford University, Jeanne Bourgault, who had managed democracy initiatives for USAID in Moscow from 1993–1996, Larry Garber from USAID, and Kathryn Sikkink from the University of Minnesota.

participants are senior scholars, while others are drawing on their recent doctoral dissertation research.

Sector	Strategy	Category
Political Parties and Elections	Promote party formation through training of activists in "election readiness" and campaign techniques (direct mail, polling, advertising)	Infrastructural assistance/proactive and reactive
	Promote coalitions to minimize competition between like-minded candidates	Infrastructural assistance/proactive and reactive
	Promote transparency in elections by advising domestic election monitoring groups	Infrastructural assistance/proactive and reactive
	Promote youth and women candidates	Human capital development/proactive
Independent Media	Professionalize media outlets	Infrastructural assistance/proactive and reactive
	Train journalists	Human capital development/proactive and reactive
	Provide equipment	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
	Improve legal and organizational infrastructure	Infrastructural assistance/proactive and reactive
	Promote economic viability	Infrastructural assistance/reactive
Public Advocacy Groups	Work with local NGO leaders	Human capital development/proactive
	Provide equipment	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
	Distribute information	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
	Build networks using Information Technology	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
Ethnic Conflict	Work with political institutions	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
	Improve educational and economic status of ethnic groups	Human capital development/proactive
	Build networks	Human capital development/proactive
	Distribute information and promote mediation	Infrastructural assistance/proactive
	Enhance the capacity of local NGOs	Infrastructural assistance, human capital development/proactive
	Help rebuild communities	Infrastructural assistance/reactive

Figure 1: Sector by Strategy and by Category

Research Design for Evaluating NGO Strategies

Our project contrasts with most other evaluations of assistance by focusing on strategy, by emphasizing qualitative evaluation, and by stressing comparison across contexts. By comparing NGO strategies within and across four sectors of activity—the development of political parties and elections, independent media, civic advocacy groups, and the reduction of ethnic conflict—we take a middle-range approach that is more specific than the broad

goal of "promoting democracy," but more general than an analysis of the specific projects undertaken on behalf of a particular strategy or NGO.

By strategies, our investigators referred to the means by which Western NGOs sought to achieve their goals.[8] Within the specific sectors, participants in the study identified four general types of strategies that Western NGOs have used: (1) infrastructural assistance, that is, assistance to organizations intended to improve their organizational capacity; (2) human capital development—assistance to individuals intended to increase their skills, knowledge, or experience; (3) proactive or imported strategies, in which Western groups advocated ideas and practices based on programs and projects designed outside the country; and (4) reactive strategies, in which Western groups solicited and responded to requests from local representatives and potential grant recipients.

Our qualitative focus contrasts with standard quantitative methods of evaluation. While some numbers relating to democracy assistance matter greatly, most tell a limited story. It is helpful to know, for instance, that just eight years ago during the Soviet period, a state had one political party or no NGOs and now has many parties and thousands of NGOs. Important numbers also relate to assistance dollars spent, particularly in Russia, where the ratio of U.S. dollars spent on economic assistance versus democracy assistance was at one time as high as 8:1. Notably, the relatively small amounts allocated to democracy assistance contrast starkly with policy makers' declarations about the importance of building democratic institutions.[9] Yet NGOs are engaged in a long-term, incremental process of changing behavior and perceptions that is simply not linear nor quantifiable. The numbers of dollars spent on assisting new political parties, for example, does not tell us about the *behavior* of these new parties, such as whether they engage in transparent and fair campaign practices which funders hope to encourage. The number of NGOs in a country does not actually tell us much about civil society or social capital, both of which funders see as central to a democratic state.

This project pursued *qualitative* assessments of Western NGO strategies in different contexts. This type of evaluation is labor intensive and requires regional expertise, but it provides a more detailed picture of developments within a sector than is commonly found in evaluations. Since the investigators were social scientists with private funding, they were free from many of the usual constraints placed on evaluators, such as only discussing the parts of society which assistance had targeted (in most cases, the "democrats") and only focusing on "good news." While NGOs often resist external evaluation, because the investigators were

---

[8] Participants in the study who looked at the development of parties, media, and civic advocacy groups focused on democracy assistance NGOs. Those writing about the reduction of ethnic conflict widened their focus to include human rights organizations and conflict reduction groups, as well as NGOs engaged in humanitarian assistance. The NGOs discussed received funding from a range of sources, which included the U.S. government under cooperative agreements, European governments, and the European Union, as well as from private foundations such as Soros's Open Society Institute.

[9] See Appendix A for funding figures. For recent statements, see Secretary of State Madeline Albright's address to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 16, 1999 and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott's address to Harvard University, October 1, 1999.

primarily academics and because this study was not done on behalf of an NGO, or a major donor to the region, the Western NGOs and funders were cooperative.[10]

To measure the impact of Western NGO strategies on democratization and conflict reduction in East-Central Europe and Eurasia, the participants of this study relied on the comparative social science method, which contrasts similarities and differences across contexts. Most commonly, we asked the participants to contrast either the same strategy in different contexts or different strategies within the same context. The multitude of contexts in which Western NGOs and local activists find themselves acts as a filter through which local activists interpret the efforts of Western NGOs; that is, local settings shape local responses to Western NGOs. Some settings are more conducive to positive response than others. At the most general level, the degree to which the country as a whole was favorably inclined to becoming integrated into the international community affected the work of Western NGOs (and not the other way around: Western NGOs did not make countries more conducive to integration with the international community).

By integration into the international community, we refer to the degree to which both the government and its citizens in these new states tended, over time, to embrace norms, ideas, and practices common to the democratic states of Western Europe and North America. These norms, ideas, and practices are wide ranging and include the rule of law, respect for human rights, transparency in competitive elections, and encompass formal institutional structures such as the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe, as well as less formal ones, such as a free press. Inclination toward integration does not strictly follow geography: the states further west *tend* to be more favorably inclined toward these ideas and practices, but not always. For example, Estonia is more inclined toward integration than Slovakia (or Serbia).

We identified three general types of integration that affect and constrain the impact of Western NGO strategies in the states we asked participants to study:

- *thickly integrated states* (the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, and Estonia): where populations and governments have largely embraced the international, and specifically European, community; political and social institutions, while still fragile, are developing in a relatively uncontested fashion; Western political rules of the game are widely followed;

- *thinly integrated states* (Slovakia under the Meciar regime, Romania, Ukraine, and Russia): where national identity is still highly contested; integration into the European

---

[10] A partial explanation for reluctance to engage in external evaluation may be found in the organizational constraints under which Western NGOs operate. When Western NGOs themselves evaluate their work, they tend to keep the focus of inquiry quite narrow. In contrast to companies engaged in economic assistance in the regions, NGOs tend to have little financial flexibility and small staffs. NGOs are often overextended in their work: many have field offices in several countries over which they have less than complete control. Beyond basic attempts to demonstrate that their short- term (usually six-month) goals have been met, such as a baseline of how many activists they trained, many NGOs have not viewed it in their organizational interest to spend precious resources (time, staff, budgets) on anything beyond the evaluation of specific programs. Additionally, because NGOs are often employing the *same* strategies in different countries, they focus little on evaluations of these strategies or how they vary according to local conditions. Finally, many NGOs (and closely connected to this, their donors) hesitate to admit the need for change in either strategies or programs.

community is uneven; institutions remain incomplete and function poorly; Western political rules appear to be followed, but in an uneven and sometimes superficial way;

- *unintegrated states* (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan): where little or no integration into the international community has occurred; and one party or faction virtually rules the country without participation of diverse groups.

Bosnia makes up yet a fourth category of states as an international protectorate, unique in our study, but more recently joined in the international system by Kosovo.

Following a common research design, each case study begins by documenting the historical legacy and political context of the country. This section is meant to highlight what the Western NGOs found when they began work, and therefore, acts as a baseline against which to measure developments. Participants compared changes in a specific sector, such as parties or NGOs, over time. Each case study then explores the strategies that Western NGOs used to pursue their goals—for example, if they were mainly focused on infrastructural assistance to grassroots organizations or the parliament, and what the basic organizational issues were, such as whether they used local staff or foreigners in decision making. Investigators pursued a set of questions with Western NGOs, as well as with the local groups that the Western NGOs had worked with. Where possible, investigators interviewed or observed groups and individuals that had *not* come directly into contact with foreign assistance.

Eleven case studies analyze the impact of various Western NGO strategies on a specific sector in a specific country, tracing the assimilation and integration or rejection of ideas and practices (for example, different approaches by Western NGOs to conflict reduction in Bosnia or to party formation in Russia). Five case studies compare strategies used on a specific sector in different countries (for example, assistance to media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia or to women's NGOs in Hungary and Poland). All the case studies conclude with some general lessons about the strategies used in a specific sector.

Limits of the Study

We stress that this study is in no way a comprehensive guide to Western democracy assistance strategies in East-Central Europe and Eurasia. No project this size could reasonably examine the work of the hundreds of Western NGOs engaged in assistance across the regions. This study does not cover every sector nor every country. It in fact does not address important sectors such as developments in the rule of law or labor unions. Instead, we asked investigators to focus on a few main areas in which U.S. and European NGOs worked, and they have presented a representative sample from across the regions.

While this study examines the process of political and social change, this report by its nature is a snapshot. We recognize that even as we write, efforts at democracy assistance are extremely vulnerable to jolts both from the states themselves and from the international system. Shocks come in a variety of economic and political forms, including currency devaluation and war. Regardless of the institutionalization of certain practices and ideas, the democratization process in many formerly communist states is fragile and influenced greatly by issues beyond the scope of Western NGOs. Clearly events such as the war in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the spring of 1999 devastated democratization efforts in both Serbia and Kosovo. Its ramifications have been felt far beyond, however, as budgets for rebuilding Kosovo swelled and money allocated for other states has declined. Despite these shocks, this study's focus on strategy has allowed participants to ask questions that are

independent of the day's events and point to needed changes in Western efforts at helping sustain political and social institutions in these regions.

Summary of Findings

Before presenting summaries of each of the case studies, we discuss the findings from across the different sectors. Most broadly, this study finds that the generalized application of Western models to diverse situations works haphazardly at best.[11] Political scientist James Scott has observed that "a mechanical application of generic rules that ignores ... particularities is an invitation to practical failure, social disillusionment, or most likely both."[12] Not surprisingly, this is just what our investigators found: in many cases, strategies were used across a wide spectrum of states in different stages of integration and transition with the implicit assumption that "one strategy fits many." Like the broken clock that tells the right time twice a day, at some point, a strategy applied to many places is bound to "fit" somewhere. If the strategy is not grounded in an understanding of the local context, however, then what looks like an apparent fit—seeming to solve some problem—is likely to be interpreted by the Western NGO as a favorable, albeit unexplainable, occurrence. It could then be filed away as a success story to be applied elsewhere since it appears to have worked somewhere.

More specifically, our investigators consistently found that NGO strategies produced mixed outcomes depending upon the kind of interaction the NGO had in the local context. A comparison of the case studies finds that Western NGOs have played a large and important role in the *design and building* of institutions associated with democratic states. These same strategies used by NGOs, however, have had minimal impact on how these new institutions actually *function*. Since many of these institutions are functioning at a minimal level, the Western NGO strategies have not yet contributed to their sustainability.

On the one hand, the case studies find that political parties, regular elections, independent media, and local NGOs are all now part of the political landscape in many states across East-Central Europe and Eurasia, and much of this is traceable to Western NGO efforts. In Russia and Ukraine, Western NGOs have had an impressive impact in presenting practical menus of problem-solving skills for elections (such as how to use research in designing a campaign). In the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Russia, Western assistance has helped launch self-sustaining media organizations and support the creation of local commercially independent television stations. In Poland, Hungary, and Russia, foreign groups have been central to forming networks of women's organizations and linking them to Western groups. Instead of bloated assistance budgets and total ineffectiveness, the return for the relatively small investment is noteworthy particularly when developments are compared with what parties, media, and NGOs across the regions looked like just five years ago.[13]

---

[11] This is similar to the point made by Albert Hirschmann, "The Search for Paradigms as a Hindrance for Understanding," *World Politics*, vol. 22, no.3 (April 1970), pp. 323–43.

[12] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 318.

[13] For example, of the approximately $10 billion (FY 1992–FY 1998) that went to all U.S. bilateral assistance to Eurasia, only $850 million was for democracy assistance to the even larger area of Eurasia and East-Central Europe combined.

Western NGOs have had, however, little impact to date on the operational nature of the institutions they helped to create. In every case looked at in the Columbia University study, the institutions function poorly with weak links to their own societies. For example, in Russia and Ukraine, while Western NGOs have influenced the electoral activities of new political parties and the organization of media watch groups, they have done little to help make parties responsive to constituents or to make major media outlets independent from the narrow political interests of owners. Local environmental NGOs have proliferated in

Strategy	Political and Historical Context
Promote party formation through training of activists in "election readiness" and campaign techniques (direct mail, polling, advertising)	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Promote coalitions to minimize competition between like-minded candidates	Thickly integrated; thinly integrating
Promote domestic election monitoring	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Promote youth and women candidates	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Professionalize media outlets	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Train journalists	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Provide equipment to media groups	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Improve legal and organizational infrastructure of media	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Promote economic viability of media	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Capacity building of local NGOs	All contexts
Provide equipment to local NGOs	All contexts
Build NGO networks using Information Technology	All contexts
Target political institutions in place to govern ethnic conflict	Bosnia
Improve educational and economic status of ethnic groups	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Build networks to deal with ethnic conflict	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Mediation/Information Distribution	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Capacity building of local NGOs to deal with ethnic conflict	Thickly integrated; thinly integrated
Community reconstruction	Bosnia

Figure 2: Strategies across Political and Historical Contexts

Kazakhstan as a result of financial support from Western NGOs at the same time that their political impact has declined; in the late Soviet period, an environmental movement was central to political reform and independence, while today they shy away from addressing

pressing environmental issues, such as uranium tailings in drinking water. In Poland, Hungary, and Russia, women's groups have mushroomed at the same time they have grown increasingly "ghettoized"—closer to their transnational partners than the constituents they are meant to represent or the governments they hope to influence. At the end of our report, we suggest ways in which foreign donors and NGOs might alter strategies and practices in order to address the *operational* nature of these new institutions and thus enhance sustainability.

Our investigators identified dynamics and mechanisms by which practices and ideas with little or no institutional history could be traced back to the work of the Western NGOs. In certain cases, this tracing was relatively simple since locals had begun to use new language on issues ranging from focus groups to feminism and from biodiversity to election monitoring. In other cases, investigators could identify changes in behavior which correlated with Western efforts, but they could not say definitively that the changes were caused by Western efforts. For example, after receiving much information from Western NGOs on the dangers of parties running many like-minded candidates in one district *and* after suffering electoral losses, Russian liberals have begun to form electoral coalitions. In other cases, unintended consequences of new speech and behavior could be found. For example, local groups proliferated in Poland, Hungary, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan often around issues that Western donors found important, but rarely around issues that locals confronted on a daily basis. In Ukraine and Russia, political parties campaigned using Western techniques, but they did little else beyond run for election.

In countries with little or no history of democratic tradition, democratization appears to be influenced by how people reconcile ideas and practices common in the international community with long-held domestic beliefs and customs. In cases where Western ideas and practices in some way *complement* the organizational culture of a specific local group, activists are receptive to them. If ideas and practices help solve specific problems (such as increasing a candidate's electoral chances), local activists are particularly likely to adopt them. When ideas and practices appear to *compete* with local customs or beliefs, activists reject them based on what scholars have called a "logic of appropriateness." [14]

The case studies reveal the clash of ideas and practices with local customs and beliefs at least as often as not. For example, in contrast with the way NGOs generally function in North America and Western Europe, in several new states in Eurasia, local NGOs were, for much of the 1990s, reluctant to work with political parties or trade unions on issues of mutual concern because of negative historical legacies from the Soviet period concerning parties and unions. At the same time, communists were reluctant initially to adopt Western campaign techniques, such as the use of television advertising or message development based on research, because it clashed with their organizational culture and beliefs. In Russia, all parties feared the government would practice electoral fraud and recognized the need for transparency. For much of the 1990s, however, despite the advice of Western groups, Russian liberals were reluctant to cooperate with communists in election monitoring, because many liberals had been persecuted under communist rule. In Poland, Hungary and Kazakhstan, the interests of donors—whether in forming a network of feminists or in addressing biodiversity—competed with the everyday problems of feeding families and

---

[14] James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989).

getting clean drinking water. The case studies in this project underscore the fact that Western NGO efforts, while central to many small, micro-oriented projects and capable of influencing change on a small scale, continually bump up against and are limited by a variety of forces. The impact of Western NGOs appears to be inhibited if the NGOs strategize without attention to these forces—whether they are organizational, historical, economic, environmental, or political.

In some cases, ideas and practices introduced into the political arena through work with Western groups had the unintended consequences of migrating beyond the specific local partners and organizations. For example, in Russia, the Communist Party's methods of campaigning have been altered indirectly by the work of Western NGOs; they have begun to use new methods introduced by Western NGOs to liberal parties after experiencing losses in competitive elections dominated by Western campaigning techniques. New practices in media and civic advocacy groups had spread across the political spectrum in many countries—to nationalists and communists. For example, NGOs are now considered legitimate groups in parts of Central Asia. Crisis centers for domestic abuse and rape are recognized by many as important beyond the narrow circle of self-proclaimed feminists in Eastern Europe and Russia. The diffusion of ideas and practices beyond the people and organizations with which Western NGOs work is an important, unexamined dynamic in assistance.

Finally, ethnic conflict poses particular challenges for those foreign groups engaged in supporting democratization. Democratizing states provide political space not only for liberals but for nationalists as well.[15] The findings from the Bosnian case study suggest that Western NGOs are limited in their abilities to reduce conflict if they work in isolation from other foreign organizations. Strategies that involve cooperative rebuilding of communities do as much if not more in terms of helping democratization as those strategies focusing on elections and "building civil society." Violent outcomes like those in Bosnia are, however, not inevitable. The case study of Estonia in this project details how international actors helped encourage leaders to change Estonian citizenship laws to be more inclusive of the ethnic Russian population and thus reduce the possibility of bloodshed. The case study looking at the Hungarian and Roma diasporas highlights the fact that Western groups working on conflict resolution cannot take short cuts by recycling material made for corporate business retreats, but rather need to design materials specifically for the local audience.

---

[15] See in particular V. P. Gagnon, Jr., "Ethnic Nationalism and International Conflict: The Case of Serbia," *International Security* (Winter 1994/1995), pp. 130–66; Jack Snyder and Karen Ballentine, "Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas," *International Security* (Fall 1996), pp. 1–36.

2. POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Democratic theorists since Schumpeter have argued that competitive elections are central to the democratic state. [16] A main focus of Western NGOs engaged in democracy assistance has been working with political parties on "election readiness." We asked participants to assess the role that Western NGOs have played in helping to develop competitive parties and elections in states that are thinly integrated into the international community, such as Russia, Ukraine, and Slovakia, and in the thickly integrated state of the Czech Republic.

The history of competitive political parties and elections in Russia and Ukraine is a relatively short one, dating from the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Soviet legacy in these countries meant that much of the population had negative associations—often called an allergy—to political parties having been ruled by one party for decades. The Czech Republic and Slovakia have a history of democratic elections to call on from the interwar period. The way in which parties and elections have developed, however, in these two countries has not been determined exclusively by their historical legacies. The Czech experience of democratization has been, of the four cases examined, the smoothest. Finally, each of these cases highlights the ways in which Western efforts have affected how parties run for election.

Investigators in the four countries focused on two U.S.-based NGOs, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). In the case of Russia, the investigator also compared the U.S.-based NGO strategies with those used by Great Britain's Conservative Party (BCP). These NGOs all received funding from state agencies: in the case of the Americans, indirectly from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), more directly through cooperative agreements with the Agency for International Development (USAID), and in the case of the British, through grants from the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. NDI and IRI were required to run programs open to all interested parties in each country although in practice, they both worked in these regions with those groups considered to be pro-Western and liberal. The BCP chose to work with the parties that matched their ideological profile.

With respect to parties and elections, unlike other sectors looked at in the study, we found much similarity in NGO strategies, while the outcomes across the different countries varied. Additionally, we found that these NGOs were more likely to consult local activists regarding specific programs than in other sectors explored in the study. In general, however, as in other cases in the study, the NGOs did not derive their strategies based on the local political and social context. For example, the Western groups have yet to begin addressing the fact that political parties in Russia and Ukraine tend to be isolated from their constituents.

All three NGOs focused mainly on infrastructural assistance to organizations intended to improve their organizational capacity by importing ideas and methods used throughout the world for campaigning (proactive strategies). They focused on the specifics of training following consultations with national and regional political activists (reactive strategies). Among these groups, however, there were differences regarding secondary strategies. NDI in Russia, for example, also focused on encouraging parties to coordinate candidate selection

---

[16] Stephen White, Richard Rose, and Ian McAllister, *How Russia Votes* (Chatham, N.J.: Chatham House, 1997), p. 197.

in single-mandate districts in order to minimize what they referred to as "vote splitting" (infrastructural assistance which combined both proactive and reactive aspects). In Russia and Ukraine, the U.S.-based NGOs helped support domestic electoral monitoring efforts with divergent outcomes. The ability of Western NGOs to work in Meciar's Slovakia was more restricted than in any of the other cases discussed in this section. This condition affected the degree to which infrastructural strategies could be fully implemented.

We asked investigators to look for evidence that electoral outcomes were generally accepted, and that parties actively supported the necessity for elections to be multi-party. We asked participants to study political party formation, including:

- the degree to which coalitions were formed to reduce competition among like-minded candidates in single-mandate districts
- the development of campaign and voter-contact skills, including use of polling data, media, and message development
- the general professionalization of party activists.

We were also interested in the degree to which transparency in elections was reflected by efforts to organize domestic electoral monitoring groups.

Below, we summarize the findings of the case studies, and in the conclusion to this section, highlight the lessons learned from the various NGO strategies for assistance to political parties engaged in competitive elections.

Parties and Elections in Russia

The Russian Federation in the 1990s had no democratic tradition of competitive parties or elections on which to draw. The historical legacy was one of centuries of autocracy, and more recently, seventy-four years of one-party rule, which created a general antipathy toward parties. Against this background, developments in political parties and elections have been remarkably rapid. Despite the crisis of governance and the ineffectiveness of institutions associated with the Russian state, Russians have, since the collapse of the Soviet Union, held several national elections and over sixty regional multi-party competitive elections that involved campaigns using standard Western techniques.

In her case study, Sarah Mendelson focuses on the work of three Western NGOs engaged in assistance to parties: the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the International Republic Institute (IRI) and the foreign office of Great Britain's Conservative Party (BCP).[17] While the BCP did not have constant representation on the ground in Russia, it played an important role, according to Russian political activists, in helping teach specific Western campaign techniques, such as the use of direct mail as a means of contacting voters. NDI and IRI have been in Russia since 1992. Both have had offices in Moscow and St. Petersburg and have also worked in many regions across Russia. All these organizations have worked, at least through the fall of 1999, undisturbed by the Russian federal authorities, and have been able to carry on extensive training on a variety of

---

[17] This was the only British party-based NGO working in Russia. Other large European efforts are sponsored by the German Party Foundations.

issues related to party development and campaigning with Russian activists from across the country.[18]

Important aspects of parties and elections have taken hold in Russia in part because of Russian activists' steady engagement with Western NGOs since the early 1990s. Mendelson finds that Western NGO impact is easiest to measure in terms of how Russian parties campaign. Western NGOs provided practical menus of problem-solving campaign and electoral skills, such as how to use focus groups and polling data in designing a campaign. Partly due to long-cultivated relationships with Russian activists, NDI, IRI, and to a smaller degree, the BCP have helped transfer "election technology" to a country that had never before had competitive parties or elections, and where the only campaign technique during the Soviet period was door-to-door canvassing. According to interviews with Russian party activists, NDI's consistent use of several American Russian-area experts, combined with input from local Russian experts, helped make them especially effective in their efforts and explains their engagement beyond training on campaign skills.[19] In response to local demand, their strategies included work on coalition politics and election monitoring.

Mendelson details how the practices of political television advertisement (including "negative" advertising), direct mail campaigns, and political "message" development have been increasingly used in national elections since 1993. She compares the campaign techniques of various reformist parties that all three Western groups worked with to those of the communists and the nationalists, groups that were not inclined to work with Western organizations. She finds that these techniques are gradually becoming standard throughout the political arena, even though communists were initially resistant to market-based techniques and did not work directly with any Western NGO.

The impact of Western NGO assistance on how parties are structured is less clear, although Western efforts may have had some influence. NDI and IRI worked most closely with two political parties, only one of which crossed the 5 percent threshold in the 1995 elections. The one that made it in the Duma, "Yabloko," has continued to broaden its national reach, in part as a result of the training of party activists from across Russia by Western groups. But according to party activists, Yabloko's efforts resulted mainly from its following the example of the Russian Communist Party and effectively using its Duma staff in the regions to work on party building.

The other party, "Russia's Choice," with which all three Western groups worked, reconfigured itself in the summer of 1999 as part of a right-of-center political coalition. It was the first major attempt by liberal leaders to join forces in order to minimize competition in single-mandate districts and to help achieve the 5 percent threshold in the December 1999 elections (which they did). The perils of like-minded candidates competing in one district was an issue on which NDI focused considerable effort, by arranging conferences on the topic, and in combination with the Carnegie Moscow Center, by presenting detailed analysis of previous elections. The BCP also encouraged coalition building. It is impossible to say

---

[18] The Russian security service, the FSB, successor to the KGB, began harassing Russians and Americans engaged in NGO activities in the fall of 1999. See Brian Whitmore, "Agents search U.S. activist's Moscow apartment," *Boston Globe*, 30 October 1999.

[19] NDI's program officers include individuals with degrees in Russian politics. Michael McFaul, a professor of political science at Stanford University and a Russia expert at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, has been a consultant to NDI since 1990.

that these efforts caused the formation of the coalition, but they do, along with lessons learned from poor electoral results, *correlate* with changes in behavior.

Some election campaign ideas and practices have caught on in Russia while others have not. Mendelson concludes that when ideas and practices have solid support from domestic political entrepreneurs who can reiterate the salience of the ideas and practices for the Russian scene, the chances of their taking hold are greater. Ideas and practices that seem to compete directly with long-held domestic practices or beliefs are less likely to take hold: for example, all-party domestic monitoring efforts were embraced by the Communist Party (KPRF), but not initially by various liberal parties. Communists had monitored "elections" during the Soviet period, although these elections were neither competitive nor transparent. Nevertheless, in the 1990s, monitoring (as a silent presence in polling stations) was a concept they felt comfortable with, and they had enough party activists to mount a monitoring effort by themselves. The liberals, in contrast, were stymied as they had fewer activists, and party leaders in the mid 1990s refused to cooperate with the KPRF effort since many had suffered persecution at the hands of the KPRF predecessor, the CPSU.[20]

Since teaching campaign techniques was a main way in which Western groups promoted party formation, Mendelson considers whether and how these techniques contributed to the development and *sustainability* of political parties in Russia. She finds that parties do little beyond run for elections. She concludes that if Western NGOs want to make parties and elections more sustainable, they might think about how to address those aspects of parties and elections that have not yet become part of the Russian political landscape.

Perhaps most important, political parties in the Duma (in addition to the presidential apparatus) are doing a poor job of representing the interests of the Russian population. Not only have elections been plagued with allegations of misuse of access to the media, particularly in the high stakes presidential campaigns, but the Duma and the presidential administration have been out of touch with citizens and unresponsive to their needs. The long-term health of the political system depends on elected branches becoming more responsive to people rather than getting bogged down in behind-the-scenes political battles, which some suggest beget military battles, as seen most recently in Chechnya. Many view the Russian military's air strikes of Chechnya in the context of electoral politics; acting President Putin, who had *no* political base in the country prior to the war, appeared strong and capable to many Russians by using force. His popularity ratings have shot up in the weeks since the war began.

Mendelson considers what, if any, role Western NGOs can now play to make parties and elections more responsive to constituents, and therefore, more sustainable. She notes that NDI, IRI, and the BCP have long recognized that they need to move beyond the "training" mode; Russian political activists have the complete menu of campaign skills and electoral advice. There are dozens of political consultants for hire in Russia, many trained by NDI, IRI, and the BCP.

---

[20] Unrelated to how the Russians monitored their elections, the U.S. Embassy in the mid-1990s discouraged NDI from working with parties on election monitoring; officials worried about the policy ramifications of supporting efforts that detected fraud in elections which Boris Yeltsin, the Americans' favored candidate, won. Through the late 1990s, NDI has continued to support election monitoring efforts, however, in a small, low-profile manner with regional groups.

Mendelson concludes that if the Western NGOs stay engaged in Russia, they need to develop strategies and programs that will demonstrate and encourage true democratic representation of the electorate. One way to do this is to encourage parties to coordinate with other types of indigenous NGOs. NDI has run programs with local government and indigenous NGOs for several years. Western NGOs working with Russian parties might seek now to coordinate and combine efforts with Western NGOs working with different parts of society, such as local NGOs or unions, with the goal of increasing party responsiveness and ties to the community. Donors to Western NGOs can play a key role in helping coordinate activities and helping make the Western NGOs more, not less, responsive to the local conditions.

Parties and Elections in Ukraine

Like their political party clients, Western NGOs working in Ukraine have had to operate in a regionally differentiated and constantly shifting political landscape. Over the past eight years, Ukraine—a country of over 50 million people—has elected two presidents, and two parliaments under two electoral laws, and ratified a new constitution. In addition to a post-independence economic free-fall, Ukrainian political parties have had to surmount a variety of obstacles: a post-Soviet electorate wary of political party organizations, reactionary local officials hostile to competitive party politics, and an electoral law that actively discriminates against party organizations. Moreover, Ukraine's pronounced socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious differences result in a society with a diverse set of political preferences.

James Clem focuses on the work of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI). These two NGO have coped with the situation through a similar three-tiered strategy for providing assistance to parties. Both organizations work to empower key actors and decision-makers in central state institutions, primarily in the Ukrainian parliament, the Rada. They also aim to strengthen party activists working at the local level in Ukraine's different regions. Both the work at the central level and at the local level is accomplished through a client-based approach, where local party leaders are consulted beforehand to identify needs. And both organizations work with local NGOs to help support parties and elections. These local NGOs affect broader populations outside the party system. In theory, NDI and IRI programs are open to all parties, but in practice, liberal parties have mainly chosen to work with these Western groups.

As in Russia, NDI and IRI have developed extensive training programs. In the regions, where the core set of activities for both organizations takes place, NDI and IRI have focused on party-building activities. These programs are client-based, and conducted with the assistance of campaign and party trainers from the United States, Canada, and Europe. Both NDI and IRI focus their program activities at the local level on membership recruitment, organizational structure, resource issues (including fund raising), and campaigning. Kiev-based programs focus on the parliament where both organizations work with members of parliament and their staffs. These programs aim to strengthen the parliament through a series of seminars on effective parliamentary government. The NGOs have focused on coalition-building, development of effective staffs, media relations, lobbying, and parliamentary leadership.

Both NDI and IRI have also worked with Ukrainian NGOs that are active in politics. NDI's main local partner has been the Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU). Registered

in 1994, the CVU is a nonpartisan organization devoted to election monitoring. With branch offices in 23 districts in Ukraine, and more than 100 regional offices, the CVU has evolved into one of the most active and influential civic organizations in Ukraine. With support from NDI on funding, training, and consulting, for the most recent parliamentary elections in 1998, the CVU participated in voter education programs, and organized more than 17,000 election monitors across the country.

IRI also works with local NGOs, including the Kiev School of Public Relations, to promote democratic change. This school provides training in political consulting and media relations for students of the post-communist generation. IRI has conducted workshops and underwritten conferences on youth and gender issues, as well as on public opinion research. IRI, like both NDI and IRI in Russia, has placed a special priority on developing a cohort of Ukrainians who will be able to lead training sessions for their fellow citizens. Such "training the trainers" programs have been conducted on issues such as voter contact, turnout, fundraising, and campaigning.

There are clear indications that at all three levels of support—parliamentary, local, and the NGO sector—NDI and IRI have had an effect in Ukraine. Within the parliament, the deputies and their parliamentary staffs show a higher degree of professionalism in running their party factions than those not engaged with the Western NGOs. The issues on which the CVU and the Kiev School of Public Relations work and the ways in which they organize themselves are particularly traceable back to NDI and IRI respectively. That said, there is still much work to be done building stable coalitions in the parliament. As in Russia, Western NGOs could devote more attention to demonstrating the negative consequences of splitting votes among like-minded candidates in single-mandate districts.

At the local level and within the NGO sector, NDI and IRI have helped to make significant improvements. Through a fairly efficient division of territory, NDI and IRI have worked on building organizational capacity within party organizations at the local level. Their efforts are traceable to the modes of campaigning when one compares the 1994 and 1998 campaigns. Modern techniques of polling, telephone canvassing, and mass mailings in various Ukrainian provinces have been accompanied by better-developed platforms and better-articulated issue positions. As at the parliamentary level, however, democratic, market-oriented parties have been hurt, as in Russia in the mid 1990s, because there are too many of them and too much competition between them. In Ukraine, as in Russia, the inability to coordinate candidate nomination has in many cases resulted in a victory for more disciplined parties, such as the communists.

Perhaps the greatest successes have come from the work with Ukrainian NGOs. The work of NDI with the CVU has resulted in a large, well-trained group of election monitors to ensure the integrity of Ukrainian elections. Similarly, IRI has worked with independent Ukrainian organizations to produce a generation of Ukrainian activists well-schooled in modern democratic politics. When NDI and IRI have joined forces with local partners, the benefits have been considerable. This dynamic should be given higher priority.

Parties and Elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

After years of repression under communism, civic movements swept across Czechoslovakia during the so-called "Velvet Revolution" of 1989. While the dissident-led successors to these civic movements in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia failed to reach the electoral threshold in 1992, the most powerful parties to emerge in each country were strikingly

different. The market-oriented Civic Democratic Party led by Václav Klaus in the Czech Republic was pro-Western and actively identified with Europe. The Movement for a Democratic Slovakia led by Vladimir Meciar ran a populist campaign followed by semi-authoritarian policies which were repressive to parties, media, and local NGOs. This divergence led to different evaluations of each country by international institutions such as NATO and the EU, both of which chose to admit the Czech Republic but not Slovakia.

Only in 1998 did the Meciar government lose power to a newly formed Slovak Democratic Coalition that has sought to remedy Slovakia's poor record on democratic institutions and its damaged international image. John Glenn finds that the role of Western NGOs in these processes is as a facilitator for those states already moving towards democratic governance, such as the Czech Republic. But the NGOs work at the margins in states that are thinly integrated into the international system.

Glenn analyzes assistance to political parties in the Czech Republic and Slovakia by examining efforts by the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). His report focuses on the early years after the fall of communism in the Czech Republic (1990–1992) and the early years of independence in Slovakia largely governed by Meciar (1993–1998). His report highlights the initially divergent outcomes that resulted from similar strategies of election training in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The main strategies used in both cases were: general election assistance (advising the drafting of a new election law and sending an international observation team), equipment provision (such as fax machines and computers), and party training (including seminars on party organization, civic education, and voter participation).

Western NGO assistance to political parties faced significant challenges in the early stages of transition because the principal political actors tended to be broad-based coalition movements, rather than political parties as commonly understood in Western parliamentary democracies. It was difficult therefore to know which of the new and emerging political groups to assist and in what areas assistance would be most helpful. Glenn finds that the concentration of assistance in Prague, the capital of the federal state of Czechoslovakia, led to difficulty identifying the potential fault lines of regional and ethnic differences and instability. The cases he looked at highlight the dynamic political situation in which Western NGOs find themselves, as well as the difficulties they face in adapting the appropriate strategies of assistance over time as new parties begin to develop more stable constituencies through repeated elections. He identifies the learning process by which it became clear to Western NGOs that election assistance was a necessary (but not sufficient) strategy to assist new political parties in the early period of transition.

Attention to these countries illustrates the need of Western NGOs to evaluate their strategies periodically to ensure that they are responsive to the processes of transformation and consolidation, especially in light of the risk of the emergence of "illiberal democracies." For example, the splintering of the democratic opposition in Slovakia (which enabled Meciar to rule) highlights the difficulties that party competition can pose for fostering an understanding of the role of compromise and for creating democratic coalitions. In the period leading up to the 1998 parliamentary elections in Slovakia (that resulted in a new Western-oriented government led by the Slovak Democratic Coalition), both NDI and IRI sought to respond to this opportunity. NDI shifted from indirect community-organizing projects in regional cities to direct election monitoring in Bratislava; while IRI moved from indirect training and youth programs to direct electoral assistance to all interested parties

(including polling based on campaign themes). Both local Slovak NGOs (which contributed heavily to the organization of the election campaign) and Western NGOs sought to mobilize the population to vote, with dramatic consequences.

Glenn's report highlights the difficulties of evaluating NGO strategies. He identifies the benefits and drawbacks of qualitative assessment by outsiders (employed in the earlier NED-funded programs) as well as "performance assessment" (which was used in IRI's USAID-funded projects). In sum, there must be a balance between meaningful evaluation with clear criteria and the time requirements necessary to conduct proper evaluation. While strict quantitative assessment (counting attendance at training sessions) is clearly inadequate to evaluate project impact, there are also weaknesses to open-ended qualitative assessment including the difficulty in linking projects to NGO goals and of comparing subjective assessments. Performance assessment, by contrast, has the benefits of introducing baseline measures and building evaluation into the project itself. It can, however, impose demands beyond the abilities of NGOs with limited staff and resources.

Recommendations

Competitive political parties and elections are now part of the landscape in Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. This sector had good, measurable indicators of progress in democratization. To date, all political players in Russia, Ukraine, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia have played by commonly held electoral rules of the game. They have not done so perfectly, but neither have they canceled elections. (Russia's next presidential election in 2000 is a high-stakes test.) Additionally, in all the cases discussed, Western assistance has affected how political parties campaign for election.

Beyond campaigning, however, the impact of assistance has been mixed. In every case following the collapse of communism, Western NGOs faced problems matching skills with local needs for the broad-based coalition movements or small proto-parties that dotted the horizon. While all the Western NGOs focused on election work, the local parties with which the NGOs worked failed at some point to make it into the parliament. The local organizations themselves were highly fluid, and often undisciplined. Political activists moved back and forth between groups driven more by personal opportunity than by ideological commitment. (Even acting President Putin in Russia, who now oversees a war in Chechnya and encourages the harassment of local NGOs by Russia's security forces, was himself once a member of a liberal party in St. Petersburg and even participated in training sessions run by NDI.) The impact that the Western NGOs had on political party activists did not always contribute to the development of a specific party, but rather had a delayed effect, helping shape the larger political environment, for example, by helping standardize campaigning. Finally, assistance to date has had little affect on how parties actually function beyond elections.

Parties and elections, particularly as they exist in these states, do not alone make a state democratic; these states are still democratizing. The challenge, if democratization is to be sustained, is for these states and the Western organizations that are engaged in assistance to move beyond the first stage. These cases suggest specific lessons (moving from the general to the specific) for the next stage of assistance.

If Western NGOs continue to be engaged in assistance to parties, then their strategies and their focus should shift to the everyday functioning of political parties in parliament. All parties, parliaments, and governments need to respond to voters and help make the lives of

constituents better, or citizens will begin to conclude that these institutions are hollow. The impact of these institutions on democratization in these states will be negative if people fail to develop trust in those that are meant to represent them. Central to such work would be training and consultation on constituent service. Equally important would be teaming parties up with other local groups, NGOs, and unions, for example, to work for legislative change on issues of concern to constituents. Western NGOs are in a good position to hold conferences that get diverse groups of people together and present examples of successful advocacy campaigns from around the world. Donors, such as USAID, which fund efforts supporting parties as well as local NGOs and unions, could play a role in helping coordinate efforts. Such work must not be restricted only to liberal parties. As in the case of campaign technology, if any party begins to respond effectively to its constituents, it will force others to do the same or risk elimination. Additionally, in cases where the state is not properly functioning, such as in Russia and in Ukraine, the functioning of local groups, whether in the form of parties, NGOs, or unions, becomes particularly important as a force for change. Assistance should be targeted at these groups and not the state.

If Western NGOs hope to see liberal parties in parliament, then they should focus more attention on the importance of coalition building by providing specific examples (and numbers) of how multiple like-minded candidates running in one district lead to splitting votes and losing seats in parliament. The parties with which the Western NGOs have worked continue to struggle to achieve the necessary numbers for representation in the parliament (in Ukraine, the threshold is 4 percent of the overall vote, in Russia, it is 5 percent.) Efforts to gain entry to the parliament have in these cases been hampered by a crowded field of undisciplined parties reluctant to cooperate on candidate selection in single-mandate districts or to form coalitions. New coalitions of right-of-center parties in Russia suggest that many Russian liberal leaders have learned the lessons of not cooperating and loosing in elections. The coalition in Russia also suggests that while work on this topic can be laborious, incremental, and slow to show results (NDI began working on this in 1994 and it was only in the summer of 1999 that coalitions began to form), it is likely to influence party formation over the long-term.

If Western NGOs want to encourage national domestic electoral monitoring efforts, then they need to help support the building of an indigenous NGO with a national reach and *then* work with that NGO on domestic election monitoring. [21] The comparisons of Russia and Ukraine reveal that work on domestic monitoring had different results. The variable that made the difference was the presence in Ukraine of a nationally based NGO. Russia has over 50,000 NGOs but few with a national reach. Domestic monitoring has been most widely practiced by communists. Because of this partisan approach, the authority necessary to question election results has failed to develop.

---

[21] This is how NDI and IRI have engaged in domestic monitoring efforts in other parts of the world, in addition to the example of Ukraine from this report. Larry Garber and Glenn Cowen, "The Virtues of Parallel Vote Tabulations," *Journal of Democracy* 4 (April 1993), pp. 95–107.

3. INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Independent mass media is one of the main pillars of democratization in post-communist states: it is both a watchdog of potential abuses in political life and a forum in which informed debate can take place among citizens. Thus, Adam Michnik argues that *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the newspaper he edits in Warsaw, "is playing a major role in creating a new language in which to discuss and evaluate the world around us. For us, *Gazeta* is not just a newspaper, it's an institution of civil society, an institution of Polish democracy."[22] The three case studies in this section evaluate the strategies of Western NGOs seeking to promote an independent media since the fall of communism in thickly integrated states like the Czech Republic, and in thinly integrated states like Slovakia, Russia, and Ukraine.

In formerly communist states, as a result of decades of Communist Party censorship and state subsidization, the media lacked the skills, resources, and know-how to support the development of democracy in the dynamic post-communist environment.[23] Even when censorship restrictions on the media were lifted after the fall of communism and demise of the Soviet Union, journalists faced new challenges with the need for legal protection of independent media and the economic challenge of sustaining new media with the rising costs of creating and supporting newspapers, magazines, or television stations. Yet the independence of the media varies with the degree of integration across countries. To the extent that journalists are free from control and harassment from post-communist governments, the rule of law protects the media from legal or physical intimidation, and media diversity has been influenced by financial control and competition among new media outlets.

Since 1989, Western NGOs seeking to promote an independent media as part of democratic societies have included Internews and the Eurasia Foundation (funded by USAID), the Soros Foundation, the European Institute of Media, and the Independent Journalism Foundation. Their strategies can be broadly categorized as:

- human capital development in the form of training of journalists,
- infrastructural assistance to professional organizations for media professionals, as well as to particular media outlets, and
- reform of the legal and regulatory framework,
- enhancement of the financial and managerial performance of media outlets,
- provision of information on the state of the media to domestic and international observers.

We asked our field researchers to examine a range of possible indicators pointing toward impact. These included:

- the development of ownership structures;
- economic viability of media outlets;
- regulatory frameworks;
- professionalization of the media (such as development of professional organizations, educational programs, as well as norms and ethics that might involve the separation

---

[22] Adam Michnik, *Letters from Freedom: Post-Cold War Realities and Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 288–89.

[23] Megan Kearns, "U.S. Assistance to the Information Sector in Eastern Europe," working paper, Project on East European Media and Society, University of Texas, 1994.

of editorials from reporting, non-partisan aspects of the media, quality of reporting, and diversity of content).

Below, we summarize the findings of the case studies and in conclusion, highlight the lessons learned within the media sector.

Media in Russia

Although Mikhail Gorbachev considered the media a tool for reform of the Soviet system, his policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* undoubtedly initiated the media's move towards autonomy in the former Soviet Union. After 1991, the Yeltsin government did not adopt a clear media policy, but the Russian media's coverage of subsequent political crises (such as the parliamentary insurrection in 1993, the first Russo-Chechen conflict, and competition in national and local elections) demonstrated a greater autonomy from and influence on politics.

Yet Anne Nivat argues that the media in Russia cannot be said to be truly independent.[24] While the Russian media has become pluralistic, its relationship with the state is not yet regulated by legislation and protection. Further, the media is no longer used only by the state; many powerful businessmen have purchased media outlets with the aim of influencing politics to their advantage, thereby creating new sources of news bias. During the June 1996 presidential elections, for example, according to many reports, Yeltsin would not have been elected president for a second term without the positive coverage he received in major media outlets owned by the oligarchs who favored him over the communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov.

Nivat analyzes the nascent sector of media NGOs, comparing the efforts of the Eurasia Foundation, the Soros Foundation, Internews, the National Press Institute, the Moscow Media Law and Policy Center, and to a lesser extent, the Glasnost Defense Fund. She finds that in the immediate post-Soviet period nearly all international assistance organizations launched media programs primarily based on professional training and seminars (in-country and abroad), and equipment drops (computers, faxes, audio equipment, printers, Internet access). Subsequently, they shifted their efforts to address the legal and organizational infrastructure of the media, providing information about Western media regulations, sending legal advisers to help draft laws, sponsoring watchdog organizations specialized in defending the rights of journalists, and pointing out the threats to press freedom. More recently, programs have aimed at enhancing the media's economic viability through consulting on issues of management, marketing, sales strategy, and the ethics of journalists.

Western NGOs have played a critical role in the development of local NGOs that work on issues related to the media in Russia. But Nivat argues that their impact on the development of the media *itself* has been less clear. On the positive side, Western NGOs have launched many self-sustaining organizations and even managed to create commercially independent local television stations. Western assistance on media issues has been aimed at the Russian regions, compensating for the imbalance in resources between the capital and the periphery. After five years, during which time media NGOs were largely associated with Western donors, the National Press Institute, Internews and the Moscow Media Law and

---

[24] A recent exhibit in Moscow by Russian media and human rights groups entitled "Public Expertise" shows how freedom of the press has declined in 1999. The exhibit includes maps of Russia documenting freedom of the press. See http://www.freepress.ru

Policy Center have all registered themselves as Russian non-profit organizations, which entitles them as "local NGOs" to receive more funding from foreign donors. (The Soros Foundation, for example, distributes its funds exclusively to Russian, as opposed to foreign, organizations).

A logical division of labor among NGOs seems to have emerged, with one "leader-NGO" in each major media area activity: Internews is the unchallenged leader in the field of management of local private television stations, the National Press Institute works primarily with the written press throughout Russia, while the Moscow Media Law and Policy Center concerns itself with the regulatory framework and the Glasnost Defense Fund remains specialized on the defense of the rights of journalists. But the success of these "leader NGOs" appears to depend heavily on the *individuals* in charge of them, as does the likely future of these organizations after the eventual departure of their current leaders.

Since economic conditions remain difficult, the situation of the media in Russia continues to deteriorate. Distribution is nearly non-existent, and media moguls heavily influence the content of their media. While the NGO strategies reviewed in this report focused on making the recipients of assistance sustainable, they failed to address some crucial aspects of the nascent Russian media market. For example, as part of the economic sector in general, the media has been extremely influenced in a negative way by the development of oligarchs, who amassed capital following privatization. Western NGOs have not addressed the perils faced by the newspapers and TV stations owned by these bankers-turned-media moguls. If independent media are going to develop in Russia, Western NGOs will need to address strategies for the survival of independent media outlets. To date, the common USAID classification of their efforts with independent media as a success story contrasts starkly with conditions on the ground.

Media in Ukraine

During the Soviet years, Ukrainians, like all Soviet citizens, did not experience freedom of the press since the state controlled all media outlets. After independence in 1991, the new state sought to live up to international expectations and took steps toward ensuring freedom of the press. While legislation was adopted legalizing non-state media, it would be inaccurate to say that the media in Ukraine is totally independent. The continued economic crisis combined with high costs of production and distribution pose the greatest obstacles. Throughout the region, mass media has become dependent on either state or corporate support, which limits its freedom of action. For example, when former Prime Minister Pavlo Lazarenko (a wealthy and influential player in the Ukrainian energy sphere and the leader of the Hromada political party) chose to support a newspaper, political and economic interests were being pursued and media independence was compromised. Further, the Ukrainian government has faced pressure from Russia, which controlled the network of former Soviet media outlets and sought to broadcast news in Russian as news for the entire Commonwealth of Independent States. As Ukraine attempted to assert its independence and political identity, it feared that Russian or other foreign corporations could buy its airwaves and undermine its statehood. Consequently, the Ukrainian government retained ownership of the three major television channels and passed a law requiring TV and radio stations to use 50 percent Ukrainian-produced programming.

Marta Dyczok's report focuses on five Western NGOs operating in Ukraine: the International Renaissance Foundation (the branch of the Soros Foundation in Ukraine), the

European Institute of Media, and three NGOs that receive AID funds: Internews, the Eurasia Foundation, and IREX.   She identifies three principal strategies: reactive ones which respond to local initiatives, proactive ones which implement projects designed from outside, and information provision. The Renaissance and the Eurasia Foundations embody the reactive approach. They approve short-term projects, usually budgeted under $25,000, with the aim of spreading small amounts of money throughout the country and directly into the hands of Ukrainian journalists and editors.[25] The projects they have funded include starting new newspapers and magazines, creating regional press centers, producing television shows, training staff both in-country and abroad, and purchasing equipment for creating or upgrading mass media outlets.

By contrast, Internews and IREX Pro-Media used a proactive strategy for pursuing their goals: they set the agenda of their projects, selected the mechanisms for implementing them, and controlled the disbursement of funds. Their projects were administered by American citizens who oversaw funding, while the management of the programs was overseen by Ukrainians. Internews, for example, arrived in Ukraine in 1993 after it secured a $7 million USAID grant to create an International Media Center in Ukraine, an idea conceived and proposed by an American citizen who had previously worked in Ukraine.

The information provision strategy can be seen in the work of the European Institute of Media which produces one of the few systematic, objective sources on the media in Ukraine, *The Media Bulletin*, that enables journalists throughout the country to report on work conditions in a forum that does not threaten their livelihood.

The visible impact of Western NGO strategies for promoting free media to date has been mixed. Reactive strategies have contributed significantly to improving skills and expanding the overall technological base of the media industry. For example, one of the Eurasia Foundation's early successes was providing a grant for the production of the first independent news and analysis programme *Pislamova* (Epilogue), which is produced by a new independent TV company, NovaMova. This show was the first independent news program to be aired in Ukraine and it revolutionized Ukrainian TV news by introducing a new format and setting new quality standards for broadcasting.

Proactive projects, however, have encountered difficulties in adjusting to the political and institutional context in which they seek to implement their projects.   For example, Internews had to develop direct and regular relations with Ukrainian officials in its efforts to establish an independent television station, not an easy task even for Ukrainians who know how the new system functions. Internews helped create a fully equipped TV station with trained journalists, but has experienced difficulties with licensing and staying on the air. Lastly, while the European Institute of Media provides a valuable source of information, its existence has had little direct impact on local journalists, editors, and producers working in Ukraine; its target audience has been donors, namely Western governments and the international community (such as the OSCE, EU, and other organizations which commission the reports.)

None of the Western NGOs studied have effectively addressed the main obstacles to independent journalism, including how media continue to operate in a restrictive political and economic environment. Two issues dominate: the lack of reliable mechanisms in the

---

[25] The Eurasia Foundation has recently been investigating potential corruption in its Kiev office.

country to protect journalists and the fact that numerous media outlets in Ukraine today are not economically viable. Unless change occurs at the regulatory level, neither reactive, proactive, nor information provision strategies are likely to have long-term impact. Further, mass media, particularly the broadcast sector, is an expensive venture. Dyczok concludes that more funding needs to be allocated toward this sector if donors and foreign audiences expect their efforts to become sustainable in the new marketplace. Finally, donor countries have not been effective in linking freedom of the press to other issues. Whereas financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank make loans conditional on meeting certain economic goals, most aid packages and democracy programs do not link progress on independent media to continued assistance.

Perhaps the least tangible (but most negative) impact of top-down Western assistance, Dyczok argues, has been the restricted access to funding. The larger, externally controlled grants had the unintended consequence of disrupting ties among reform-minded journalists who had coalesced during Ukraine's independence struggle and who had the potential of influencing the regulatory framework. In the years immediately following independence, Western groups could have supported the creation of a professional association. Instead, competition was fuelled by a general lack of transparency in the procedures used for grant making, which then led to rivalries, resentments and fragmentation among journalists. Missed opportunities could be recovered with increased input from locals in developing strategies.

Media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

The Czech Republic and Slovakia share a common background as constituent republics of the Czechoslovak Federation since 1918. Both began the post-communist transition in 1989 with similar legal and political environments, and with comparable (albeit not identical) media cultures and structures. In both countries, international democracy assistance— including projects designed to support the development of independent media—began at roughly the same time, and with similar strategies. While the Czech Republic increased its integration with Western institutions by becoming a member of NATO and first-round candidate for membership in the European Union, democratic consolidation in Slovakia took a different turn after 1994. Vladimir Meciar was re-elected prime minister and instituted a semi-authoritarian regime characterized by harassment of the political opposition, independent media, and minorities. Subsequently, Slovakia was refused membership in both NATO and the European Union. Thus, a comparison between the Czech Republic and Slovakia permits examination of how the same strategies work in more and less hospitable political environments, and how, in some instances, international assistance organizations have subsequently adapted to these different political conditions.

Karen Ballentine's report focuses on several Western NGOs including the International Media Fund, a USAID grantee, and the Independent Journalism Foundation and its local partner organizations, the Soros Foundation, the IREX Pro-Media Program, and Article 19 (an international press monitoring group). She categorizes strategies in terms of the targets of assistance, contrasting human capital development aimed at individuals with infrastructural assistance aimed at media outlets and the regulatory environment. Within these categories, she analyzes product- or process-oriented strategies, comparing those involved in activities that focus on the long-range, incremental development of media skills and infrastructure with those aimed at delivering a specific product for a specific need (such as providing consultation on a draft media law, holding a one-shot conference on journalist

ethics, publishing handbooks, or subsidizing professional journals). Additionally, she describes assistance strategies as either selective—those which restrict assistance only to beneficiaries that meet specified criteria of eligibility—or non-discriminatory—which aim to spread the benefits of assistance to the media sector at large.

For example, human capital development has been the primary thrust of the Independent Journalism Foundation, founded in 1991 and supported largely by private U.S. funding, which helps fellow journalists upgrade their professional skills. The IJF founded the Centers for Independent Journalism in Prague (1991) and Bratislava (1993), both of which quickly became major local NGO partners for other international agencies, as well as primary institutional bases for on-going series of in-country training seminars and workshops. In addition, these Centers have taken on some functions of a press center, a media advocate, and an informal professional development network. By contrast, the largely Soros-funded Media Loan Development Fund was the first in the region to undertake a media loan program, and acted essentially as a development bank that provides direct loans to eligible media outlets to assist them in developing their own broadcast or print facilities and sustainable business practices. Lastly, the reform of the legal and regulatory framework has involved both direct advocacy efforts by international press monitoring groups, such as Article 19 and the Committee to Protect Journalists, which seek to use publicity and disapprobation to pressure governments to alter offending practices, and indirect advocacy efforts, which seek to strengthen the capacity of local media professionals to effectively participate in the design and implementation of democratic media legislation.

Ballentine finds that international support has had a positive influence in shaping the norms and practices of the post-communist media: it has enhanced their professionalism and their viability, and has helped to integrate them in a larger transnational media community. This assistance has made a crucial difference to the professional careers of individual journalists and, in some cases, to the survival of particular non-state media outlets. However, the relative importance of this support on the aggregate, sector-wide level depends in large part on more general progress toward democracy. Where the consolidation of democracy has been relatively unproblematic, such as in the Czech Republic, media assistance is best characterized as "facilitating" the development of the independent media and not as decisive to its very existence. In contrast, where democratic transitions remain partial or are threatened by significant authoritarian reversals, such as in Slovakia, international assistance can play a more decisive role in ensuring the material and financial basis necessary for independent media to operate.

The particular strategies of assistance which appear to have been most effective in promoting media independence and professionalism have displayed some or all of the following features:

- sensitivity and responsiveness to the changing needs of the various local media;
- development of strong local partnerships that give local partners and beneficiaries wide leeway in project design and implementation;
- targeting of infrastructural needs as well as individual's skill-building;
- provision of long-term specialized skills-oriented training using local talent rather than short-term, general training by outside advisors; and
- strategic limiting of support to a small number of niche projects sustained over a longer period of time.

For example, precisely because local journalists are working to define their own media culture and because many are resentful of what they view as western efforts to lecture them on ethics, they have not been enthusiastic participants of training seminars and conferences in which journalistic ethics have been featured. For this reason, a more promising strategy might aim to supply journalists with administrative know-how and resources so that they can develop and sustain their own organizations, rather than one which focuses on the direct transfer of norms and ideas or fixed institutional models. In Slovakia, the Pro-Media program appears to have learned this lesson the hard way. In its initial, pro-active phase, Pro-Media devised a plan for organizational restructuring that gave little room for the preferences and priorities of the existing Slovak Syndicate of Journalists. The response of the Syndicate was to abruptly suspend its cooperation. Fortunately, however, Pro-Media has since managed to restore the confidence of the Syndicate and has shifted to a more interactive strategy of administrative development.

Ballentine identifies a number of lessons for more effective media assistance. She concludes that there is a need for more careful, strategic planning before assistance efforts are launched, so that resources can be more effectively matched to the most pressing needs of the media sector in varying settings. Discrete strategies of Western NGOs were not always evident, particularly during the initial stages of assistance (1990–1993), when the design of coherent strategies of assistance was secondary to providing as much visible aid as quickly as possible, both in order to satisfy donors that their money was being put to work and to enhance the palpable benefits of democracy to newly enfranchised citizens.

In post-authoritarian settings where the media are likely to be highly partisan and politicized, international actors must be extremely wary of mistaking opposition media outlets for independent, professional media, and should seek to develop strategies that can help offset or transcend media politicization and promote an integrated, professional fourth estate. As elsewhere, much of the media's larger democratic influence still depends on the degree of democratic commitment among prevailing power holders and the dominant political culture. Such constraints also create attribution and measurement problems that make it extraordinarily difficult to provide a definitive evaluation of the wider impact of international media-assistance programs, either individually or together.

There is a need to integrate media support with other democracy promotion activities, especially those aimed at strengthening civil society organizations and local government reform. Western NGOs should also strategize about mitigating the corrosive effects of the commercial media in environments where the public sphere is still nascent. Efforts to support a viable commercial media should be balanced by greater support for the norms, practices, and effective operation of the public service media.

Recommendations

The case studies in this section highlight the often ambiguous place of the media in democracy assistance efforts. On the one hand, a free and independent media is considered one of the pillars of democracy, serving as a watchdog on political power and a vehicle for public debate; on the other hand, media in market societies is a business, and a costly one. Three of the four countries (Russia, Ukraine, and Meciar's Slovakia) fall into the category of "thinly integrating" states or "gray zones" in which democracy has not been fully consolidated, yet where many donors have thought democracy assistance could make a significant difference. In these countries, assistance to promote a free media tends to

resemble support for the democratic opposition by providing a vehicle for independent political opinions, since "free" media in such situations often simply means "beyond the control of the state." Consequently, efforts to promote free media, like aid to political parties, may encounter the perils of partisanship, and Western NGOs providing operating support for media run by the democratic opposition may risk threat and reprisal from the ruling states.

All the reports note the importance of adapting media assistance strategies to the local context. Without a permissive political and normative framework, in Ballentine's words, the seeds of international media assistance may not yield the desired democratic fruit. Paradoxically, international media assistance may be least effective in achieving its broader goal of democracy-support where democracy has yet to be consolidated—that is, precisely where it appears most needed—and appears to be most effective where it is least needed.

Assistance to promote free media reveals a tension between democratization and marketization. Media is an expensive business. Rarely are Western NGOs prepared to provide the significant operating costs for a television station or newspaper. As Nivat and Dyczok note, encouraging new media to become self-sustaining can raise contradictory pressures, since subscriptions or memberships are insufficient support in a marketizing environment. When new media outlets turn to advertising support, they risk surrendering their independence to business interests. In large countries like Russia and Ukraine, for example, businessmen who buy television stations and newspapers are also part of a new political and economic oligarchy, imposing political restrictions on their newly acquired media outlets.

All the reports highlight the need for a secure legal environment in which journalists can work, where they are protected against lawsuits as well as from physical violence. The cases suggest that Western NGOs seeking to promote free media adjust their efforts to address the broader regulatory environment, that is, the state institutions that control licensing and regulate the media (or fail to do so). Western NGOs could do this by funding organizations that are most familiar with existing structures or that help groups press for laws, such as those that deal with news content and libel, that guarantee the independence of the press, or that offer legal protection for journalists reporting unpopular issues.

The three reports highlight the degree to which Western media styles, like campaign technology, have spread in these countries. New television stations have adopted Western technologies and styles of presentation, with fashionable newscasters, upbeat theme music, and quick cuts to video stories dramatizing political and everyday life, all interspersed with commercials. Newspapers have adopted cutting-edge graphics with bold layouts and headlines, catchy stories, and small snapshots of the columnists next to their columns. Journalists have traveled to Western countries to participate in seminars on separating commentary from factual reporting and have visited prominent newspapers such as *The New York Times* or *Le Monde* to see how journalists in established democracies actually work.

Ballentine's report highlights the problem that media assistance shares with much democracy assistance: the lack of a strategic vision matching efforts with the most pressing needs, the potential for increasingly useless seminars by outside experts who know little about the local conditions in which journalists must work, and equipment drops into situations unprepared for new technologies. The reports in this section suggest that assistance to independent media should shift more to *reactive* strategies that support a smaller

number of recipients over the long term, and which solicit input from potential recipients and build in feedback mechanisms to understand which programs are most successful and which are superfluous.

In sum, assistance to promote a free media shares certain risks with other forms of democracy assistance, but it differs from others in its link with commercial economies and its costly nature. Few would question the importance of the media for new democracies, yet in the absence of a better understanding of the link between media projects and vibrant democracies, the best way for Western NGOs to assist may be in thinking small and longer term.

4. CIVIC ADVOCACY GROUPS

Since the fall of communism and end of the Soviet Union, aid to public interest advocacy groups has become an additional focus of democracy assistance programs, part of (what is often referred to as) supporting the development of civil society. The argument that a robust civil society is the basis for sustainable democracy can be heard widely in public debate, from Robert Putnam's writings on civic culture to management guru Peter Drucker's argument that the main global challenge today is promoting "worldwide civil society, without which there can be neither political nor social stability."[26] Thomas Carothers observes that advocacy-oriented groups are crucial to democracy because they "seek to influence governmental policy on some specific set of issues," and thus serve to articulate citizens' interests vis-á-vis the state.[27]

The concept of civil society, however, must be used carefully. It seems to have many different meanings: sometimes civil society refers to the "democratic opposition" to communist regimes in Eastern Europe.[28] In formerly communist countries, independent advocacy groups—the core of civil society—emerged out of a legacy of repressive regimes which sought to suppress all activity beyond the control of the communist parties. (These regimes were successful to varying degrees across countries, with results ranging from the vibrant range of underground activity in Poland in the 1980s to its absence in parts of the former Soviet Union.) At other times, it seems to refer to a normative model of an economic and political "third way" between socialism and capitalism.[29] Some scholars have used it to refer to the Western parliamentary traditions of non-profit organizations.[30]

Some scholars have argued that there is little reason to presume that international aid is capable of supporting the development of a civil society which must emerge from within countries lacking traditions of independent organization or volunteerism, and lacking a legal framework that recognizes and supports not-for-profit activity. Claus Offe declares that:

> while democratic institutions and economic resources can be "transplanted" from the outside world (or their introduction facilitated and their durability protected by a host of positive and negative sanctions designed to support and strengthen new democratic regimes), the civic "spirit" or "mental software" that is needed to drive the hardware of the new institutions is less easily influenced by external intervention. The rise of a robust "civil society" cannot be initiated from the outside.[31]

---

[26] See Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); and Peter F. Drucker, *Managing in a Time of Great Change* (New York: Truman Talley Books/Dutton, 1995).

[27] Thomas Carothers, "Democracy Assistance: The Question of Strategy," *Democratization*, vol. 4, no. 3 (1997), p. 114.

[28] See Václav Havel, *Open Letters: Selected Writings 1965–1990*, selected and edited by Paul Wilson (New York: Vintage Books, 1991); Adam Michnik, *Letters from Prison* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); and David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics: Opposition and Reform in Poland since 1968* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990).

[29] See Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

[30] See Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, "Social Origins of Civil Society: Explaining the Nonprofit Sector Cross-nationally," working paper no. 22 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project), 1996.

[31] Claus Offe, "Cultural Aspects of Consolidation: A Note on the Peculiarities of Postcommunist Transformations," *East European Constitutional Review* (Fall 1997), p. 67.

Paul Stubbs goes further to declare that most "civil society" assistance programs become simply troughs at which local elites feed themselves.[32]

In light of the multiplicity of meanings of "civil society," it is necessary to clarify. We refer to public interest advocacy groups or organizations that are outside the control of the state and that seek to influence it on behalf of public aims. The seven case studies in this section evaluate strategies of assistance to public interest advocacy groups concerned with three issue areas—women, the environment, and civic education—across thickly integrated states (Poland and Hungary), thinly integrated states (Russia and Romania) and unintegrated states (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan). The Western NGOs studied in these cases vary across issue areas, including the Soros Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, the Network for East-West Women, the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal, IREX, the Charity Aid Foundation, and World Learning.

Broadly speaking, Western NGO strategies to assist public interest advocacy groups can be categorized in terms of: 1) human capital development, which seeks to support and train individuals, 2) infrastructural assistance targeted to providing equipment and support for organizations, and a range of proactive and reactive strategies, aimed, for example, at 3) implementing designs for new public interest organizations and resource centers, or 4) soliciting proposals for particular events, such as conferences.

We asked our field researchers to look at a range of issues suggesting the impact of Western assistance. These included:

- the development of NGOs that did not exist before the collapse of communism and that address specific issues;
- professional development of activists and organizations including their economic sustainability, national or international networking, and access to technology;
- the ability of NGOs to work with media to enhance awareness of issues;
- legislative developments as a result of NGO efforts; and
- the empowerment of new groups in society.

Below, we summarize the findings of the case studies and in conclusion, highlight the lessons learned within the sector of public interest advocacy groups.

Women in Poland and Hungary

Until 1989, in Poland and Hungary, the Communist Party intervened in almost every aspect of life, and mass organizations on behalf of the country's female population were established only under the direction of the Party. Ambitious communist rhetoric and the presence of large and well-organized women's organizations, however, did not mean that socialism's promise of gender equality had been fulfilled. As in other countries, women were paid less than their male counterparts and were barely represented in positions of power.

Since the fall of communism in 1989, the process of democratization has proceeded at a comparable rate in both countries and women have experienced similar challenges. Changes in the early 1990s exacerbated existing disparities between men and women, and despite important differences among post-communist societies, women throughout the region

---

[32] Paul Stubbs, "NGOs and the Myth of Civil Society," *ArkZin*, no. 55 (January, 1996).

suffered disproportionately from political uncertainty and economic restructuring. Moreover, the anti-communist paradigm engendered a patriarchal backlash as these societies struggled to reestablish their traditional cultures. Yet despite initial similarities in the development of this sector, the diverse and fairly developed landscape of women's NGOs in Poland looks dramatically different from the still fledgling and unorganized activities that are currently taking place in Hungary.

In an effort to promote democracy in East-Central Europe, numerous international actors have focused their energies on helping women in the region respond to the challenges posed by the transition to democracy and the market. Patrice McMahon's report assesses the strategies of American foundations and non-governmental organizations in Poland and Hungary in the post-communist period (1989 to 1998), including the network of Soros foundations, the Ford Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, the Global Fund for Women, as well as the Network for East-West Women, and Women's World Banking. She distinguishes strategies in terms of the identity of the beneficiary (infrastructural assistance to organizations versus human capital development) and the terms of involvement or method of transfer the Western NGO is likely to adopt (distinguishing proactive from reactive and elite-centered from mass-focused approaches). She also examines project-based strategies in terms of their process or product orientation and short- versus long-term involvement.

The inability or unwillingness of the Polish and Hungarian governments to fund women's groups has meant that the primary strategy employed by Western NGOs has been providing money and in-kind assistance, such as computers and fax machines to develop the necessary infrastructures to create or sustain women's organizations. McMahon finds that the local branches of the Soros Foundation (such as the Stefan Batory Foundation in Poland) have been the most extensive in this regard. While most of the grant-giving international actors (such as the German Marshall Fund, the Soros foundations, and the Global Fund for Women) are inclined to support existing or already conceived organizations, the Ford Foundation's efforts in Poland provide a contrast in their reliance upon a more proactive, top-down strategy. Unlike many Western organizations with offices in the region, Ford's funding decisions for Poland and Hungary are still made from their offices in New York (such as its decision to establish The National Women's Information Center in Warsaw that grew out of a successful similar initiative in Russia).

By contrast, empowering individuals or developing skills which are more marketable in the new economy has also figured prominently in the strategies of Western NGOs, particularly the Network for East-West Women (NEWW), the League of Women Voters, and Women's World Banking. Since the late 1980s, the development of human capital has been a common strategy used by American foundations. Importantly, it has evolved a great deal in the last ten years. Seminars, workshops, and fellowships remain the most obvious manifestations of this strategy, but in most cases, the content as well as personnel involved in these educational endeavors has changed to reflect new needs.

Finally, according to many practitioners in the region, Western NGOs appear to be more eager to become involved in projects that lend themselves to short-term, identifiable objectives. Involvement in specific projects, for better or worse, suggests a beginning and an end and thus, a defined amount of financial assistance or commitment. For example, several foreign embassies and USAID funded the Center for the Advancement of Women's *Directory of Women's Organizations and Initiatives in Poland*. Yet, these same actors are not interested or willing to provide general support for this organization.

The impact of Western NGO strategies, McMahon finds, was constrained across countries by varying governmental support for the sector, the strength of indigenous NGOs' culture and traditions, and the different challenges facing women in these countries. Ten years after the fall of communism in Poland and Hungary, the landscape of women's organizations differs tremendously. Whereas in Poland, infrastructural assistance has had a large impact, both in terms of the number and the diversity of women's organizations that were established after 1989 and that continue to exist today, Hungary has attracted fewer international donors and international actors to the plight of women's advocacy. Polish women's NGOs, McMahon observes, appear to be better organized and far more active outside the capital than their Hungarian counterparts. In Poland, the Center for the Advancement of Women's *Directory of Women's Organizations and Initiatives in Poland* and the National Women's Information Center's quarterly bulletin of gender activities in Poland are signs of the evolution and maturity of women's advocacy groups. In Hungary, even among NGOs in Budapest that appeared to have a great deal in common, many practitioners admitted to knowing little about the activities of other groups.

Democracy assistance to women's advocacy groups has been seen as a way to counter economic and political trends that were threatening the status of women. Since neither Poland nor Hungary had any independent women's organizations in 1989 when communism collapsed, the importance of providing resources for the establishment of offices to meet and conduct business cannot be over-stated. Yet, says McMahon, it would be incorrect to suggest that international involvement has been *the* driving force in the development of women's advocacy groups. Rather, it has had a paradoxical effect on the development of women's NGOs in post-communist countries: while international involvement has sped up the process of building a nascent "women's lobby" and promoted the development of a feminist consciousness, it has, simultaneously, resulted in the isolation and even "ghettoization" of women's NGOs which neither depend on, nor seek to support, local actors or national governments.

McMahon recommends that the sector be supported with both large, long-term institutional grants and small grants that primarily target individuals. While international actors have undeniably made a difference in the development of women's NGOs in Poland and Hungary, their efforts would be more successful if:

- assistance were sustained, at least for a couple of years;
- assistance were to target organizations and projects that seek to attract the "average woman"; and
- Western NGOs were able to persuade national governments that it is in their best interest to respond to the needs of their female population.

This work requires nuanced strategies. For example, in some instances, the adoption of feminist ideas from the U.S. and the American style of activism has conflicted with Polish culture and, thus, ideas related to women's advocacy have had a difficult time taking hold in Polish society. Local NGOs and the ideas around which they form cannot be imposed by Western NGOs but must be initiated locally, using domestically generated ideas and methods. The example of Women's World Banking (WWB) is illustrative. WWB conducted seminars for "elites" in Warsaw and also in Lodz, a city dominated by female workers, in an effort to create women's banks in both cities. The organization's approach was proactive and relied on ideas that had been tested in the developing world. According to Polish

practitioners who had a great deal of contact with WWB representatives, the organization knew a lot about Poland and the ongoing changes. But its seminars and strategies for responding to these changes were based on models that originated in countries significantly different from Poland. As a result, representatives were unwilling to change WWB structure or methods to respond to the unique needs Polish women faced. Despite WWB's early interest in Poland, no Women's World Banks were established.

To be truly successful, both Western and local NGOs must take into account domestic politics: Western NGOs should try to create an incentive structure that would lead government brokers to recognize women's issues as important (as the European Union has done, for instance). McMahon's report suggests the importance of sequencing by Western NGOs, acknowledging and responding first to local activities with infrastructural assistance and human capital development. Once a critical mass has developed, Western NGOs should then provide larger long-term assistance to women's NGOs that are politically grounded and domestically supported.

Women in Russia

For most of the Soviet period, there were no independent public associations in Russia. The Communist Party did create a number of social organizations that enjoyed nominal autonomy, but these depended upon the regime for funding and personnel and acted more as a means of social control than of individual empowerment. Although the official ideology proclaimed the legal equality of men and women, women's interests were subsumed under the general interest of the proletariat. Under these circumstances, most Russians avoided the public sphere as a realm of hypocrisy, surveillance, and subordination, and retreated as much as possible into the sanctuary of their homes, their families, and a small network of trusted friends. During *perestroika*, in the late 1980s, while official women's organizations pursued the ideal of Soviet womanhood, a number of activists came together to form the first independent women's movement since the 1917 revolution. Yet Russian feminists often met with indifference and hostility. The reasons for this hostility are complicated, but Russian women often identified the struggle for equal rights with Soviet-style emancipation and so accepted the narrow Soviet definition of equality. Second, feminism's aim to politicize relations between men and women threatened the sanctity of the household, that sanctuary of privacy that Russians had protected fiercely under Soviet rule.

While Russian feminists found few allies at home, they had little trouble forging ties with women in the United States and Western Europe.[33] James Richter's report analyzes the efforts of transnational feminist organizations such as the Global Fund for Women and the *Frauenanstiftung* of Germany, as well as the efforts of donors, such as the Ford and MacArthur Foundations. Richter contrasts strategies according to the tasks the organizations and donors seek to accomplish (building NGO infrastructure, public advocacy, and community outreach), the identity of their beneficiaries (individuals or organizations), and their terms of involvement (by comparing, for instance, grants that enable individuals or organizations to accomplish a specific task or project, with multidimensional grants that enable organizations to accomplish a range of services).

---

[33] See also Valerie Sperling, *Organizing Women in Contemporary Russia* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

For example, infrastructural assistance helped establish three core organizations in the independent women's movement: a Ford Foundation grant helped create the Information Center of the Independent Women's Center; the Consortium of Russian Women's Non-Governmental Organizations grew out of a grant from Winrock International; and the St. Petersburg Center for Gender Issues was established with help from the German feminist group, *Frauenanstiftung.* Human development strategies (such as those of the Ford Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, and other assistance agencies), by contrast, made it possible for representatives from independent women's organizations to take part in the NGO Forum at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Project-based strategies can be seen in the efforts of the Global Fund for Women, which provides grants of up to $15,000 without any conditions to small, promising organizations, and in the Winrock International and Eurasia Foundation's sponsorship of unidimensional grants to purchase office technology, gain access to the internet, organize a conference, conduct policy-related research, or publish a newsletter.

Western assistance to women's organizations, Richter argues, has been a mixed blessing for the construction of civil society in Russia. In many ways, Western support has made it possible for the women's movement to survive. Though some independent, feminist organizations would have carried on without outside assistance—indeed, some have done so—they probably could not remain sufficiently active and connected to be called a movement without a core of organizations sustained by Western funds. These core organizations have not only survived, but become vigorous participants in Russia's growing third sector. Donors' efforts to encourage Moscow organizations to reach out to the regions have been particularly successful. In December 1995, for example, a seminar sponsored by the Information Center of the Independent Women's Forum and the Archive-Database-Library produced a new Association of Independent Women's Organizations that included thirty organizations from seventeen different regions. Further, the political successes of the Union of Russian Women and Movement of Russian Women have ensured that each of the three major power centers of the Russian government—the Duma, the Federation Council, and the Presidential apparatus—has a committee or commission devoted to issues concerning women and families.

Yet, by creating a cadre of professional activists involved in their own networks, norms, and practices, Western assistance has in some ways widened the distance between the Russian women's movement and the rest of society.[34] As civic associations become more institutionalized and professionalized, they are frequently transformed into more hierarchical, centralized corporate entities that value their own survival over their social mission. Their dependence on Western assistance often forces them to be more responsive to outside donors than to their internal constituencies. By selecting feminist organizations over other women's organizations, donors have ended up assisting organizations whose goals from the beginning were more firmly based in this transnational network than in Russian society. Further, their dependence has the unintended consequence of removing incentives to mobilize new members and of fostering inter-organizational competition for grants that breeds mistrust, bitterness and secrecy between and within organizations. Finally, even as organizations become more professional, some still rely heavily on the personal

---

[34] In addition to Sperling's work, see also Sarah Henderson, "Importing Civil Society: Western Funding and the Women's Movement in Russia," paper presented at the 1998 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association (Boston, September 3-6, 1998).

relations of small circles of friends and relatives characteristic of Soviet society. Some of these problems are inevitable in an environment where Western grants provide more financial resources than other sources can, but some are the result of donor practices that could be improved.

Western donors, Richter argues, can partially offset this trend by changing some of their emphases. First, donors and Western NGOs should pay closer attention to how decisions are made within organizations to encourage wider participation and transparency. Perhaps most damaging has been the donors' practice of giving one person the responsibility for administering a grant. Russian feminists, like their counterparts in the West, have sought to avoid hierarchical structures in their movement as much as possible, yet this practice forces women's organizations to name a director who will have influence over organizational decisions. Rather than instilling habits of compromise and mutual responsibility, the practice has bred ill-will and contributed to rifts in several women's organizations, including the Independent Women's Forum, the St. Petersburg Center for Gender Issues, and the Archive-Database-Library Project.

Second, donors and NGOs should take steps to avoid centralization within the movement as a whole by spreading out more small grants among a variety of organizations, and by continuing efforts to connect women's organizations with the Internet. While resource centers and other large multi-dimensional grants are vital to the survival of the movement, donors should combine such grants with smaller seed grants to assure the presence of multiple voices within the movement, diminish the resentment between organizations, and reduce the suspicion that Western assistance goes to the same people.

Third, donors should award grants that actively encourage organizations to reach out to the community with practical services that have an immediate, tangible impact on people's lives. Public advocacy cannot be effective without public support, and current strategies too often accomplish abstract and symbolic achievements. By contrast, projects offering immediate, tangible benefits have a greater chance of bringing women into the public sphere. Here, the success of the Committee of Soldiers' Mothers (CSM), despite their organizational problems, is instructive. The CSM does not seek to transform society; the assumption that mothers should put themselves on the line in the interest of their sons, rather than their own interests or even their daughters' interests, conforms well with traditional views of Russian femininity. Partly because of this, Russian women are more likely to approach the CSM for assistance: the offices in Moscow had a long line of petitioners waiting for advice, and a weekly open meeting in St. Petersburg was attended by over 150 people. Western assistance to crisis centers for abused women, and projects in which activists work with local officials to enforce and implement existing laws have also proven particularly effective in this regard.

Information Technology Assistance to Women's Groups in Russia

In the 1990s, all over the world, from Belgrade to Chiapas, new technologies have allowed activists in grassroots NGOs to mobilize virtual communities and shine a spotlight on issues of public interest, circumventing state control and connecting directly with international media channels. Starting in 1996, donors in Russia began to combine support for women's groups with the spread of technology, culminating in the development of women's information and/or electronic networks. A recent report cited that 1.35 million Russians have Internet access today, and that number is constantly increasing. Today, an Internet surfer interested in Russia can click on a plethora of websites featuring home pages for most

major Russian political figures, complete with policy statements, press releases, and invitations to citizens to write directly to the politician. These programs have a range of objectives, but all assume that technology can contribute to the development of women's public advocacy groups. It allows them opportunities for free speech and political advocacy, helps to identify and publicize abuses or issues of public concern, and aids in mobilization across great distances by improving and simplifying coordination of actions.

Tina Nelson's report analyzes the strategies of Western NGOs, including the Ford Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Eurasia Foundation, and the National Democratic Institute, as well as local women's groups in Moscow that received grants to develop networks. Her report draws on her work in June 1998 at the Gender Expertise Project of the Moscow Center for Gender Studies with Elena Kotchkina, currently the Director of the Soros-funded Open Society Institute-Russia's Women's Network Project. Nelson identifies three strategies for utilizing technology: sharing information, recording and documenting information, and producing information.

Network building—that is, providing women's groups with equipment and training in e-mail and the Internet as a means of communicating with other women's groups and their constituencies—is the most common form of information-sharing. For example, the Information Center of the Independent Women's Forum (with funding from the Ford Foundation and USAID) acts as an umbrella organization for more than 200 women's groups throughout Russia, organizing seminars, conferences and training, in addition to acting as an information clearinghouse, archive, library, and database. The Network of East-West Women ([NEWW], whose funders include MacArthur, Ford, Eurasia, and World Learning) has been active in similar ways, but has also been involved in developing on-line resources, including one that gives legal advice to women. NEWW has sophisticated, hyper-linked websites (in English and Russian, as well as other Eastern European languages), sponsors electronic forums on gender issues, and is currently developing a quarterly on-line bulletin. Some of the strategies employed to produce information include: Internet publication of position papers, newsletters, and magazines, manuals for lobbying the government on-line, and organizing of political campaigns.

Western funding since the fall of communism, Nelson finds, has been a financial lifeline to the Russian women's movement, a movement which lacks domestic popularity despite its wide support from the international community. Technology has helped build connections among Russian women's groups and has transformed communication and information exchange, thereby helping to sustain a relatively small and geographically dispersed women's movement. Technology projects have resulted in increased communication between groups, and the opportunity for some collaboration on a national basis (such as with the ICIWF and NEWW). They have also increased the participation of groups in the more distant regions, which has the effect of decentralizing the women's movement away from Moscow.

Nelson finds, however, that technology on its own is not a panacea. Access itself does little to alter the way groups interact or engage with their local communities. The Russian women's groups that have received significant infusions of foreign funding have tended to be top-down groups of academic feminists who espouse expansive mission statements. They are geared toward the broad goal of improving the position of women in society; they engage in a variety of activities which tend in the short run to benefit a relatively small group of displaced (mainly) elite women during a time of transition. Their goals have been enthusiastically supported by western funders, who have been keen to assist women's groups

as part of their civil society programs. This support may have inadvertently reinforced and institutionalized a weak movement that has neither connected with Russian women at large nor undertaken activism and outreach.

The effects of projects aimed at connecting different groups have been limited by several factors. First, as in the case elsewhere in the world, a widening gulf is being created between technology "haves" and "have nots." In Russia, groups that have received funding from western organizations generally have the equipment and training to use technology, whereas groups that are not members of these coalitions do not, and therefore miss out on benefits. The result is that access to information and resources remains in the hands of the *same* small group of activists who were selected by foreign funders in the first place. Further, networking projects are hampered by the same factors that limit the effectiveness of other NGO development projects, namely, they work best for groups with a clear mission, a target audience, and well-defined goals. Groups that do not meet these criteria are unlikely to reap the benefits that technology has to offer.

Nelson argues that the modest impact of technology programs to date is due not to the limitations of technology itself, but to the lack of understanding and appreciation of the *applications* of technology for public advocacy groups. For instance, the groups selected for funding often employ only low levels of technology (exchange of information via e-mail). Thus, individual groups may benefit from increased communication between *existing* members and organizations, and from access to more information, but in these cases, claims that technology facilitates broader dissemination of information to the public cannot be supported. One alternative to funding technology development to individual groups is to fund programs that promote the creation of local language content web pages and Internet resources for NGOs. Examples include IREX's OpenWeb Workshop, Charities Aid Foundation's Charity Net, the new Moscow-based NGO Hypernet project, and the increasingly popular Resource Centers for NGOs that provide information and training to activists.

Several elements must be present in order for these projects to succeed. First, funders need to work with experts to understand and identify applications of technology in light of the state of telecommunications infrastructure. Second, it is essential that ongoing tech support be available. For example, a half-day of training is not enough; it is clear that groups must have ongoing contact with a tech professional, and that their training must be updated. (Perhaps through this ongoing relationship, equipment could also be regularly upgraded.) In addition, training should convey the benefits of the technology for the group and combat the reluctance by many groups to spend extra money dialing into the server. Simply, groups will need to be convinced about how concretely this technology could help them. In addition, a technology trainer may not necessarily have the right skills to help groups define their goals and translate them to the Web: this is another emerging area of expertise, more like a specialized form of marketing and communications, that needs to be further developed.

Environment in Russia

The poor state of the environment in Russia, as well as in the entire former communist bloc, is well known and has become an international cause célèbre. Because of the controlling and repressive nature of the Soviet political system which held sway for most of this century, environmentalism in the Soviet Union was either an outright fiction or an unadulterated

effort on the part of communist party leadership to turn what could have been autonomous social organization into state-sponsored and state-controlled activity. With Gorbachev's policies of *perestroika* in the late 1980s, however, an active environmental movement did emerge, only to fall into relative obscurity after 1992.

Constantly changing state environmental institutions, the unclear relationships among these institutions, their often overlapping responsibilities, and the shifting content of environmental legislation have produced a highly unstable, and often perplexing, setting in which environmentally concerned citizens, advocacy groups, and decision makers must operate. In the past decade, well over a billion dollars have been committed by a combination of foreign governments, multi-lateral institutions, and international foundations to address environmental issues in the Russian Federation, but these funders have largely conceptualized efforts as either democracy or technical assistance, separate from the more heavily funded economic assistance.

Acknowledging that most programs encompass a wide range of activities and strategies, Leslie Powell's report compares strategies in terms of their goal orientation (civil society versus the environment) and their recipients (grassroots versus elite or societal, but non-mass-focused groups). She distinguishes strategies originating in indigenously generated ideas from imported models, as well as project-based and interactive financing. For example, the program Seeds for Democracy, which is administered by the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia under contract to USAID from 1993–1997, embodies the strategy of project financing for indigenous ideas. Approximately 500 small grants (up to $5000, for a total of about $1 million) were awarded to environmental NGOs throughout Russia. Beyond minimal guidelines (stipulating no commercial ventures, no purely scientific projects, and preference to projects which benefit the community at large or have a policy angle), all projects awarded funds were of local origin. By contrast, the Center for Energy Efficiency (CENEf) in Moscow, initiated by the Battelle Memorial Institute in Washington, D.C. represents the strategy of project financing for imported ideas: the basic concepts underlying CENEf—energy conservation among both industrial and household consumers, as well as promotion of collaboration among regional administrations, industrial energy consumers, the media, and the public—originated primarily with CENEf's U.S.-based founders.

The U.S.-based Sacred Earth Network (SEN) and its Russian partner, Ekotok, embody the strategy of interactive funding for indigenous ideas. Having previously donated computers and communications equipment to more than 400 environmental NGOs in the former Soviet Union and run training seminars on electronic communications, SEN-Ekotok is now refocusing its strategy—by indigenous suggestion—and working as a coordinator for environmental groups in outlying regions. There, SEN-Ekotok now conducts training for environmental NGOs that wish to cooperate and become better networked among themselves on a regional basis. Finally, the strategy of interactive financing of imported ideas is represented by many examples of professional training by foreign and international foundations, such as ISAR and a Russian-American group called Golubka. Such training consists of lessons in strategic planning, tactics, and identification and utilization of resources of all kinds (human, informational, financial, etc.). One indicator of the wholly imported nature of these ideas is that in a popular handbook for Russian environmental groups, terms such as strategic planning, fundraising, and press releases are translated (transliterated) only as "strategicheskoe planirovanie," "fandraizing," and "press-relizy."

Powell finds that the success of these assistance programs cannot be measured in terms of improvements in the environment, or in greater consciousness among national or local decision makers for environmental issues. Indeed, if one were to gauge success in this manner, one would have to conclude that these programs have failed. Instead, the success of these programs lies in assisting the establishment and development of environmental advocacy organizations in Russia and, to some degree, in helping to establish new democratic channels between civil society and political society for interest articulation and input. Nearly all environmental aid from foreign governments and international foundations has gone to this third sector in Russia, rather than the state or commercial sectors. This aid has clearly empowered social actors, created communication networks both horizontally and vertically, raised the level of public awareness of both environmental and democratic issues, and helped to make civil society groups more professional, organized, and strategic in their planning and activism.

Conspicuously, however, environmental aid has had little impact to date on the environment itself and on the implementation of environmental policy. The major reasons for this failure, according to Powell, are three. The first is the weakness of the state, which has little control over industrial and commercial interests, and also has a difficult time policing itself. Meager budgetary resources and the constant instability of elites and institutions contribute to the state's ineffectiveness in protecting the environment and managing Russia's natural resources wisely.

Second, channels for articulating societal interests are still weak. The state enjoys a high level of autonomy with respect to the mass public; the state is not accountable and democratic processes are either absent or dysfunctional. The party system is weak in a representational sense, both generally and with respect to environmental interests. The larger parties pay lip service to environmental issues, but even the green parties (KEDR and the Green Party) are either green in name only or politically powerless.

Third, there is an inextricable link between environmental issues and economic-industrial issues. The sheer magnitude of types of problems and their connection to each other make addressing only one and not the other an ineffectual way to resolve environmental issues. Industrial pollution, for example, is a problem that cannot be fully addressed without simultaneously addressing the health and reconstitution of the economic and industrial infrastructure of the country. Yet most foreign and international foundations that fund environmental aid programs do not concern themselves with the economic or industrial source of environmental problems, and economic/industrial assistance is usually considered an issue altogether separate from democracy and technical assistance. While this is generally true of foreign and international foundation assistance, it is not necessarily true of foreign government or multi-lateral assistance (such as the European Union's TACIS program, which attempts to combine environmental and industrial/commercial issues in many of its assistance programs).

Foreign foundations will have a more substantive impact on both the development of civil society groups and the environmental political process in Russia, Powell concludes, if they factor these problems into their strategies. Such strategies include employing holistic programs whereby all sectors (state, industry, media, the public) cooperatively engage in environmental strategizing and problem-solving, and building coalitions among environmental, economic, social, and state actors. The World Wide Fund for Nature, for instance, sees itself as trying to change the overall attitude toward environmental protection

in Russia, rather than treating the environment as a set of discrete issues that can be solved on a technical level by a single responsible actor (whether a polluting factory or a regional environment department). In a similar vein, the Green Cross promotes the idea of "cooperation, not confrontation," an idea originating in Green Cross International headquarters in Switzerland. Through interactive cooperation its ideas have filtered into Green Cross Russia and even out into the hinterland of Russia to affect the behavior of other Russian environmental NGOs. Under this behavioral concept, Green Cross Russia thinks of itself as an intermediary between the public and the state, and as spearheading the so-called "pale green" movement in Russia.

Environment in Kazakhstan

Environmental movements were among the first independent organizations to emerge in the Soviet Union as a consequence of Gorbachev's liberalization policy. In Kazakhstan, environmental activism centered around protest movements against nuclear weapons testing, such as in Semipalatinsk. After the break-up of the Soviet Union, the political climate relaxed considerably, and Kazakhstan witnessed a proliferation of independent organizations across various issue-areas. At the same time, however, the environmental situation worsened as the government began to develop the vast energy reserves in the Caspian Sea Basin. Although the environmental NGO sector was fairly well developed in Kazakhstan at the time of independence and continued to grow for the first few years afterwards, just as the environmental situation degraded, large-scale environmental movements disappeared from the political arena.

The report by Pauline Jones Luong and Erika Weinthal focuses on the energy sector and analyzes the strategies and activities of environmentally oriented Western NGOs and local NGOs in Kazakhstan, including the Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia (ISAR), Counterpart Consortium, and the American Legal Consortium. They analyze three primary strategies: the provision of small grants and technical support to local NGOs, assistance in information collection and dissemination, and training in decision-making techniques and grant-writing skills to empower local actors and communities to address their own problems. For example, between 1994 and 1996, the American Legal Consortium awarded $1.1 million in small grants to fifty-four NGOs across Central Asia. ISAR's "Seeds for Democracy" program held a series of grants competitions to provide assistance to individuals and groups working on environmental issues. Other organizations, such as NOVIB, have organized conferences in which local groups from throughout Central Asia exchange ideas and information about environmental issues as well as and the common political and organizational problems they face. Examples of the strategy of training and local empowerment include ISAR's creation of a Board of Directors from local environmental organizations to help them run their grants program and thereby entrust the granting decisions to local actors.

While local NGOs have proliferated in recent years, the authors find that they have played a *decreasing* role in environmental policy making since independence. They argue that this is a result of both domestic and international constraints. At the domestic level, local NGOs face institutional obstacles in a political system that has become more restrictive since 1994, and they lack access to organizational resources due to Kazakhstan's continued economic decline. These constraints derive directly from the Soviet legacy as well as from the limited degree of democratization in Kazakhstan since independence which has

continued to restrict press freedom and political mobilization. At the international level, the frequently conflicting interests and strategies of multiple international actors, including Western NGOs, international donor organizations, foreign oil companies, and foreign governments, have the unintended consequence of hindering rather than enhancing the role of local NGOs in promoting environmental protection in the energy sector. While outside groups (often with assistance from USAID) fund local environmental organizations in the hope of promoting a vibrant civil society, they sometimes usurp the local organizations' role by sending in foreign consultants to draft legislation and advocate regulatory regimes for the environment. For example, the Hagler Bailly project to create environmental regulations for the Caspian Sea Basin chose to involve foreign consultants who worked exclusively with local industry and government ministries, rather than invite local environmental organizations to participate in the consulting process.

Further, the active role of international oil companies has had the unintended consequence of circumventing local activism; oil companies engage the local population directly—effectively excluding local activists—in public meetings to explain their work and promote support for the development of the Caspian Basin. These companies are popular because they are perceived to be solving acute economic problems in the present by channeling substantial funds into the regions in which they operate. For example, over a five-year period, Chevron has allocated $10 million each year for support of the social sector in the Atyrau region, which includes investments to improve the local water system and power supply and to build schools, hospitals, and housing.

Paradoxically, the authors conclude, international democracy efforts appear to have undermined, rather than contributed, to a robust environmental movement in Kazakhstan. Although local environmental NGOs have grown in numbers due to the financial support of Western NGOs, the environmental movement is overwhelmingly reliant on international assistance for its survival, a dynamic that is reinforced by domestic political constraints on activism. In light of the domestic and international constraints, local environmental movements have had little incentive to increase their membership locally. Rather, the goals and strategies of environmental activism have converged with those of donors towards education and outreach to the international community, often ignoring the most pressing environmental issues at home, such as uranium tailings in the drinking water.

Civic Education in Romania

While Nicolai Ceausescu's particularly destructive communist regime was overthrown by a violent struggle in 1989, the first post-communist government was neither fully democratic, nor integrated with Western institutions. Under restrictive conditions, education was a particularly sensitive area. For example, although courses on the Romanian Constitution and the Scientific Bases of Socialism were formally replaced by civic education after 1993 under pressure from Western donors, the Education Ministry initially "neglected" to insert the course in the broader curriculum and did not make provisions for manuals to be printed. With the victory of the Democratic Convention in the 1996, the new Romanian government became more receptive to the influence of western efforts at civic education. But the impact upon civic education remains unclear. While the current Education Ministry is attempting structural and curricular reform, the current mandatory school program only includes civic education until seventh and eighth grades, which means that as teenagers approach voting age, there are no civics classes to prepare them for their new role as citizens.

Sandra Pralong's report evaluates the strategies of three U.S.-based NGOs that were active in civic education between 1990 and 1998: the Soros Foundation for an Open Society (later known as the Open Society Foundation), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and World Learning. The report also looks at one EU-backed effort, the Foundation for the Development of Civil Society (FDSC), and two Romanian organizations (Pro-Democratia Association and CENTRAS, or Center for Assistance) because of their particular relevance to civic education programs. Noting that most NGOs combine strategic approaches over time, Pralong contrasts strategies which imitate educational models from other national contexts with those that seek to adapt existing models, distinguishing between strategies targeting state actors from those targeting citizens.

While Western NGO strategies differed at first, the structural and institutional deficits of the Romanian transition unintentionally resulted in a gradual convergence of strategies. In the initial post-communist period, Western NGOs found their most fertile ground in civil society rather than in the formal state-run educational system. Accordingly, most civic education programs were informal; they targeted opinion leaders and the public at large, rather than attempting to influence institutional reform in education. After the democratic opposition came to power in 1996, the strategy of most major Western donors moved from primary support of civil society to direct involvement in assisting the state to undertake educational reform.

For example, the Soros Foundation (the largest private donor in Romania) before 1996 focused on empowering individuals through civic education workshops and teacher training. After the success of the democratic opposition in 1996, its funding for workshops was dramatically curtailed as it re-oriented its efforts toward assisting state institutional reform. By contrast, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (funded by USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy) started its Romanian programs in 1992 by focusing on election monitoring and civic education to benefit politicians and members of civil society through conferences, workshops, and a newsletter for opinion-makers. After 1996, it also changed its name and its identity, and became known as CENTRAS. It also changed its focus to support of local NGOs by providing training, legal assistance, and managerial support.

Western NGOs, Pralong finds, have served as catalysts for local processes of social innovation in the area of civic education, such as the discussion and encouragement of civility, tolerance, respect for difference, individuality, and the need for self-realization. Initially, however, NGOs demonstrated a bias toward strategies favoring the imitation of American institutions, a common strategy of USAID-backed donors. This approach created difficulties because of conflicts between the U.S. pedagogical model of encouraging student-centered discussion and the traditional Romanian emphasis on teacher-centered lectures, and it provoked resistance from teachers trained to give lectures and who are evaluated on the basis of how completely they cover the curriculum. World Learning's initial strategy was so novel, and so at odds with local reality, that in order to implement its programs, it had to create not only new words, but also an entire new field of activity and a new conception of involvement for local NGOs. To implement its strategy of demand-driven institutional imitation, World Learning started a training program and a recruitment and job-placement agency, as well as programs to produce the lobbyists it had come to Romania to assist.

As a whole, the impact of civic education programs has also been limited by the haphazard nature of program implementation. Several programs have provided training,

manuals, trips, conferences, and teaching materials to the same "core group" of schools, teachers, and opinion leaders, thereby reducing the distributional benefits of the resources invested. Further, impact has also been hindered by the lack of attention given to the actual "messengers" of civics: when the old apologists of socialism now teach "democracy," the credibility of the subject matter is bound to suffer.

Western involvement in civic education, Pralong concludes, has sped up social processes that would have taken generations to complete without NGO assistance. Due to a weak state structure in post-communist Romania, Western private donors could become substantively involved with local organizations. Romania's post-communist civic education continues to be a domain torn between the state's desire to assert control, and the expectation that Western and local NGOs foster the mobilization of civil society. To be effective, civic education programs need to address both the state and society. Organizations such as Pro-Democratia, CENTRAS, and the Foundation for a Civil Society have been remarkably creative in helping design civic programs that enhance innovation, but the impact of such programs is limited if they do not attempt to involve local officials.

Civil Society Projects in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan

Since the Central Asian republics gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, millions of dollars have been spent by international actors to promote democratization in the region. USAID alone spends more than $11 million annually in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, two countries that are widely viewed as representing contrasting levels of democratization in Central Asia. Uzbekistan is a highly authoritarian state, while Kyrgyzstan has taken more steps along the path to democratic reform. Despite these differences, both countries share similar Soviet institutional legacies, have similarly high levels of corruption, are marked by a disjunction between formal and informal political and economic institutions, have low levels of economic development accompanied by an uneven distribution of wealth, and are characterized by a weakened public sector infrastructure, especially in realms such as education, health, and social security.

Much democracy assistance is used to finance strategies and programs that are designed to strengthen "civil society" in the region. Fiona Adamson's report considers the efforts of international organizations and multi-lateral assistance efforts (such as the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, and European Union Phare and Tempus Programs), government foreign aid programs (including USAID, USIA/USIS, the British Know How Fund, and Swiss Aid), and local NGOs (such as Center Interbilim, the Tashkent Center for Public Education). Adamson evaluates six strategies, specifying the methods and programs within each strategy, and the actors pursuing each strategy. These include:

- creating and supporting independent advocacy groups,
- exposing elites to western democratic ideas,
- increasing public access to information and ideas,
- changing the institutional structure within which civil society operates,
- transforming political culture in society, and
- promoting community development at the grassroots level.

For example, Counterpart International works to create and support independent advocacy groups by providing seed money and grants for the establishment and support of local NGOs, as well as training for leaders of local NGOs in such areas as grant-writing,

financial management, and constituency-building. Similarly, the Eurasia Foundation supports specific projects carried out by local NGOs by providing grants for equipment, training, conferences, and other expenses. IREX and ACCELS administer large-scale academic exchange programs that expose elites to western ideas. IREX, the Soros Foundation, and the private NGO Central Asian Free Exchange (CAFE) facilitate access to information by providing computers, internet hookups and access, and training. The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, part of the Counterpart Consortium, tries to change the institutional structure that civil society operates in by monitoring legislative developments in the various Central Asian countries, and by providing legal advice to government committees regarding the drafting of new legislation on NGOs and other topics. Finally, the strategy for changing political culture involves promoting civic education, educational reforms, and cultural events. In Kyrgyzstan, the Soros Foundation has been so active that it is viewed by some as a second Ministry of Education. It also commissions the writing and translation of civics texts and Kyrgyz history books, and supports the development of new, critical accounts of Kyrgyz history.

Adamson finds that there has been a high level of disjunction between the vision of democracy being promoted, and the actual results produced by democracy assistance programs in Central Asia. Democracy assistance programs have not succeeded in penetrating deeply into society, and many have interacted with local conditions in ways that unintentionally aggravate a number of problems, such as corruption, income inequality, and aid-dependence, all of which are obstacles to democratic consolidation. That said, democracy assistance programs have not been without achievements, the most notable of which have been the incorporation of local elites into transnational civil society networks, a growth in official and societal acceptance of NGOs as legitimate social actors, and a limited number of small-scale community development successes. IREX, for example, has expanded from being an organization that focused almost solely on scholarly exchanges during the Soviet period, to an organization that also sponsors professional exchanges and conferences. In Uzbekistan, IREX administered the Uzbek Parliamentary Exchange Program, which brought nine members of the Uzbek parliament to the United States, and the USIA "Contemporary Issues" program in Uzbekistan, an exchange program for public administrators, journalists, and other professionals. Community development successes are illustrated by the efforts of Crosslink International, a small organization whose staff live in the communities with which they work (a lower-class *mahalla*, or neighborhood, in Tashkent). Its approach is to respond to community-based needs in ways that seek to empower the local community, such as helping build a soccer field for children by directing organizers to the proper government agencies, and providing after-school English classes for children partly financed through parents' donations.

Mixed results ensue when similar projects are administered by larger organizations. For example, the USAID-sponsored Aid to Artisans program is counted as one of the most successful democracy assistance programs in the region, and has resulted in the development of strong, independent, and financially self-sustaining regional artisan organizations. Artisan organizations have also been successful in applying to outside donors for grants and in collecting membership fees from their constituency. The reason for this success appears to be that programs were designed so that participants had a strong personal financial stake in the success of the organizations, receiving very tangible economic benefits. (For example, association members could participate in local crafts fairs that were geared to the expatriate community in Central Asia.) By contrast, a USAID program administered by the Citizens

Network for Foreign Affairs, which was designed to foster the development of independent farmers' associations, has suffered from massive misappropriation of micro-credit funds which has further entrenched local divisions, inequalities, and corruption.

Undoubtedly, one of the main reasons for the mixed impact is the difficult conditions under which international actors operate in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. There is a great contrast between the on-the-ground reality of limited democratization in which international actors carry out their programs, and the ideal end-points that programs and strategies are designed to achieve. Much of the ineffectiveness of democracy assistance can be attributed to the challenges that Western organizations encounter as they try to work in very different contexts; most assistance organizations have their headquarters in advanced industrial democracies, and their overall organizational structure, mission, macro-level strategies, and programs reflect this context. On the other hand, local branches of international assistance organizations must interact with conditions in Central Asia, and must adapt to these conditions in order to survive.

In restricted political and economic conditions like those found in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Adamson concludes, democracy assistance strategies need to be *especially* sensitive to local situations. This requires a flexible organizational structure and staff who are familiar with the local context. Adamson concludes that international actors need to be more willing to work with a variety of local groups, such as local community structures (*mahallas*), government NGOs (GONGOs), and religious organizations. But the willingness to work with such groups varies greatly across organizations. If Western groups work exclusively with the so-called "independent NGO sector" (largely created by Western assistance), then they will continue to reach only a small sector of society. Finally, international actors need to pay as much attention to the impact of informal processes and institutions, such as corruption and patronage networks, on their strategies and programs as they do to formal institutions.

Recommendations

The reports in this section reveal an array of groups with different concerns covered by the broad notion of "public advocacy groups." By comparing the impact of strategies in thickly integrated states like Poland and Hungary, in thinly integrated states like Russia and Romania, and in unintegrated states like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the reports highlight the problems inherent in applying any single model to all contexts. At the same time, the reports identify common problems, such as the need for transparency in grant making in light of the Soviet legacy of mistrust, and the limited nature of funds. All the reports note the quandary of aid recipients who become so dependent on international assistance that they become "ghettoized," more responsive to international donors than to the local concerns of the groups they claim to represent. Many of the authors note that while Western assistance may lead to the emergence of a new sector of local NGOs, these groups often have a tenuous relationship with their proclaimed supporters, with each other, and with the state they aim to influence.

More than other sectors in this project, the experience of public advocacy groups reveals the tensions and problems between "proactive" and "reactive" strategies. Many of the local NGOs claim to represent groups within society, yet since they have been created by Western funding, they often respond to Western influence and expectations. The reports on women's organizations by McMahon and Richter, for example, note that most Western assistance has traditionally gone to groups which espouse Western feminist ideals, even

though strong resistance toward such ideas makes it difficult for feminist organizations to connect with the media and other local institutions that could help spread their ideas. Similarly, Pralong's report notes that U.S. models of civic education met with resistance in Romania because they were in conflict with traditional conceptions of pedagogy. Nelson's report offers a portrait of how new technologies developed in the West can create both opportunities and problems for resource-poor groups in moderately integrating states like Russia. Her report highlights the need for Western assistance to devote significant time to understanding the local context to appreciate how (if at all) models of technology and communication such as e-mail and web pages can have the desired impact.

All the case studies argue that Western NGOs should rely more heavily on *reactive* strategies, and that they should solicit proposals for projects from the local society, rather than implement ideas and projects conceived outside the country. McMahon's report recommends that Western NGOs sequence their efforts, beginning with infrastructural assistance and human capital development, moving to reactive projects that are politically grounded and domestically supported only when a critical mass has been established.

To prevent the isolation of local groups from the societies in which they live and work, Western NGOs should turn to strategies that engage the state, media, and local NGOs in problem-solving within issue-areas and build coalitions among economic, social, and state actors. The case studies of environmental and civic education groups draw attention to the link between democracy assistance and the broader economic and political contexts. Powell's report argues that the weakness of the state in Russia (with little control over industrial interests as well as over its own administration), limits the enforceability of environmental laws even where local groups have lobbied successfully for their adoption. Where the economy remains poor, environmental groups will struggle to achieve their stated goals (although Powell highlights the TACIS program as an exception that seeks to combine environmental and industrial concerns in many of its programs). Weinthal and Jones Luong suggest that in some situations, Western assistance may have the contradictory effect of actually *arresting* the development of civil society. Similarly, the effectiveness of civic education projects may be limited in states resistant to Western involvement (such as Romania before the 1996 elections); with changes in political conditions, Western efforts must be able to respond quickly to take advantage of new opportunities, such as increased state openness to reforming the education system.

This sector is most identified with the promotion of civil society. While Western groups are united in their mission to articulate citizens' interests vis-à-vis the state, the reports in this section, however, caution against the simple idea that supporting local NGOs leads directly to either greater democracy or civil society. Like the other sectors studied in this project, the success of Western NGO strategies will depend on their ability to tailor and adapt their concerns to the realities in the countries that are constantly changing. While nearly all Western NGOs ultimately seek to assist local groups in becoming self-sustaining, our case studies suggest that this process is a difficult one, in which donors and recipients must establish a deeper understanding of each other's needs and expectations. In many cases, strategies different from those most commonly used are the ones that are required.

5. REDUCTION OF ETHNIC CONFLICT

Ethnic conflict has the potential to entirely undermine a state's movement toward democracy and with it, all those local forces associated with democratic change. External efforts at reducing ethnic conflict have met in some places—most recently in Kosovo—with limited success, and in others, such as Estonia, with greater success. In light of the potentially damaging role that such conflict may have in political transitions, we asked authors to explore a variety of situations in which Western groups have been engaged in trying to reduce it: 1) the international protectorate of post-conflict Bosnia, 2) a potentially violent situation between ethnic Estonians and Russians that was defused in Estonia, now quite thickly integrated with the international community, and 3) the more ambiguous predicament of ethnic Hungarian and Roma minorities spread across several states in Central Europe. These states exhibit varied degrees of integration into the international system, and include the thickly integrated Hungary, and the thinly integrated states of Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine. These cases highlight the combinations of strategies used by Western NGOs in different circumstances, as well as the variations in their success.

Ethnic conflict has increased in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia since the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. The most recent crisis in Kosovo offers a backdrop against which all these cases should be considered. Until late March 1999, the presence of Western NGOs (and international organizations) failed to either reduce or stop the Serb persecution of Albanian Kosovars. For the last several years in fact, Serbia has been the most difficult region for Western NGOs to work in; some American-based NGO workers spent the majority of their time waiting at the border in order to get entry visas. The Serbian officials severely constrained the work of NGOs in ways not seen elsewhere in formerly communist states.[35]

The Serbian situation fits a pattern we see in some of the cases discussed here: under conditions where the host state is itself deeply engaged in promoting nationalism, the potential of external influence is particularly constrained. This pattern also correlates with the degree to which the country is integrated within the international system. It suggests that ethnic conflict has a greater chance of being defused in states that are (or are becoming) thickly integrated into the international system.

Efforts at reducing ethnic conflict are distinct from other types of democracy assistance we explore in this study. Unlike political parties, independent media, or indigenous NGOs, ethnic conflict is not common to all formerly communist states. In the cases we examine here, it has played a varied role in the pace and scope of democratization, decisive in some places such as Bosnia and less so in others, such as Ukraine.

The main organizations looked at in Bosnia were: the International Crisis Group, which directly addressed its efforts at the foreign and local forces that make up the internal balance of power in post-war Bosnia; the National Democratic Institute's use of party building and civic education; Delphi-STAR's indigenous NGO capacity-building; and Catholic Relief

---

[35] V. P. Gagnon explores the situation in Serbia before the war in Kosovo in a mini-report for this project, also available at: http://www.ceip.org/programs/democr/democ.htm. Because of his own difficulties obtaining a visa to Serbia in order to carry out research, we have not included it as a regular case study. But since it sheds light on problems associated with both the reduction of ethnic conflict and democracy promotion in a state endorsing nationalist policies, we have made it available to interested readers.

Service's and Mercy Corps International's community reconstruction and development. In Estonia, efforts to reduce conflict were carried out principally, at least initially, by the pan-European governmental organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) which uses strategies most commonly associated with NGOs, such as micro-level observation and information distribution. The report on the Hungarian and Roma diasporas looks at over thirty NGOs, the strategies of which fall into two general categories: 1) NGOs working with ethnic Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine which focus on networking, that is, trying to increase communication between the ethnic minority and the titular power in each state; and 2) NGOs working with the Roma population which focus primarily on status raising, that is, improving the levels of Roma education, human rights, and economic well-being.

We asked the participants to consider broad categories of ethnic conflict reduction, including the ability to create order between ethnic groups through a variety of means, such as refugee (re)settlement, the publication of information on ethnic conflict, the reconciliation of diverse groups, and work with media NGOs to increase the objectivity of media outlets. Civic education also played a significant part in strategies to reduce ethnic conflict, and includes language training, and face-to-face contact. Central to the success of some cases were efforts to affect legislative initiatives on potentially discriminatory citizenship laws.

Below, we summarize the findings of the case studies and in the conclusion to this section, we highlight the lessons learned from the various NGO strategies engaged in trying to reduce ethnic conflict.

Reducing Ethnic Conflict in Bosnia

Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) has been under an international protectorate since the Dayton Accord of 1995. International organizations make crucial decisions, set electoral laws, run the Central Bank, and sit on the constitutional court. As in pre-war Kosovo, the Western NGOs, however, operate under severe structural constraints. Here the real power to stop violence lies well outside the NGOs' realm: it lies ultimately with the 20,000 multi-national SFOR, or Stabilization Force, troops and with the UN's Office of the High Representative. V. P. Gagnon notes that given the level of international engagement (similar in part to the sort that can be found in Kosovo), BH is a good case from which to draw lessons regarding the effectiveness of Western NGOs helping to reduce ethnic conflict during a period of reconstruction.

Gagnon examines five NGOs which use four broad categories of strategies to reduce ethnic conflict. These are: the International Crisis Group (ICG) which directly targets its efforts at the governing political and institutional structures of post-war BH; the National Democratic Institute (NDI) which focuses on party building and civic education; Delphi-STAR which works to build indigenous NGO capacity; Catholic Relief Service (CRS) and Mercy Corps International (MCI) which work on community reconstruction and development as a means of strengthening civil society. While these do not represent the strategies of all 250 Western NGOs operating in BH, they include those used by the NGOs receiving the largest amounts of funding.

Gagnon finds that the most effective strategies for reducing ethnic conflict integrate reconstruction of the community with reconstruction of civil society. The other key ingredient in success is that Western NGOs encourage local actors, communities, and local NGOs to determine both priorities and projects. In short, those that use local expertise and

develop strategies with the specific political context in mind have a greater impact. A third ingredient for success is the understanding by Western NGOs that engaging in an interactive two-way process is more successful than one of direct importation of ideas and practices (what we refer to as a proactive strategy).

The BH case highlights a number of important lessons for Western NGOs that aim to reduce ethnic conflict or to (re)build civil society. The tendency of donors and NGOs to generalize from experience elsewhere and overlook the specificities and complexities of BH leads to the greatest limitation of NGO effectiveness. For example, some Western NGOs have been so limited by their own dependence for funding on institutions, such as USAID, that they have invested in strategies in Bosnia that exacerbate realties on the ground, such as working on party building. Western NGOs are best able to strategize when their funding comes from donors that allow the NGOs themselves—such as in the case of the international assistance organization, Catholic Relief Service—to determine priorities and projects and to operate with a long-term time horizon. This freedom to maneuver helps resolve what is often an imbalance of donor interests versus those of the society in which the Western NGO is operating. Gagnon concludes that the disconnect between the needs of society and the interests driving projects and priorities needs to be overcome for greater impact.

Gagnon argues that the Western NGOs should work mainly on helping communities (re)build themselves and their civil society, such as demonstrated by CRS and MCI, rather than on importing notions of political party and civil society development derived from Western experiences, as NDI has done. For example, in post-conflict situations, teaching political parties to behave democratically, or advising citizens on principles of liberal democracy, does not get at the underlying dynamics of power.[36] Attempts to build democracy should instead derive from ideas and experience of the society in question, rather than assuming that there is nothing on which to build and that all must be imported. NDI has proceeded with the assumumption that before 1989 or 1990, the socialist states were in a type of totalitarian deep freeze. Instead, NGOs, such as CRS and MCI, do well when they build on the types of grassroots activism seen in the region in the 1980s.

Gagnon argues that the goal of NGOs in post-conflict settings should be to *decrease* the importance of politics rather than centering work around it. Clearly electoral outcomes matter, but beyond organizing parties and elections is the bigger and more difficult (but ultimately sustaining) task of empowering local communities, not in the form of parties or even as NGOs, but as *communities*. A vital economy is needed for stability as well. But by focusing on "nonpolitical" aspects, such as housing, infrastructure repair and economic revitalization, Western NGOs like CRS and MCI make contributions that help create alternative sources of stable employment and resources. In this way, they help lessen the importance and the power of political parties that have been mobilizing the forces of violence, and at the same time, they help to create civil society.

---

[36] In fact, in some cases such as in Burundi, this strategy had the unintended consequence of increasing ethnic divisions by paving the way for mass killings following elections in 1993. Michael S. Lund, Barnett R. Rubin, and Fabienne Hara, "Learning from Burundi's Failed Democratic Transition, 1993–1996: Did International Initiatives Match the Problem?" in Barnett R. Rubin, ed., *Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action* (New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1998), pp. 47–91.

The BH case and the variety of strategies that Western NGOs have used there provide lessons for helping to build civil society elsewhere, but are most important for post-conflict reconstruction and the prevention of violent conflict. The focus on an overall common goal, such as infrastructure repair or shelter reconstruction, and the encouragement of all the community's stakeholders to participate in decision making, planning and implementation—rather than holding workshops on "civic education" or "multi-party democracy"—provide concrete ways for people to learn participatory democracy.

Reducing Ethnic Conflict in Estonia

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, 25 million ethnic Russians found themselves living in what was then called the "Newly Independent States." Many anticipated the result would be a rise in ethnic violence. Observers were particularly concerned by the mix in Estonia, with 62 percent ethnic Estonian, 29 percent ethnic Russian, and other minorities making up 9 percent of the population. This demographic mix was a direct product of fifty years of Soviet occupation and rule, including the forced incorporation of Estonia into the Soviet Union, the large-scale settlement policy of Russians to Estonia, and several mass deportations of Estonians to other parts of the Soviet Union. The Russian populations that were settled in Estonia did not learn Estonian and did not mix with the Estonian population. Thus two entirely separate ethnic communities inhabited Estonia.

Because of the Soviet legacy, initial drafts of Estonian citizenship laws in the early 1990s were based on ethnic, rather than civic or territorial, notions of citizenship; the intent was to give ethnic Estonians power and to minimize the influence of ethnic Russians in the new Estonia. Later drafts, however, were more inclusive. In his report, Vello Pettai set out to explore the impact of Western NGOs on changes in this legislation and on the reduction of the potential for conflict. Pettai found that the main players in diffusing ethnic conflict were *not* NGOs, but rather an international governmental organization, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which worked in conjunction with NGOs and used strategies and tactics employed by NGOs. Unlike other case studies in this project, this report is not mainly about the impact of Western NGOs, but it provides a good example of the role of outside forces in the reduction of ethnic conflict, and the limits that NGOs face in their efforts. Additionally, it is an important example of a conflict that has not turned violent.

Pettai's report examines the work of the long-term mission run by the OSCE. This political and diplomatic institution developed a number of NGO-like dimensions in its dealing with citizenship issues in Estonia. Pettai argues that (as in the case of Bosnia and Kosovo) ethnic conflict centered around the basic distribution of political power and opportunity in a society with a deeply negative historical legacy. The political authority needed to mediate and reduce the potential of this conflict was beyond the scope of any single NGO and was held only by international governmental organizations. Central here was the leverage that the OSCE had in forcing compliance with certain international norms in order for Estonia to gain access to the pan-European organizations that the ethnic Estonians prized, such as the European Union and NATO.[37] At the same time, the OSCE

---

[37] On this topic see also Riina R. Kionka, "The International Politics of Estonian Nationality Policy," (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, forthcoming). Kionka was, from 1993 to 1995, the Chief of Policy Planning at the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), and from 1995 to 1996, the General Director of the Political Department at the MFA.

recognized certain NGO-like strategies to be valuable and incorporated them: for example, because the reduction of ethnic conflict is an inherently social process, it requires micro-level community work and direct, personal contacts, both of which are more characteristic of NGOs than of international organizations. It is the combination of the OSCE's leverage and their strategies that, Pettai argues, helped reduce the risk of ethnic conflict in Estonia.

Pettai argues that the most important strategies employed by the OSCE mission targeted both elites and society. By far the most important function that the mission played during its five and a half years of existence involved collecting and distributing information on political developments and minority policies in Estonia. These reports provided a steady source of objective information to the international community, including the governments of Estonia and of the Russian Federation. This information then affected the way in which the international community dealt with Estonia.

The OSCE was in a number of ways a "force multiplier." It helped reinforce the efforts of other Western organizations such as the European Union and the Council of Europe. It also supported efforts of the Estonian government to reach out to and speak with communities that were otherwise hostile. The OSCE engaged in conflict mediation during certain political crises over citizenship and minority policies. It assisted Estonia's general public to obtain necessary information not only about citizenship issues, but about other rights as well.

In Estonia, the ethnic conflict had a clear political dimension (namely, the granting of citizenship), which could not have been monitored or influenced by any other means other than direct international observation by a group that was widely seen as objective by both the ethnic Estonians and Russians. No NGO had a similar status. At the same time, the OSCE mission behaved more like an NGO than a governmental organization when it engaged in the longer-term rapprochement of the two communities in Estonia, and by helping to overcome the social barriers created by Soviet rule. The mission has also been a force in improving the ability of indigenous NGOs to work on societal integration.

Pettai concludes that the OSCE's contribution to ethnic conflict resolution in Estonia was both political and social, both macro- and micro-oriented. The OSCE was not the only actor in Estonia's ethno-political transition, and he argues that a great deal of credit must go to the local Estonian and Russian leaders themselves. Given the combination of strategies, however, the OSCE mission has proven to be a wise investment in preventive diplomacy. Its largest lesson for other regions is that governmental organizations that take on a mediating role should be set up to pursue the types of micro-level engagement in which NGOs typically engage. By combining efforts with NGOs, efforts at reducing ethnic conflict in states that want to integrate with the international community are likely to be successful.

The Hungarian and Roma Diasporas

Like the ethnic Russians in Estonia, when multi-ethnic empires disintegrate and borders are redrawn, various populations find themselves as minorities in new states. While the Estonian case explores how potential ethnic conflict was reduced in the years immediately following the Soviet empire's disintegration, this case explores ongoing efforts at conflict reduction in one diaspora community created eight decades ago with the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian empire, when territorial transfers left three to four million Hungarians scattered across several states of Central and Eastern Europe. At least four million Roma

inhabit these same states. Similarities in the situations of these diaspora communities end there; they have had vastly different experiences.

The "Hungarians abroad," as those in Hungary refer to their co-ethnics in Slovakia, Romania and Ukraine, have a long tradition of material, intellectual, cultural, and human rights assistance from Hungary. Roma, in contrast, living in Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and Ukraine, experience extreme levels of economic and social disenfranchisement and have been subject to violence, particularly in Slovakia and Romania (and following the war in Kosovo, also in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia). The Western NGOs that have engaged these communities have taken vastly different approaches to helping reduce such conflict.

Sherrill Stroschein examines the strategies of twelve NGOs operating in Romania, eleven NGOs operating in Slovakia, five in Ukraine, and five in Hungary. Her study encompasses Western NGOs as well as indigenous NGOs because the indigenous NGOs were almost entirely dependent on and constrained by Western funding. She finds, as does Gagnon looking at Bosnia, that local NGOs tailor their projects to Western guidelines and must implement projects less relevant to their contexts than projects they themselves would have designed. Yet NGO programs can rarely be successful when they are "transplanted" from West to East without adjusting to the particularities of post-communist states.

Stroschein finds that Western NGOs working in Romania, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Hungary strategize differently depending on which ethnic group the NGO addresses. NGOs that work on improving relations between the minority ethnic Hungarians in Romania, Slovakia, and Ukraine and the titular ethnic groups tend to focus primarily on strategies to increase communication between individuals of each group or, as she refers to it, to build social networks. This network approach is geared toward facilitating communication both between elites and among "average" individuals. Central to the network strategy is finding "multiplicators" or locals with some degree of professional standing and multiple social ties who can carry the message of the program to others. For network strategists, programs meant to build cooperation appeared to be increasing in popularity in Romania, as organizations have moved away from an explicit focus on conflict resolution. In Slovakia, frustration with the previous Meciar government led to a shift from engaging government elites to grassroots approaches to networking.

In contrast, NGOs that address relations between the Roma and other ethnic groups in these same countries tend to focus primarily on improving the levels of Roma education, economic well-being, and decreasing human rights violations against Roma. This status-raising strategy is grounded in the notion that the stark asymmetry in social status between Roma and other individuals is a background cause for inter-ethnic tensions involving Roma. NGOs using this status-raising approach tend to focus on education, human rights advocacy, and material assistance. Additionally, there are supplemental tactics for both groups including research, education, and information distribution. Western funding for Roma programs in the 1990s increased. Funding has shifted from material assistance to education and human rights work. Of note, the NGOs in Hungary which work with Roma tend to focus their activity on integration of the Roma and the development of minority government institutions.

Both networking and status-raising strategies have had visible successes, but have also had unintended consequences, including government abdication of responsibility for the

Roma to Western and indigenous NGOs, as well as infighting within groups over funding. It is often the case that NGOs with an emphasis on promoting the rights or status of one minority group are perceived by members of the titular population as biased (one reason that the OSCE as opposed to an NGO in Estonia was particularly effective). Additionally, Western programs used materials that were inappropriate given local cultural contexts. For example, some NGOs post their information on the Internet, inaccessible to most local people, instead of printing and distributing materials. One Slovak NGO coordinator attending a seminar on conflict resolution in the United States could not make sense of the materials presented at the seminar since they consistently made references to hierarchical corporate settings or other contexts that bore no resemblance to his own.

Stroschein finds that NGOs have been instrumental in providing information and creating channels for the distribution of information that would otherwise not exist. NGOs help create a new faith in free information. NGOs have also had a direct impact on creating practical skills such as grant writing and using technology, and they do this by direct learning: they provide funding for educational and other grants and provide access to technology as well as training classes on, for example, the use of the Internet to which individuals would not otherwise gain access.

Evaluation of societal approaches to the reduction of ethnic conflict such as networking require nuanced, long-term observation of changes over time. Polls help measure these changes. Electoral data help show whether or not ethnically inclusive political parties take root. But Stroschein concludes the NGOs can also use participant surveys and essays, repeated over several years. The evaluation of status-raising strategies are simpler than for network strategies. For example, it is easy to measure an increase in secondary school graduates by a disenfranchised group, or an increase in university attendance.

Stroschein suggests that NGOs working in the region should realize the benefits of using both strategies for work with both minority groups. Some NGO practitioners fear that using a networking strategy to increase communication between Roma and other groups might simply reinforce stereotypes, because they assume Roma participants would not be able to voice their views in ways understandable to other groups. Several Roma communities, however, have elite members accustomed to articulating their group's case to non-Roma audiences. Coordinating and consulting with these members of the community might result in increasing dialogue among groups and also increasing Roma participation.

Stroschein concludes that NGOs must recognize that although their programs and budgets are limited, the impact of developing even "weak ties" or acquaintance relationships between individuals from different groups plays a role in reducing conflict. These ties provide channels of communication, an important foundation for coexistence in multi-ethnic societies. NGOs are able to bring disparate and hostile groups together to create such ties. NGO strategies that facilitate contact between elites and non-elites of different groups create conditions for talking to one another that would not otherwise arise.

Recommendations

Ethnic conflict in formerly communist states and efforts to reduce this conflict have great variation in terms of strategies and effectiveness. The degree to which a state is becoming integrated into the international system correlates with effectiveness: in Estonia and Hungary, states that are thickly integrated, the level of conflict has been managed and improved by external efforts. In Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine, all thinly integrated states,

the efforts—some applying the identical strategies used elsewhere—have been less effective. In Bosnia, an international post-war protectorate, effectiveness varies depending on strategy.

Many predicted that, given the Soviet legacy, Estonia would turn bloody, but despite various crises, it did not. One aspect of the solution was the international community's efforts to help move all players quickly into the European community, thus undercutting nationalist politicians and forcing them to redefine Estonian interests in European terms. Few now fear that Estonia (or the other Baltic states) will lapse onto the destructive path taken in the Balkans. The Hungarian diaspora grew out of the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire, and decades later, still affects political and social developments in Eastern Europe. The Roma are a minority in practically all countries of the region. While there have been violent acts committed against members of the Roma ethnic group, NGOs played an important role in helping Central Europe on the whole avoid violence. The attempts to reconstruct Bosnian society after massive death and destruction clearly bear on current efforts in Kosovo.

Two main conclusions emerge from the study of NGO strategies used to reduce ethnic conflict: strategies need to be driven by local conditions, and NGOs need to coordinate better with international organizations.

NGOs have made a difference in the reduction of ethnic conflict but their impact is also determined by the degree to which their strategies are *reactive*, that is, directly informed by the local political and social context rather than determined by interests and constituents in the West. In all the cases examined here, investigators found the degree to which strategies were determined by the local context the greatest indicator of effectiveness. While this is a main message of this report more generally, the authors in this section are quite clear about the implications of not pursuing contextual, reactive strategies. Given how high the stakes are in situations of ethnic strife, for NGOs that work directly on the reduction of conflict or simply work in areas of high tension, they are likely to be more effective if they pay greater attention to adjusting their strategies to fit the context.

The role of NGOs is more clearly limited in the reduction of ethnic conflict than in other aspects of political transformation examined in this project. Western NGOs can deal with their local counterparts in helping to build many institutions associated with democratic states. But the room for maneuver in many situations rife with ethnic conflict is so narrow—particularly if nationalist policies are endorsed by the state—that NGOs have problems negotiating meaningful strategies if they do so independent of international organizations policing the area. That said, they can have an impact if they coordinate and cooperate with these organizations, such as NATO, the OSCE, or the UN.

This need for cooperation and coordination is a lesson that has not been clearly learned by the international organizations themselves, as was made evident by the lack of preparations for massive outflows of refugees from Kosovo in March and April of 1999. If NATO had cooperated and coordinated with humanitarian NGOs in Macedonia and Albania, the refugee crisis could have been lessened. Ultimately, as the Bosnian case suggests, the successful reconstruction of Kosovo will depend on the coordination of NGOs with a range of governmental and international organizations and reducing the emphasis on politics. NGOs and aid agencies should pause before encouraging the mobilization of political parties for elections. Reconstruction of communities are likely to help more than elections in mending the scars left by violent ethnic conflict.

6. FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, this study finds that a relatively small investment in terms of dollars has generated a noteworthy return. Western NGOs do not change societies on a macro- level—they cannot make a state democratic—but they can have, under specific circumstances, an impact on the micro-level by helping to build new institutions necessary for a democratic state. Compared to other types of assistance, such as economic assistance, the support of Western NGOs has, more times than not, resulted in the transfer of ideas and practices or helped indigenous ideas evolve in a direction consistent with democratic states. It is worth noting also that participants who looked at democracy assistance did not find the widespread corruption and "collusion" that has often been associated with economic and development assistance.[38]

The impact of Western democracy assistance on the development of institutions, however, has been limited by the strategies employed as well as the nature of the political and economic contexts in which NGOs work. The findings from this study suggest a number of conclusions and prescriptions for improving strategies used in Western efforts.

Variations in Impact across Sectors within Contexts

If Western NGO strategies are not tailored to specific sectors and contexts, they may have only marginal impact and even backfire, provoking unintended harassment of both locals and Western groups. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the impact of Western NGO strategies across all four sectors—parties and elections, media, NGO development, and the reduction of ethnic conflict—has been greatest in those states rapidly democratizing and integrating with the international community. Western NGOs in such contexts provide additional resources in an environment already moving towards democratic governance. Examples include the work of Western NGOs on media in the Czech Republic, and of the larger international community on changing citizenship laws in Estonia. In these cases, Western NGOs and other outside groups have facilitated the transformation process.

By contrast, the effectiveness of particular strategies in the contested political environments of thinly integrated and unintegrated states has varied greatly across sectors. In Russia and Ukraine, infrastructural assistance has influenced how new political parties campaign and how media watch groups organize themselves. Such assistance has not, however, helped make parties function as representatives of constituents or help make media outlets independent from the narrow political interests of powerful and corrupt owners. In these settings, the potential exists for "ghettoization," where local NGOs become increasingly isolated from the governments they seek to influence and the citizens they hope to represent. In other cases, such as Slovakia under the Meciar government, infrastructural assistance to local NGOs and the use of proactive strategies across sectors can actually backfire, making both Western and local NGOs the targets of hostile ruling governments which see the alliance of these organizations as threatening.

In unintegrated states that allow Western NGOs to work, such as in several cases in Central Asia, the impact of NGOs is quite limited. Effective Western NGO strategies in such contexts focused on the periphery of the political sphere, such as working with local

---

[38] There are several ongoing investigations concerning the abuse of Western economic assistance delivered by the IMF, the World Bank, and USAID to Russia. See also Wedel, *op. cit.* For a critique of development assistance elsewhere, see Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1998).

cultural organizations and training journalists. The strategies of infrastructural assistance to political parties or media are virtually impossible to implement, given the restrictive nature of the regimes. Infrastructural assistance to public advocacy groups, with the risks of infighting among recipients and limited impact upon broader goals, may be appropriate only if viewed as a very long-term investment; should the political context change, the groups that receive funding may be poised (although admittedly not assured) of contributing to democratization. Human capital development and reactive strategies that seek to coordinate—rather than duplicate—responses to local needs may, by contrast, be effective.

Even within one context, differences across countries can influence the effectiveness of any given strategy. For example, while Slovakia, Russia and Ukraine can all be categorized as thinly integrated states, assistance to these states to promote independent media has faced different constraints. Assistance to opposition media in Slovakia resulted in legal harassment of Western NGOs from the Meciar regime, while in Russia and Ukraine, similar strategies of assistance to media (increasingly the domain of corrupt bankers and organized crime) brought with it the potential for bodily harm. Investigative journalists in Russia and Ukraine have been killed pursuing stories not in the interests of oligarchs or the state.

Working with Local Experts to Adapt Strategies

If Western NGOs rely mainly on Western practitioners for developing and implementing assistance strategies, then they are likely to have an impact on the building, but not the functioning, of new institutions. Western practitioners, such as civic organizers or political campaign workers, are often unfamiliar with the organizational cultures and domestic political settings in which they work. Because they are not specialists in the region, they cannot anticipate how applying generic practices will interact with long-held local political customs. From the Czech Republic to Uzbekistan, local NGOs exist in part because of Western assistance, but most do not function as civic advocacy groups; they have extremely weak links to their own society and are often driven to work on issues that donors—not locals—think important. Western NGOs that are unfamiliar with the domestic setting and which rely on practitioners are hampered in their ability to make these new institutions function. The practitioners tend to be good architects, but they do not have the skills needed to furnish the structures they helped build.[39]

Because of the reliance upon Western practitioners, it is also difficult for Western NGOs to gauge how their strategies should adapt not only to the inherited historical legacy but to the rapidly changing political environment of a country in transition. Russia in 1999 is not the same as Russia in 1992. The Czech Republic in 1999 looks very different from Czechoslovakia in 1990. While infrastructural assistance and human capital development based on imported strategies may be appropriate for the early periods of democratization when new institutions remained unformed, Western NGO strategies confront new problems posed by both the transition from communism *and* the consolidation of post-communist governments.[40] After a point, political parties no longer need help campaigning. They need

---

[39] On this point, see also Nancy Lubin, *op. cit.*; Thomas Carothers, "Aiding Post-Communist Societies: A Better Way?" *Problems of Post-Communism* (September/October 1996), pp. 15–24.

[40] Scholars have devoted much attention to the distinction between "transition" and "consolidation." See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns

help responding to constituents. Media organizations have been formed, but they may only be nominally independent because economic "reform" has created controlling business interests. This study finds that when new institutions have emerged and a critical mass of local NGOs and other institutions have developed, reactive strategies that call for *local* proposals and respond to *domestic* needs (and are grounded in political support) are more likely to be effective in helping develop sustainable institutions.

Regional and local experts can help devise explicit strategies for reducing the political isolation that this study identifies as widespread among the new, local groups that have sprung up since the collapse of the Soviet Union. While a local group's transnational ties are often robust, Western NGO strategies might focus more, for example, on incentives for encouraging these groups to develop horizontal (that is, within country) ties among political parties, trade unions, and other local NGOs. Those Western groups that *team up* regional and local experts with practitioners will be better able to read the political and organizational contexts, develop close working relationships with local groups, and implement informed strategies.

How Ideas and Practices Diffuse

If Western ideas and practices are presented in a way that directly competes with local organizational culture, then they are likely to be rejected. If ideas and practices promoted by Western NGOs in some way complement local custom, they tend to be adopted, and indeed, adapted. Central to the diffusion of ideas and practices is the support of local political entrepreneurs; they are the brokers through which the Western NGOs interact with the society. If Western NGO strategies make the identification of local entrepreneurs a main priority, and engage in active partnership with them—by taking time to identify partners, and using local and regional experts to do so—they are more likely to be able to present ideas in ways that appear to address and solve problems and which seem reasonable to locals. The more interactive the partnership, as case studies from Bosnia to Russia suggest, the greater likelihood of impact; it helps Western NGOs make clear that the democratization process is an interactive one, rather than one of direct importation. If Western NGOs fail to find local political brokers who share their message, the ideas and practices can neither travel nor evolve within the local context.

If ideas and practices take hold, they usually do so in a way that encompasses a wide spectrum of political actors with—at least initially—varying commitments to democratization or the reduction of ethnic conflict. Practices involving parties, elections, media, and civic organizing have spread to groups beyond those with which Western NGOs worked. In this way, Western NGOs have effects on the political culture of a country that reach beyond their intentions. For example, while Western NGOs did not generally work with communists, in Russia, communists have been affected by the experience of operating day-to-day with institutions, such as parliaments or a quasi-independent media. Western NGOs have tended to think in terms of "good guys" and "bad guys" or reformers and anti-reformers. This categorization is less meaningful as the democratization process unfolds. In the next few years, in many countries, it makes sense for Western NGOs to be more

---

Hopkins University, 1996); Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997); Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Towards Consolidation* (Baltimore, Md: Johns Hopkins Press, 1999).

inclusive in both their strategies and their implementation of programs and for funders to be less concerned about targeting only "the democrats."

Regarding Ethnic Conflict

If Western NGOs are engaged in democracy assistance to a country that practices nationalist policies, the NGOs are more likely to be effective if they coordinate their work with international organizations. When nationalism has backing from the state, policymakers must be persuaded to abandon nationalist policies. Western NGOs are in a poor position to do this since they have little leverage; moral outrage generated by the foreign NGO community concerning the abuse of human rights is not enough to change state behavior; international organizations have an important role to play.[41] To counter marginalization, Western groups should coordinate efforts with larger, international organizations that provide money and/or material assistance to the target state. For example, nationalists in Estonia were persuaded to alter citizenship laws by the possibility of Estonia's inclusion in various pan-European organizations, such as the European Union. Coordinated campaigns to reduce ethnic conflict appear to be more effective than atomized ones. Then the work of Western NGOs acts as a multiplier of other efforts.

Matching Public Expectations with the Realities of Political Transition

If U.S.-based NGOs spend more time on public education regarding the incremental nature of democratization, then they may lessen the pressure to deliver short-term quantifiable results to Congress that reflect little about the pace and scope of change in a country. This study finds that quantitative analysis of programs does not begin to capture the dynamic process of change that affects diverse groups across the political spectrum in many formerly communist states. This diffusion of ideas and practices, part of the broader process of political and social change, is an important aspect of assistance not usually discussed in evaluations or in the public debate on the uses and abuses of assistance. In the United States, NGOs and donors have feared the congressional response of newspaper headlines claiming assistance "helped" communists or nationalists. Public education on democratization would help the NGOs which are engaged in assistance talk about what *really* happens, rather than what Congress has to date wanted to hear.

In this vein, it is worth considering, as is sometimes argued, whether the work of Western NGOs and their strategies have contributed to, or resulted in, the rise of "illiberal democracies"—countries where rulers hold elections but nevertheless govern in autocratic ways. This report provides much evidence that, for good or ill, assistance to the countries across East-Central Europe and Eurasia tends to affect developments only at the margins of political life. [42] Assistance may have a significant impact within a certain community in these formerly communist states, but it is unlikely that Western NGOs could *alter* in any way the internal balance of power within one of these states—either toward or away from democratic rule.

---

[41] Keck and Sikkink, *op.cit*., pp. 79–120.

[42] The ratio of assistance dollars to the size of the local economy seems to be an indicator of the degree to which external assistance affects the internal balance of power. For example, in cases from other parts of the world such as Burundi and Rwanda, assistance seems to have played a much more central political role. See Lund, Rubin, and Hara, *op. cit.,* pp. 47–91.

Donors and NGOs must recognize that the building blocks of democratic states, whether they are political parties, independent media or civic groups, are inherently neutral—rather than exclusively positive—organizational structures. As we know from Nazi Germany, they can also serve as the building blocks of a fascist state. Elections can lead to bad outcomes for a country in which autocrats rise to power through the ballot box. The media can be captured by nationalist interests. Indigenous NGOs can be mobilized to support fascists.[43] Does this mean that NGOs, donors, and policy makers should avoid the promotion of parties, elections, independent media and civic advocacy groups?

Given the transnational links that are already developed in many formerly communist states, it is too late to turn back the clock. Additionally, much of this work is driven by local demand. But most important, the fact that institutions can be hijacked necessitates not that we cease activity, but rather that we increase activity. By analogy, we do not stop flying because airplanes can be hijacked; we institutionalize safety precautions for deterring and detecting terrorists. Similarly, we need to think just as *preventively* about democracy assistance.

The Need for Adequate Funding

If policy makers in the United States and Europe continue to define the development of democratic institutions in formerly communist states as an important policy priority, then they ought to make sure that Western NGOs assisting in the development of these institutions are adequately funded. For example, despite what U.S. policy makers say about the importance of developing democratic institutions in Russia, from 1992 to 1996, USAID spent the majority of its Freedom Support Act budget in Russia supporting market reform, while allocating at times as little as 6 percent for democracy assistance. Explanations that policy makers offer for the low amounts of democracy assistance in the early years after the collapse of the Soviet Union (such as that there was little "capacity" to absorb the funds or the work of Western groups) may be correct, but they do not explain later figures, which decreased precisely as capacity increased. They also do not explain why so much more was allocated to market reform at a time when capacity in the economic sector was equally limited. Additionally, the argument that NGOs engaged in democracy assistance cost less than the corporations under contract for economic assistance (which were paid more than NGOs) reflects not the marketplace but the priorities of Western policy makers. Despite pronouncements, particularly in the United States, policies (rather than words) suggest that markets were first, and institutions associated with democracy were second. This choice has real consequences: while economic institutions are essential to stabilizing the situation in these countries, political and social institutions play a crucial role in regulating and helping create incentives to combat corruption.

Only with adequate funding can NGOs hire teams of practitioners, regional experts and local experts to devise and implement strategies sensitive to local context and historical legacy. This report illustrates many examples of how Western efforts have made a difference; that they have not made *the* difference is not reason to stop funding them. It is reason to increase funding so they can hire the needed experts to more effectively do their job.

---

[43] Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49 (1997), pp. 401–29. Rwanda is another more recent example of genocide occurring despite the large number of NGOs and churches. On this see Uvin, *op. cit*.

In Closing

The lessons to be learned from the experience of Western NGOs in Eastern Europe and Eurasia are, as we have noted, not just academic; we believe that if they are followed, they could help make Western engagement with the democratization process more effective and sustainable. Assistance can make a difference if strategies are derived from local ingredients rather than a global cookbook. The practice of applying blueprints used in Russia to Romania or from Ukraine to Uzbekistan will not help make new, fragile democratic institutions sustainable. Instead, donors and NGOs should be prepared for the appearance of as many different strategies and solutions as there are communities engaged in transformation. They must be ready for the reality that strategies and solutions will be developed *on the ground* and not in Western capitals.

Many of the findings of the Columbia University study confirm earlier work done by other observers of democracy assistance.[44] These studies also stressed the need for increased input from experts and more attention to locality. The comparative focus on strategy in this project provides a range of case studies to support our beliefs about *how* Western donors should adapt to the dynamic conditions of democratization and integration. By specifying the mixed nature of impact and limitations within and across four sectors of activity, our recommendations are nuanced to explain the different challenges and realities of countries as diverse as Poland, Russia, and Kyrgyzstan. Based on our findings, we are concerned that if Western groups pursue a business-as-usual approach in the coming years, their impact on the development of sustainable democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia will dramatically diminish.

Western assistance to efforts at democratization in Eastern Europe and Eurasia are not the first nor the last. One can only imagine what Germany or Japan would look like today if, in 1955, ten years after the end of World War II, the West had decided that the process of transformation was not fast or substantial enough and had cut all political and economic ties. It also makes sense to remember American history. The abolition and civil rights movements, with their transnational links, helped sustain the incremental changes that took over 100 years to manifest here.[45] Impatience with the progress of ten years in Central and Eastern Europe and eight years in Eurasia, and calls to cut democracy assistance, make little sense when compared with America's own drawn-out experience with democratization. We hope that the findings and conclusions presented here will encourage policy makers, donors, and NGOs to stay engaged in a way that places *context* and *culture* at the center of their strategies and initiatives. Only then are external efforts likely to help create sustainable institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

---

[44] Carothers, 1999 and 1996, *op. cit.*; Lubin, *op. cit.*

[45] Keck and Sikkink, *op. cit.*, pp. 39–78.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

APPENDIX A: WESTERN ASSISTANCE TO EASTERN EUROPE AND EURASIA

Government Assistance (expenditures) to Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia 1992–1998
(Millions of U.S. $)[46]

	1990–99	Democracy Assistance	% of total to Democracy Assistance
To Central and Eastern Europe:			
U.S.	3,640	599	16.5
EU[47] (other than PHARE)	4,568		
EU (PHARE)	4,550	891[48]	19.5
To Russia:			
U.S.[49]	4,471	133	2.8
EU	1,417	272	19
To Eurasia (not including Russia):[50]			
U.S.	5,807	222	3.8
EU	3,597	393	11
To Eurasia (total):[51]			

---

[46] Sources: U.S. Department of State 1998 Annual Report; Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act Implementation Report, 1998; TACIS; Kevin F.F. Quigley, *For Democracy's Sake: Foundations and Democracy Assistance in Central Europe* (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1997); Janine Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe, 1989–1998* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998); Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

[47] EU figures do not include 1998 assistance.

[48] This is the minimum calculation, as provided by the PHARE program, based on the "Civil Society Democratization" subtitle figures: $231 million was spent on "Administrative Reform" and $651 million on "Education, Training and Research." With these totals, the "Democracy" spending would equal $891 million, that is, 19.5% of the total.

[49] Totals of U.S. assistance to Russia and Eurasia include Freedom Support Act (FSA) funds and non-FSA funds, such as Cooperative Threat Reduction. All "democratic assistance" programs are funded by FSA. From FSA, 6% for Russia went to democracy assistance (figures include percentage of funds expended for "Democratic Reform" and the "Eurasia Foundation"). About 7% of FSA funds for all of Eurasia were spent on democracy assistance.

[50] Assistance to the countries of the former Soviet Union started in 1992. The figures here represent assistance expenditures in 1992–1998.

[51] These figures do not include assistance distributed through the IMF, the World Bank, or the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

U.S.	10,278	355	3.5
EU	4,995	665	13

APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE INVESTIGATORS

Fiona B. Adamson (Civil Society Projects in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science, Columbia University, and an SSRC-MacArthur Foundation fellow on Peace and Security in a Changing World, 1998–2000. E-mail: fba1@columbia.edu

Karen Ballentine (Media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) is a research associate at the Carnegie Corporation of New York, and a Ph.D. candidate in Political Science at Columbia University. E-mail: kb@carnegie.org

James Clem (Parties and Elections in Ukraine) is the executive director of the Ukrainian Research Institute at Harvard University. E-mail: jclem@fas.harvard.edu

Marta Dyczok (Media in Ukraine) is assistant professor of history and political science at the University of Western Ontario and a fellow at the Centre for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Toronto. E-mail: mdyczok@julian.uwo.ca

V. P. Gagnon, Jr. (Reducing Ethnic Conflict in Bosnia) is assistant professor in the Department of Politics at Ithaca College, and visiting research fellow in the Peace Studies Program at Cornell University. E-mail: chip.gagnon@cornell.edu

John K. Glenn (Parties and Elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) is currently the European Union Center of New York postdoctoral fellow at New York University. He served as the postdoctoral fellow and project manager for this study. E-mail: jkg6@is9.nyu.edu

Pauline Jones Loung (Environment in Kazakhstan) is assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at Yale University. E-mail: pauline.luong@yale.edu

Patrice C. McMahon (Women in Poland and Hungary) is assistant professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. E-mail: pmcmahon@unlserve.unl.edu

Sarah E. Mendelson (Political Parties in Russia) is assistant professor of International Politics at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, and a research associate at the Davis Center, Harvard University. She served as director of research for this project. E-mail: smende01@tufts.edu

Anne Nivat (Media in Russia) is a free-lance journalist based in Moscow contributing to *US News and World Report, Liberation, Ouest France,* and *Radio Canada.* E-mail: anivat@glasnet.ru

Sandra Pralong (Civic Education in Romania) works in the office of the President of Romania. E-mail pralong@presidency.ro

Tina M. Nelson (Technology Assistance to Women's Groups in Russia) is a program officer for Central and Eastern Europe at the Council for Economic Priorities Accreditation Agency. E-mail: tina@cepaa.org

Vello Pettai (Reducing Ethnic Conflict in Estonia) is a lecturer in Political Science at the University of Tartu, Estonia and a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Columbia University. E-mail: pettai@cie.ut.ee

Leslie Powell (Environment in Russia) is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at Columbia University. E-mail: lap32@columbia.edu

James Richter (Women in Russia) is associate professor of political science and chair of the Environmental Studies Program at Bates College. E-mail: jrichter@abacus.bates.edu

Sherrill Stroschein (The Hungarian and Roma Diasporas) is a Ph.D. candidate in political science at Columbia University. E-mail: ss160@columbia.edu

Erika Weinthal (Environment in Kazakhstan) is a lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University, Israel. E-mail: erikaw@post.tau.ac.il