WHEN RECIPIENTS BECOME DONORS:

POLISH DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE

IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE

by

PAULINA MARIA POSPIESZNA

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Political Science
in the Graduate School of
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2010
ABSTRACT

The dissertation is a first attempt to explore democracy assistance efforts provided by a young democracy that was a recipient of similar aid in the past. The study investigates approaches to democracy assistance, reasons for a young democracy’s engagement, methods and effectiveness of efforts to promote democratic ideas and practices in recipient countries. Specifically, the research examines how government and social actors in a young democracy conceptualize democracy assistance and how their view on democracy aid is different from approaches used by Western donors. Then, why and how a former recipient country goes about assisting other states in their struggles for democracy are investigated. Finally, the research is motivated by the question of how democracy assistance efforts by a young donor can be evaluated in terms of their potential to diffuse democracy to other recipient countries.

This project demonstrates several main findings based on comparative case studies of Polish democracy assistance to Ukraine and Belarus. These conclusions contribute to the theory and practice of democracy assistance. First, the Polish approach to democracy assistance takes into account the political situation of recipient country and is carefully crafted when directed to authoritarian and democratic regimes in terms of types of assistance, choice of domestic partners, and strategies used in the programs. This assistance also seems to avoid pitfalls described in the literature on democracy assistance. Second, this dissertation reinforces the importance of civil society as a sender and recipient of democracy assistance. This study unveils the key role of Polish NGOs in shaping the state’s democracy assistance and their unique ability to reach civil society groups in recipient Belarus and Ukraine.
Third, this research reveals a great deal about the features of cross-border work as a method of democracy assistance to exert an impact on civil society groups. Polish NGOs engage in close collaborative work with foreign civil society groups. By demonstrating the democratizing potential of cross-border projects, the dissertation shows that this form of assistance may contribute to the overall diffusion of democracy in the region, thus strengthening the role of regional actors in promoting democratic values and practices.
DEDICATION

To my Parents, Marcin and Maksymilian with love and gratitude.
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACAP</td>
<td>American Committee for Aid to Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACILS</td>
<td>American Center for International Labor Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFL-CIO</td>
<td>American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFPC</td>
<td>American Foreign Policy Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEZ</td>
<td>Belarusian Environmental Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BKDP</td>
<td>Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRSM</td>
<td>Belarusian Republican Youth Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE</td>
<td>Center for Social and Economic Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Citizens Democracy Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDiA</td>
<td>Center for Documentation and Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERF</td>
<td>Central Emergency Response Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIPE</td>
<td>Center for International Private Enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIR</td>
<td>Center of International Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPI</td>
<td>Corruption Perceptions Index</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSSA</td>
<td>Training Center for Local Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAC</td>
<td>Development Assistance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFID</td>
<td>Department for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DG</td>
<td>Directorates-General in the European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMK</td>
<td>St. Maximilian Kolbe House for Meetings and Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSE</td>
<td>Democratic Society East Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBRD</td>
<td>European Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEA</td>
<td>European Economic Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EEDC</td>
<td>East European Democratic Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHU</td>
<td>European Humanities University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EIDHR</td>
<td>European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENP</td>
<td>European Neighborhood Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENPI</td>
<td>European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>European Partnership for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUROSTEP</td>
<td>European Solidarity towards Equal Participation of People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EWI</td>
<td>East West Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FED</td>
<td>Education for Democracy Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FH</td>
<td>Freedom House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSLD</td>
<td>Foundation in Support of Local Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEF</td>
<td>Global Environment Facility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GONGOs</td>
<td>Government organized NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDA</td>
<td>International Development Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDEE</td>
<td>Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFC</td>
<td>International Finance Corporation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFES</td>
<td>International Foundation for Electoral Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPA</td>
<td>Institute of Public Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRI</td>
<td>International Republican Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRF</td>
<td>International Renaissance Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO</td>
<td>Quality Management Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KGB</td>
<td>Committee of State Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOR</td>
<td>Workers’ Defense Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPN</td>
<td>Confederation for an Independent Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPSN</td>
<td>Committee for National Self-Determination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDA</td>
<td>Mediterranean Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIGA</td>
<td>Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NED</td>
<td>National Endowment for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZS</td>
<td>Independent Students’ Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODA</td>
<td>Official Development Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFOP</td>
<td>Polish National Federation of NGOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKOR</td>
<td>All-Poland Farmers’ Resistance Committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
OSCE Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

OSI Open Society Institute

PAFF Polish-American Freedom Foundation

PASOS Policy Association for an Open Society

PAUCI Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation/

Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative

PCA Partnership for Cooperation Agreement

PCDC Polish-Canadian Development Co-operation Program

PGCF Polish-German Cooperation Foundation

PHARE Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring their Economies

PPN Polish Independence Pact

PSSI Prague Security Studies Institute

RBF Rockefeller Brothers Fund

RITA Region in Transition

ROPCiO Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights

SDPU Socialist Democratic Party of Ukraine

SEED Support for East European Democracy SEED

SIDA Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SKN Social Committee for Science

SPU Socialist Party of Ukraine

STP Study Tours to Poland

TACIS Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States

TKN Society for Academic Courses
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UCIPR</td>
<td>Ukrainian Center for Independent Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>United Democratic Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPS</td>
<td>United Parcel Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFD</td>
<td>Westminster Foundation for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIP</td>
<td>Freedom and Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTO</td>
<td>World Trade Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMCA</td>
<td>Young Men's Christian Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZPB</td>
<td>Union of Poles in Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZG</td>
<td>Zagranica Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe a tremendous debt to my advisor, Dr. Barbara Chotiner. This dissertation could not have been written without her support and encouragement from the beginning, when the idea of this study came to me during a directed reading course with her. Dr. Chotiner allowed me the space to develop my own path of professional development without ever imposing a particular perspective. It takes considerable talent to grant students freedom and positive reinforcement while still leading them to understand where the project is going and knowing when to push their work. Dr. Chotiner offered me tremendous assistance in my application process for the University of Alabama Graduate Council Research Fellowship for the 2008-2009 academic year, without which the process of writing my dissertation would have been more arduous. I appreciate her constant feedback and support amidst her hectic schedule including teaching as well as advising a large number of undergraduate students as well as her own dissertation students. I have learned from Dr. Chotiner, both as a scholar and as a teacher, and I hope I will be able to demonstrate similar virtues in the future.

The completion of a dissertation marks the beginning of a professional career, but it also is an ending to the long path of graduate school. Thus, it causes reflection on the contributions of many people who made this path endurable for me. I would like to thank especially Dr. Terry Royed, who, as the Director of Graduate Studies, showed a lot of kindness, support and understanding for my persistence from the very beginning of my interest in the PhD program. I will never forget her kind e-mail informing me that the department granted me an assistantship. Later, as my teaching advisor, she helped me to improve my teaching skills. She also inspired me
as a scholar, and I am grateful for her tremendously helpful feedback and suggestions on the first version of this dissertation.

I would like to distinguish Dr. Douglas Gibler, who exposed me to recent international relations literature on democratization that improved my project and lead to new ideas. I should also like to thank Dr. Harvey Kline, whose course inspired me to explore the topic of democratization. He also showed me that warmth and humanity make academia a friendlier environment. I would also like to thank Dr. Marysia Galbraith who offered me incredible assistance throughout many stages of this project. She played an important role in helping me prepare for my research trip to Poland, and advising me with the IRB process. She also took care of my physical health during a long year of writing my dissertation and she encouraged me to discover an interest in running, for which I am extremely grateful to her.

I also would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to other people from the Department of Political Science. Dr. Joseph Smith and Dr. David Lanoue, who demonstrated careful understanding of my situation and always supported me in my endeavors. Dr. Simanti Lahiri, to whom I could turn when I had lost confidence in qualitative research in the political science. My colleagues in the Department of Political Science have been a great model of support and collegiality—especially Jane Munga and Mark Ferguson, who have supplied generous portions of wit and humor amidst broader discussions of my research and career goals.

I am grateful for generous financial support obtained from the Capstone International, the Department of Political Science, the Graduate School, and the Graduate Student Association at the University of Alabama for my fieldwork in Poland and the U.S. These organizations made the research and writing of my dissertation physically possible.
Obviously, this project would not be successful without the input of many civil society activists who took part in the project. I thank each of the many representatives of Polish Non-governmental Organizations and the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs who agreed to be interviewed for this study. They shared their valuable time, insights, stories, and struggles, and they generously equipped me with a suitcase of valuable materials. Thank you also to representatives from and the National Endowment for Democracy in Washington D.C. whose participation added value to my project by providing me with data that greatly strengthened the argument of my study.

Finally, I could not go far without the love and support of my family and a wide array of friends. Thank you to my parents for teaching me the importance of education and hard work and for demonstrating the value of these two in their lives. Thank you for supporting me in all my endeavors and for encouraging me to climb the academic ladder. I should mention my brothers, Przemo and Pawel, for their interests in my project and our discussions about life and the future. Many thanks also to my parents-in-law, who always showed great care for my education and who always had a good word for me. I should express my gratitude to wonderful people like Barbara, Jay, Jill and Mr. Harrison for their big hearts, their support from the beginning of my stay in Tuscaloosa and for helping me pursue my goals in graduate school. It also is a real blessing to have great friends like Jadwinia and Kuba, Karina and Jurek, Michelle and Russ, who have been good listeners and who, sometimes amidst the geographical distance, offered me a great deal of emotional support throughout the ups and downs of graduate school. Thank you also for our talks about anything other than my dissertation and for helping me balance an academic career with a personal life. Thank you everyone who helped me along the way.
Last, but not least, I must thank my husband, Marcin Smiglak with whom I have had the great good fortune of sharing this experience. He has endured my path through graduate school with an extraordinary amount of patience, tolerance and care. I can honestly say this project would never have been completed without his love, relentless support and friendship. He has a great ability to keep me sane and make me smile on some difficult days. Thanks also to my son, Maksymilian Smiglak, now aged three, who always reminds me that some things are much more important than my dissertation. Thank you Marcin and Maks for everything and every day.
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABSTRACT</th>
<th>................................................................................................................................. ii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>............................................................................................................................... iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</td>
<td>.......................................................................................................................... v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>...................................................................................................................... x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>....................................................................................................................... xvii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>......................................................................................................................... xix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

- Democracy Assistance ............................................................................................................... 2
- Democratization and Democracy Consolidation ....................................................................... 15
- Role of External Factors and Regional Diffusion of Democracy ........................................... 17
- Solving the Puzzle through the Polish Democracy Assistance Case ................................... 21

### CHAPTER 2 BELARUS’ AND UKRAINE’S QUESTS FOR DEMOCRACY

- Belarus’ Backsliding to Authoritarianism ............................................................................. 31
  - Lukashenko’s War Against Civil Society ........................................................................... 42
  - Signs of Hope for Democratization in Belarus .................................................................. 50
- Ukraine’s Transition to Democracy and Current Problems .................................................... 55
  - From Ukraine’s Hybrid Regime to Democratic Breakthrough ......................................... 55
  - The Role of Ukrainian Civil Society and External Actors in Bringing Democracy ........... 66
  - The Difficult Road Toward Democratic Consolidation ..................................................... 71
  - Problems with Commitment to Democratic Rules ............................................................. 72
LIST OF TABLES

Table 4.1. Breakdown of Polish MFA-Funded NGOs’ Projects, 2005-2008 (% of Number of Projects in a Given Year) .................................................................197

Table 4.2. The Stefan Batory Grants and Donations Received in 2007(%) ..............203

Table 4.3. The Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian Partners in the NED-Funded Cross-Border Projects in the Former Soviet Union, 1998-2007 ......................212

Table 4.4. NED Partnership with Polish NGOs in the Former Soviet Union ($), 1993-1997 .......................................................................................................212

Table 6.1. Demonstrating Success of Some Projects in Ukraine..........................290

Table A3.1. Amount of ODA Provided by Selected Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Countries (Current Prices, $ millions) ........................................374

Table A4.1. Polish NGO Projects Financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2008 .................................................................375

Table A4.2. Allocation of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bilateral Funds in 2008 (Total PLN million) .................................................................377

Table A4.3. Number of Polish NGOs Projects Financed by the MFA in 2008 .......377

Table A5.1. The NED Cross-Border Projects with Central and Eastern European Countries in the Post-Communist Region, 1993-2007 .........................378
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1. The Amount of Official Development Assistance Provided by Some Young Democracies ..............................................................................................................112
Figure 3.2. ODA Provided by Poland, 1998-2007 .................................................................113
Figure 3.3. Poland’s Foreign Assistance Channels .................................................................119
Figure 3.4. Distribution of MFA Assistance in 2008 (% Total) .............................................121
Figure 3.5. Allocation of the MFA Bilateral Assistance to the Priority Recipient Countries/Regions (% of Total) ...........................................................................125
Figure 3.6. Distribution of the MFA Bilateral Funds to Priority Countries, 2008 (% Total Bilateral Assistance Allocated to the MFA Partners) .............................................139
Figure 4.1. Application Process for the MFA Funds .............................................................189
Figure 4.2. Number of Polish NGOs’ Projects Financed by the MFA in 2008 .....................196
Figure 4.3. Amount of MFA Monies Spent on Grants for Polish NGOs Projects Abroad in 2008 (% of Total Amount of Grants for NGOs) .............................................197
Figure 4.4. Examples of Income Sources for Two Polish NGOs’ Cross-Border Projects ..................................................................................................................205
Figure 4.5. NED-Funded Cross-Border Projects versus Direct Grants ($) ............................209
Figure 4.6. The NED Cross-Border Projects with Central and Eastern European Countries in the Post-Communist Region, 1993-2007 ($) .................................................210
Figure 4.7. The Percentage of Monies Spent on NED Cross-Border Projects with its CEE Partners, 1993-2007 .........................................................................................211
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The dissertation addresses four main questions that deal with approaches, reasons, methods and assessment of democracy assistance provided by a young democracy that was a recipient of this kind of aid not so long ago.¹ How does a young democracy conceptualize democracy assistance and how is its view on democracy aid different from approaches used by Western donors? Why does a former recipient country engage in democracy assistance today and when did this shift take place? How does the country go about assisting other countries in their struggles with democracy? Finally, can democracy assistance efforts by a young donor be evaluated in terms of their capacity to diffuse democratic norms and practices to other recipient countries?

The dissertation presents a first attempt to investigate efforts of a young democracy to support democracy in other countries and thus contributes to the body of research on democracy assistance. The questions addressed in this work arise largely from ongoing debates in the literature on democracy assistance regarding approaches and strategies used to assist recipient countries with their struggle for democracy. Using Polish democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine as a case, the dissertation makes contributions by comparing approaches and strategies

¹ The term young democracies or third-wave democracies is used to contrast long-established Western “old democracies” and refers to a group of countries that underwent successful democratic transitions during the widespread, international push toward democracy, called the “third wave of democratization” (Huntington 1991). Thus, the term refers to those countries from regions such as Southern Europe, Latin America, East Asia, Southeast Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, and Sub-Saharan Africa that today are successfully consolidated democracies.
used by a young democracy with those of Western donors, and by investigating democracy aid
efforts in an authoritarian versus a democratizing country. Moreover, this dissertation also
engages many other literatures in political science. Some of them lie at the intersection of
comparative politics and international relations. Specifically, it is important to present
contributions that this study makes to research on democratization and democratic consolidation,
and the role of external actors in these processes, as well as on regional diffusion of democracy.

**Democracy Assistance**

The literature abounds with studies on democracy assistance carried out by Western
democracies (e.g. Alesina and Dollar 2000; Burnell 2000; Carothers 1999 and 2004; Diamond
1992; Lancaster 2007; Pinto-Duschinsky 1997; Ottaway and Chung 1999; Schraeder, Hook and
Taylor 1998; Youngs 2006 and 2008).\(^2\) The literature usually focuses on democracy assistance
programs run by quasigovernmental and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), foundations,
and international organizations. The major actors examined in the literature are the United States
government-funded and privately run US-based non-profit organizations, the Office of
Democratic Initiatives attached to the United States Agency for International Development
(USAID); the National Endowment for Democracy (NED); the Rockefeller Brothers Fund
(RBF); the Soros Foundation; and the Ford Foundation. Other important actors engaged in

---

\(^2\) Even though democracy assistance and democracy promotion are used interchangeably, this research emphasizes the
difference between these terms and defines democracy assistance as one of the instruments of democracy
promotion, following Quigley (1997) and Azpuru *et al.* (2008). Contrary to other measures aimed at establishing or
strengthening democracy, such as diplomatic pressure; conditionality on aid (including conditionality for joining
organizations like the European Union); economic sanctions; or even military intervention, *democracy assistance*
suggests that the impetus for democratic development in a given country is internal, not external. In other words, by
providing foreign aid in the form of direct grants or technical assistance to domestic actors in a recipient country,
who are working to facilitate conditions that could lead to democracy’s rise. *Democracy assistance* recognizes that
the principal responsibility for developing democracy rests with the actors in recipient countries.
democracy assistance efforts have been international organizations such as the World Bank and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Also there is assistance undertaken by European entities—governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and foundations like Germany’s Stiftungen—as well as the European Commission programs, such as European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) (ACAP 1995; Diamond 1999; Quigley 1997).

However, there is a gap in the literature with regard to the way in which third-wave democracies promote democratic values and practices elsewhere. Carothers (2004) just touches on this subject, mentioning that some of the democracies such as Chile, Poland, and Taiwan are also establishing democracy assistance programs in their regions, and that these programs are growing and being institutionalized. Hence, this study examines one of these cases in depth. The analysis addresses the question to what extent, in giving foreign aid, Poland, as a third-wave democracy, is motivated by the desire to spread democracy. Why does the Polish Government engage in democracy assistance? Which are the major recipient countries of this assistance? Since there is no comprehensive study on democracy assistance initiatives undertaken by a young democracy beyond its borders, by studying Polish democracy support this work fills a gap in the literature.

Moreover, there are two major debates in the literature on democracy assistance to which this dissertation contributes: 1) a debate on approaches to democracy assistance—which type of assistance and which target sector receives more attention from donors; 2) a debate on the best strategies to provide assistance.

In general, the literature presents that there can be distinguished forms of democracy assistance programs that focus on economic development, political institution building, elections,
civil society and the media, and the rule of law (Burnell 2000). Aid aimed at fostering economic development seems to have predominated in foreign democracy assistance. The rationale behind economic aid has been a belief in the link between economic and political change. However, the example of many wealthy authoritarian recipient countries that have benefited for years from such aid makes donors and scholars skeptical about the effectiveness of this type of democracy assistance (Ottaway and Carothers 2000).

Another common form of democracy assistance is promotion of free and fair elections. Since elections make the leaders of the country accountable, and, “founding elections,” especially, also are seen as legitimating the new political order, elections have been considered as a keystone of any emerging democratic process (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986). 3 From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s donors concentrated on elections occurring in the developing countries and the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union (Carothers 1997 and 2004; Ottaway and Carothers 2000). The assistance to promote free and fair balloting focused on foreign election administration projects and election observation missions aimed at detecting and, if possible, deterring fraud. Scholars, however, turn a critical eye on the effectiveness of election observation and point out that monitoring the fairness of election processes and critical reports written by the observers often have not had significant impact in semi-authoritarian states (Carothers 2004; Fish 2005). Moreover, it is not always clear

3 In Schumpeter’s (1947, 269) conception, democracy is defined as elite competition. He argues that “the democratic method is the institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of competitive struggle for the people's vote.” Thus, according to Schumpeter, democracy means that the people have the opportunity of selecting, through a competitive electoral process, those who will represent their interests. Even though scholars agree that a system for choosing the government through free, fair and competitive elections organized at regular intervals with universal suffrage is an essential feature of democracy, many experts and practitioners believe that elections are not enough to make a state democratic. Thus, a “minimalist” definition of electoral democracy proposed by Schumpeter—although still employed today (e.g. Przeworski et al. 1996)—is rather rare among scholars. However, O’Donnell (2001, 9) points out that Schumpeter (1947, 271) realizes that in order for the “free competition for a free vote” to exist, some conditions external to the electoral process itself must be met.
whether free, fair elections lead to democratization, or are themselves products of
democratization (Ottaway 2003).

Some donors provide support for building institutions, such as party systems, parliaments
or judicial systems. However, scholars acknowledge that international support for the
development of institutions is a very difficult task to accomplish. Analysts agree that
infrastructural assistance based on strategies imported from the West may be appropriate for the
eyearly periods when new institutions remain unformed (Mendelson and Glenn 2002).
Nevertheless, institutions established by foreign donors might not be long lasting, if donors do
not take into account the demands coming from within, and do not tailor these institutions to the
specific situation in the recipient country. Moreover, scholars argue that it is not enough to set up
institutions and withdraw assistance; the strengthening of such structures in the later stage of
democratization also plays an important role (Huntington 1968, 8-24; Ottaway 2003; Putnam
1994). Finally, the question remains whether external support has any lasting effect at all on
poorly functioning institutions in countries with long histories of nondemocratic politics and the
absence of the rule of law (Carothers 2004).

Promotion of the rule of law is another common arena of democracy assistance. The main
initiatives in this sphere include: judicial and legislative reform—such as rewriting constitutions,
laws, and regulations—and providing training for officials in parliaments, executive branch
agencies, and local governments. However, foreign democracy promoters find that despite many
years, as well as hundreds of millions of dollars, spent on such aid, some countries, like Russia
or China, are not moving in the right direction (Carothers 2004). Scholars argue that the primary
obstacles to such reform are not technical or financial, but political and human. Many donors are
of the opinion that recipient countries must have Western style of rule of law and tend to
translate this conception into an institutional checklist, overlooking the fact that law is also a normative system that resides in the minds of the citizens of a society. Therefore, only recently have aid providers started to facilitate expansion of the rule of law efforts to civic groups that use law to advance particular interests and to nongovernmental organizations that push for such reforms (Rose-Ackerman 2007).

In sum, support for elections, institution building and the rule of law has shown that democracy assistance is unsuccessful without taking into the account the role of citizens in democratization. Therefore, most scholars argue that civil society aid is the most important aspect of democracy assistance strategy, because of merits in mobilizing citizens’ demands and strengthening their political participation (Grugel 1999; Blair 1998; Hearn and Robinson 2000, 244; Sundstrom 2006).

The importance of civil society is well recognized in the democratization and democracy assistance literatures (Bernhard 1993; Diamond 1994 and 1996; Hadenius and Uggla 1996; Linz and Stepan 1996). A vibrant civil society is a necessary, although not sufficient, condition for the emergence and sustainability of democracy. Civil society is usually defined as the realm between state and family, which is separated from the state, is autonomous in relation to the state, and is formed voluntarily by members of the society to protect and extend their interests and values (Cohen and Arato 1997; Linz and Stepan 1996; White 1994). Although scholars

---

4 The concept of civil society is incorporated in the definition of liberal democracy with which scholars prefer to work. The concept of liberal democracy devotes more attention than electoral democracy to human rights secured through constitutional, limited government, the rule of law, freedom of speech, press, organization and association (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Diamond 1999; Pateman 1970; Tilly 2007). In Dahl’s (1971 and 1989) understanding, what makes countries truly democratic is the dependence of officials’ decisions upon the expressions of preferences by the citizenry, as well as citizens’ chances to express their interests and values by means not only of parties and elections, but also of the independent associations that individuals have the freedom to establish and join. In Dahl’s opinion civil rights are essential for the exercise of political rights. Specifically, Dahl (1989, 233) argues that in a democracy, which he defines as “Polyarchy,” citizens have an effectively enforced right to form and join autonomous associations, including political associations, such as political parties and interest groups, that attempt to influence the government by competing in elections and by other peaceful means.
debate the exact definition of the concept, there seems to be consensus that civil society excludes private sector business and formal political institutions (so-called “political society”) (Dahl 1989; Biekart 1999, 34; Carothers 1999, 209; Deutsch 1961; Linz and Stepan 1996; Putnam 1994; White 1994, 379).  

Deutsch (1961) emphasizes the importance of social mobilization, occurring when a country is moving from traditional to modern ways of life, in facilitating democratization by pressuring the government to respect citizens’ growing demands. Putnam (1983) shows that the regions of Italy in which democratic institutions function most successfully today are those in which civil society was relatively well developed earlier. In other words, successful democratization processes are possible “only if, and only to the extent that, a civil society … predates the transition or becomes established in the course of it” (Perez-Diaz 1993, 40). O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 48-56) state that the opening of authoritarian rule usually produces a rapid increase in activation of the general popular activation—“the resurrection of civil society” in which diverse layers of society may come together and form a “popular upsurge” that pushes the transition toward democracy further that it would otherwise have gone. Civil society has played a crucial role in undermining authoritarian regimes and facilitating the establishment of democratic rule in Central and Eastern Europe, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Korea (Bernhard 1993; Diamond 1994 and 1996; Diamond and Plattner 2001; Hadenius and Uggla 1996; Linz and Stepan 1996).

Linz and Stepan (1996, 9) argue that civil society is crucial in all stages of transition, because of the capacity of the third sector to generate political alternatives and to monitor

---

5 By political society Linz and Stepan (1996, 8) mean political parties, elections, electoral rules, political leadership, interparty alliances, and legislatures, which they describe as an arena in which the polity specifically arranges itself to contest the right to exercise control over public power and the state apparatus.
government. A lively and independent civil society can help transitions get started, resist reversals, push transitions to their completion, consolidate, and help deepen democracy.

It is important, however, to distinguish between civil society and uncivil society in authoritarian regimes. There may be groups that support the non-democratic regime and even facilitate that growth of authoritarianism. The real civil society aims to limit state power in order to guarantee individual and collective liberties under democratic or non-democratic regimes. However, it is instructive to distinguish different roles and functions that civil society plays within the context of authoritarian regimes, transitioning regimes, and in democracies. In an authoritarian environment, civil society can serve to delegitimize a regime or compel it to be more responsive to its citizens. A united civil society that forms an opposition to the regime that can mobilize a “popular upsurge” and thus overthrow authoritarianism (Henderson 2003, 33; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 56-58; Ekiert 2003). Later, in transitional polities, civil society through its “resurrection” can gain leverage and organize protests and rallies, and hasten reforms. Thus the transition can go further than it would otherwise have developed (O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986, 56-58).

Whereas the potential of civil society in undermining authoritarian rule has been recently well demonstrated in the third wave transitions, there is scholarly consensus on the important role that civil society has played in democratic stability in Western societies (Bermeo 2003, 8).

---

6 Some scholars distinguish between civil and uncivil society, based on the use of violence, like Payne (2000) or Keane (1998, 115). Here usage follows Whitehead’s (1997) and Shils’ (1992) definition of organizations/groups with a lack of democratic ideas or with anti-democratic components. Shils (1992) argues that only certain organizations qualify as part of civil society, namely those that support and embrace liberal democratic values and institutions. Berman (1997) argues that the term civil society is vague, and she implies that in fact this concept may refer sometimes to uncivil society. Whitehead (1997, 107-8) points out that uncivil society negatively influences the quality and stability for the democracy as a whole; and whereas uncivil society may also be well-established in Western democracies, in new democracies such uncivil society occupies a much larger social space, often more than that occupied by the emerging civil society itself.
In authoritarian states, civil society plays a more oppositional role. After transition, however, this “revolutionary” civil society adapts as its autonomy becomes institutionalized through the rule of law that establishes legal guarantees of individual rights and freedoms, and so forth. (Henderson 2003, 33; Linz 2000; Linz and Stepan 1996; 14). In consolidated democracies, although civil society puts curbs on government, state and civil society are seen as partners more than opponents. For example, Geremek (1996, 250) points out that civil society in a consolidating country “should not be based on emotions” and should not act in opposition to the democratic state, but cooperate with it in building of democratic institutions and involve the greatest possible number of people in public life, in order to construct a democratic mechanism of stability.

Civil society is connected with the durability and quality of democracy, and an organized civil society often determines how quickly democratic practices are absorbed into the new political system and the speed with which the consolidation of democratic institutions takes place for several reasons (Diuk 2006, 70). Pluralistic and autonomously organized civil society provides a counterweight to state power, penetrates, fragments and decentralizes government’s power (Diamond, Linz and Lipset 1989, 35; Linz 2000; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992, 6; Taylor 1990, 117; Tilly 2007). Civil society can be the basis of good and effective government during the process of consolidation of democracy (Bermeo 2003, 9; Biekart 1999, 45). Civil society can be a partner in resolving problems of successful democratic governance, because civil society serves as a bridge between private citizen and public office, gathers citizens’ interests and articulates their demands, behaves as a watchdog for these interests, and widens public debate (Bermeo 2003, 11; Biekart 1999, 34; 46; Cohen and Rogers 1992; Dahl 1971; Diamond 1999, 239-50; Putnam 1983 and 1994; Rose-Ackerman 2007). Civil society
guarantees that citizens can participate in public debates beyond elections. Since civil society acts as a channel for protecting and promoting personal values and interests, NGOs and civic groups provide public authorities with valuable information and expertise on the problems and needs of the society.

Civil society can contribute to the consolidation of democracy by building social capital. In the framework of a functioning democracy, it is important to activate citizens’ participation in society. Participation in civic organizations “inculcates skills of cooperation as well as a sense of shared responsibility for collective endeavors … quickens political awareness … dispels isolation and mutual distrust” (Putnam 1994, 89-138).

However, scholars argue that there have to be certain preconditions fulfilled in order for civil society to perform the above-mentioned functions. Civil society should be “vibrant”—understood in terms of its pluralism (number, size, variety, and the density of civil society’s networks); have a democratic orientation; participate in politics; but above all should be autonomous from the state (Bermeo 2003, 10-11; Bernhard 1993; Biekart 1999, 35; Diamond 1994; Hadenius and Uggla 1996; Rueschemeyer, Stephens and Stephens 1992, 77; Walzer 1991, 300). The argument regarding autonomy and commitment to democratic values is especially important taking into account Berman’s (1997, 424) findings that a robust civil society’s alliance with undemocratic elites contributed to the collapse of the Weimar Republic—Germany’s first experience with democracy.

Civil society assistance was not a major component of democracy aid at the outset (Ottaway and Carothers 2000, 6). The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of opposition coming from civil society groups in Central and Eastern Europe triggered the expansion of democracy assistance to these groups in the 1980s and 1990s (Burnell 2000;
Especially, the growth of civil society in the early 1990s came to show its important democratizing potential when donor agencies realized that their focus on electoral systems and state institutions was inadequate and lacked the ability to strengthen citizens’ political participation (Bernard, Helmich and Lehning 1998; Freres 1999; Lehning 1998; Thijn and Bernard 1998). Since then, there has been a steady increase in interest among Western democracies’ governments, foundations, and organizations in assisting civil society (Allison and Beschel 1992; Azpuru et al. 2008). Donors began to sponsor programs labeled as “strengthening civil society” across the developing and post-communist worlds, with the assumption that civil society is crucial in the transition to and consolidation of democracy (Blair 1998; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; USAID Mission to Poland Europe and Eurasia).  

There are differences among Western donors with respect to which form of democracy assistance should be given priority. Scholars distinguish two major emerging approaches in democracy assistance—political and developmental (Carothers 2009; Jarábik 2006, 86; Kopstein 2006). Some policy makers and political observers see US democracy assistance as basically political and the European Union’s democracy-building efforts as largely developmental (Jarábik 2006, 86; Kopstein 2006).

According to the political approach, democracy aid is directed to political parties, civil society groups, associations, politicians, or politically oriented nongovernmental organizations. Democracy assistance also can be carried out through support to key institutions—an independent electoral commission, independent judiciary, or independent media. In Carothers’

---

7 From 1989 to 1994, the international community made commitments to Central and Eastern Europe, namely to Poland; Czechoslovakia (after 1993 the Czech Republic and Slovakia); and Hungary—of approximately $ 44.3 billion (Quigley 1997, 1).

8 The development of Central and Eastern European civil society has been vigorously discussed for long time among scholars (Mendelson 2001; Mendelson and Glenn 2002; Petrescu 2000; Quigley 1997 and 2000; Richter 2002); but other regions also attracted researchers’ attention, such as Latin America (Allmand 1998; Shifter 2000), the Middle East (Brouwer 2000), Africa (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Hearn and Robinson 2000, Landsberg 2000, Sedogo 1998), Asia (Adamson 2002; Golub 2000; Racelis 2000; Weinthal and Luong 2002; Win 1998).
(2009) opinion, the political approach best corresponds Dahl’s conception of democracy, because this concept highlights the importance of political and civil rights to ensure that citizens can participate in democratic political processes.

The developmental approach, however, perceives democratization as a slow, iterative process of change in a wide range of political and socioeconomic aspects. In Carothers’ (2009, 8) opinion, the developmental approach suggests that it is better to achieve a certain basic level of social and economic development before proceeding with democratization. Thus, particular attention is paid to promoting social and economic development and then building political institutions and good governance rather than strengthening political contestation and openness.

This study will help answer the question—using Poland as a case—whether democracy assistance provided by a young democracy falls into the recent typology of approaches in democracy assistance. By investigating Polish assistance to the post-communist region, it will be possible to determine which approach drives this aid. Moreover, the question arises whether Polish democracy assistance is distinctive with respect to countries that are authoritarian, versus those that are newly democratic. Finally, taking into account the importance of civil society in bringing and sustaining democracy, as well as the role of the Solidarity Movement in overthrowing the communist regime in Poland, and later the role of organizations during the transformation process to democracy, the question also arises to what extent civil society assistance dominates Polish aid.

Another debate about democracy assistance regards the strategies of providing assistance and which method is more effective in facilitating democratic tendencies in recipient countries. The literature distinguishes three strategies. Using Carothers’ (1999, 257) terminology, the first strategy is called “the external project method.” This strategy was, for example, used by USAID
toward Eastern Europe and parts of the former Soviet Union at the beginning of 1990s. This strategy involved aid for US NGOs’ contractors, e.g. consulting groups, trainers (Carothers 1999, 257; Siegel and Yancey 1992). The proponents of this method may justify it by pointing out that domestic organizations in the recipient countries are poorly institutionalized, lack reputation and administrative experience, are not adequately developed to absorb outside assistance effectively, and thus do not receive direct funds. However, there are also costs associated with this strategy. Much of the funding instead of being spent in recipient country, was used by donor or its domestic contactors. Siegel and Yancey (1992, 52), in their study on assistance to the post-communist countries, point out that there was “too much of auto-consumption of assistance, because 75 percent of an aid dollar was consumed by the donor.” Moreover, such strategies did not find much approval among civil society activists in recipient countries, who were of the opinion that the “Marriott Brigade” or “fly-in, fly-out” consultants that used to stay at Warsaw’s five-star hotels provided training with little knowledge about the CEE reality (Mendelson and Glenn 2002, 3; Wedel 1999, 1-20). Finally, this strategy is characterized by “lack of local ownership” of assistance projects and a lack of flexibility, when, for example, the real local needs and possibilities turned out to be different from what the donor anticipated (Carothers 1999, 259-265).

The second method of supporting civil society groups in their struggle for democracy is to provide direct grants. The US assistance providers used also direct grants to organizations, distributed via a grants competition. Then, no American intermediary groups were involved in the implementation of the projects. Direct grants have been typically employed in civil society assistance by the Eurasia Foundation and the NED almost from the beginning of their existence (Carothers 1999, 271; McFaul 2005, 155). The principle in NED work is to provide direct funds
for “proposals that originate with indigenous democratic groups.”9 The evaluations of the democracy-building work, like McFaul’s writings, seem to be more favorable to the NED approach than to the USAID model, because the direct grants method has many advantages. Money goes directly into the recipient society, and this method permits greater flexibility in the design and implementation of projects (McFaul 2005). Although the strategy seems to be more effective in assisting civil society, this approach involves difficulties and limitations as well. In order to avoid any misuse of money, donors might be more likely to finance those more Westernized groups who are familiar with grants proposals and who are well-known by the donor (Carothers 1999, 263; 271-2). It might be difficult to reach local partners, especially in authoritarian countries, and identify whether they are worthy recipients. Finally, donors may be more likely to give bigger direct grants for fewer projects to those organizations that are well-known in the region (Aksartova 2005, 124-5).

The third strategy is represented by the activity of the Soros Foundation, which can be called a strategy of “going local.” Unlike many other foundations, the Soros Foundations does involve local people. The Soros Foundation established local foundations in each target country, and each of local organizations has a separate identity with local boards of directors and local staff. However, this method is costly, because of the price inherent in the capitalization of the foundations. The approach also possesses a problem with allocating money to local groups through the individual national foundations, because funds may be more likely to be distributed to large extent within a tight circle (Carothers 1999, 273-4; Quigley 1997).

This dissertation answers the question of how new democracies go about delivering their democracy assistance to recipient countries by studying Polish governmental and non-

---

governmental aid. Is there is cooperation between governmental and non-governmental sectors while supporting democracy in recipient countries? To what extent are strategies employed in Polish democracy assistance similar to or different from Western democracies’ strategies?

**Democratization and Democracy Consolidation**

The study analyzes the political situation in two post-Soviet states, recipients of Polish democracy assistance, in order to present different opportunities and dilemmas of democratization in one of them and of democratic consolidation in the other. The *democratization* process is defined as a transition that proceeds in a set sequence of stages: from the “authoritarian opening,” through liberalization and increased participation to regime change (Gunther *et al.* 1995). Where on this gradual scale is Belarus placed? Why has democratic breakthrough not occurred there yet? What are the obstacles toward democratization in Belarus? These are a few questions that this study aims to answer.

*Democratic consolidation*, however, is defined as a process of building a democracy following the collapse of an authoritarian regime and continuing to the stability and persistence of the democratic regime. Scholars tend to consider democratic consolidation as a process by which the rules, institutions, and constraints of democracy come to constitute “the only game in town,” the one legitimate framework for seeking and exercising political power (Przeworski 1991, 26; Diamond 1997, 5; Linz and Stepan 1996). Consolidation remains a contested if not

---

10 Following a common definition, democracy is defined here as a form of government with: 1) regular elections that are free, fair and competitive to select public officials taking responsibility on behalf of the citizens; 2) authorities accountable to the citizens; 3) rule of law; 4) civil liberties and political rights guaranteed by law. The most common mechanism that fosters accountability is elections (Schumpeter 1947). However, O’Donnell *et al.* (2004; 32) and Rose-Ackerman (2007) see civil society as providing mechanisms of accountability, as well.
controversial concept in the comparative politics literature. Scholars point to the difficulty of specifying precisely when a consolidation begins or when a democracy is consolidated (Diamond and Plattner 2001; Gunther et al. 1995; Linz and Stepan 1996). Based on this scholarly literature on democratic consolidation, what are the problems with democratic consolidation in Ukraine? Do factors for democratic consolidation apply to Ukraine’s case? How is the idea about Ukraine’s path toward democratic consolidation reflected in Polish democracy assistance to this country?

Moreover, taking into account the role of civil society in democratization and democratic consolidation, the study investigates the situation of the third sectors in Belarus and Ukraine and their abilities to influence democratic changes in these countries.

This dissertation also addresses the question of mitigating the “post-communist divide” discussed in the post-communist literature on democratic transition. Scholars of post-communist democratization have noted that the communist space in Europe used to be considered “regional,” because some countries within this area were politically, economically and military integrated. Today, there is a significant variation in political outcomes in the post-communist space (King 2000; Kitschelt 2003; Kopstein and Reilly 2000). It is commonly proclaimed that the post-communist countries witnessed not only a political transformation from an authoritarian regime to a pluralistic democracy, but at the same time an economic transformation from a planned command economy to a free market economy (Armijo et al. 1994; Offe 2004). However, the transformation paths of post-communist countries varied. On the one hand, there were countries like Belarus that backslid to authoritarianism despite some prospects for democratization at the beginning of the 1990s (Dawisha and Parrott 1997; Diamond and Plattner 2001; Fish 2001 and 2005; Ishiyama and Kennedy 2001; Mihalisko 1997). On the other side,
there are the Central and Eastern European countries, including the Baltic States, that
successfully democratized and underwent transition to a market economy; and their
accomplishments were internationally recognized by inclusion into the Western mainstream
(Baldwin 1995; Haerpfer 2002; Pridham 2005; Pridham et al. 1997; Rose and Haerpfer 1995;
Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeir 2005).

Other countries, like Ukraine or Georgia, although having some brief experience with
democratization before, only recently underwent democratic breakthroughs marked by electoral
revolutions; but their democracies are not yet consolidated (Åslund and McFaul 2006b;
D’Anieri 2007b; Flikke 2008; Tudoroiu 2007; Wilson 2006; Zhurzenko 2005). The differences
between post-communist countries regarding their democratic transition encouraged political
scientists to investigate reasons for this “post-communist divergence” (Crawford and Lijphart
1995; Ekiert and Hanson 2003; King 2000; Kitchelt 2003; Rupnik 1999). This study investigates
possibilities that this gap can be narrowed with help of those post-communist countries like
Poland that were more successful in their political transformations.

Role of External Factors and Regional Diffusion of Democracy

The comparative politics and international relations literatures on democratization and
democratic consolidation abound with different explanations about the ways in which a system
becomes democratic and solidifies its democratic features, but political scientists are far from
consensus on what affects these phenomena (Tilly 2007, 49). Prior to the 1990s, the studies on
democratization and democratic consolidation privileged domestic explanations (Schmitter
This view began to change particularly in response to transformations in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) taking part in the third “wave of democratization” (Huntington 1991; Pridham, Herring, and Sanford 1997; Whitehead 1996). The role of external factors in the politics of regime change in post-communist CEE states made scholars realize that domestic factors are not sufficient to explain how countries democratize (Crawford and Lijphart 1995; Ekiert 2003; Kopstein and Reilly 2000; Rose and Haerpfer 1995). Today, any model exploring the determinants of democratization that does not take account of external factors is underspecified; but the literature devoted to the importance of international forces in democratization is still small.

One of the external factors well-acknowledged in the democratization literature is the role of influential actors, such as international organizations (Bratton and van de Walle 1997; Burnell 2000; Grugel 1999; Linden 2002; Pridham 1994; Vachudova 2001). Pevehouse (2002 and 2005) focuses on the regional organizations, i.e. those made up of geographically proximate states, in promoting democracy and argues that organizations with a higher democratic “density” (a higher percentage of members in the organization that are democratic) are more likely to be associated with both democratic transition and consolidation of members. Pevehouse (2005) suggests that regional organizations’ impact results from their ability to pressure domestic elites, to foster credible commitments, and to raise the costs of anti-democratic behavior. Pevehouse (2005) finds that the regional organizations can facilitate transitions to democracy, as well as guarantee its survival. Substantial attention has been devoted to such organizations as the European Union.

\[1\] Analyzing the transitions from authoritarian rule in Southern Europe, Schmitter (1986, 5) concluded that the “external factors tended to play an indirect and usually marginal role” in democratization. However, his findings tend to clash with some obvious facts surrounding the transitions that have occurred in Central and Eastern Europe. After the rapid political transitions in Eastern Europe, followed by the collapse of the Soviet Union, Schmitter (1996, 27) admitted that “perhaps it is time to reconsider the impact of the international context upon regime change.”
The ability of the EU to spread democracy derives from political and economic incentives provided for its member states. Becoming a member of the EU requires successful pre-accession democratic reforms in the fields of rule of law, human rights and protection of minorities (Haerpfer 2002). It is believed that this “carrot and stick” policy facilitated democratic changes in the Central and Eastern European countries prior to their accession to the European Union (Pridham 2005; Rose and Haerpfer 1995; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeir 2005; Schimmelfennig 2007; Youngs 2001a; 2001b and 2003).12

In addition to influential actors, a second form of international influence consists of “contagion,” “diffusion” or “snowballing,” meaning that authoritarian neighbors imitate and learn from emerging new democracies (Bratton and van de Walle 1997, 29; Huntington 1991). Diffusion itself can be defined as a process by which an idea, institution, policy, model, or the like, is spread through certain channels to the members of the social system (e.g. within a state or across states) (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Brinks and Coppedge 2006; Rogers 1995, 10; Tarrow 1998 and 2005; Tarrow and della Porta 2005). Today’s world map shows that regimes are similar within regions. Scholars find significant effects for regional diffusion (Brinks and Coppedge 2006; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; Gleditsch and Ward 2006; O’Loughlin et al. 1998; Starr 1991; Starr and Lindborg 2003).

The fact that democracies expanded in “waves” and that democratization occurred in some regions motivated international relations researchers to investigate the impact of

---

12 At the 1993 Copenhagen Summit, the European Union put into words “the model of European democracy,” which comprised the only points of reference for post-communist Europe. In order to be considered for membership, states must have achieved “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the respect for and protection of minorities.” Moreover, since the regimes that were being dismantled in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) were very different in structure from the authoritarian regimes in Southern Europe, in addition to fulfilling the political criteria, candidate countries must have achieved “the existence of a functioning market economy.” Thus, the transition to a market economy was viewed as an integral component of democratization (European Commission: Enlargement. 2009). This definition of democracy is now incorporated in the Treaty of Nice that entered in force on February 1, 2003 (European Commission: The Treaty of Nice).
neighboring states. Several political scientists bring the “neighborhood factor” into the analysis of effects on both conflict and democratization propensities (Enterline and Greig 2005; Gibler and Sewell 2006; Gibler 2008; Rasler and Thompson 2004). They find that a relatively peaceful neighborhood encourages democratization, which in turn increases the probability of reduced conflict with other democratic regimes.

The occurrence of regional clustering in the distribution of democracy motivates scholars to hypothesize that countries neighboring democratizing states or new democracies are far more likely to undergo transition to democracy themselves (Crescenzi and Enterline 1999; Gleditsch and Ward 2006). Gleditsch and Ward (2006) find that as the frequency of democracies within a geographic region increases, the more democratic nondemocratic states in the region became, according to the Polity IV scale. Thus, the authors argue that “international processes that influence democratization are not particularly to be found at a global level” and that “the global level is an aggregate that masks large regional differences and variation;” therefore it makes little sense to exclude the regional context (Gleditsch and Ward 2006, 913).

Crescenzi and Enterline (1999) also find strong evidence that democratization “snowballs” particularly in the European regions. However, the question arises whether we know the regional mechanism encouraging actors in authoritarian states to undergo transition to democracy. Despite statistical evidence of regional clustering of democracies, it is difficult to identify the particular causal process behind the correlations between neighborhood influence and democratization. The question still remains, what drives the regional spread of political change?

This research has a potential to contribute to understanding of what may be behind the observable diffusion of democracies within a region. This project suggests that in addition to
domestic and other external explanations, democracy assistance provided by a young democracy may be one of the potential mechanisms for regional democracy diffusion.

Also, recently in the literature on post-communism, there have been some efforts explaining observable democracy diffusion in the region (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Jacoby 2006). Bunce and Wolchik (2006, 288) address the question of why the electoral revolutions in the post-communist region have begun since 2000. The authors argue that the process of diffusion occurred through complex cross-national collaborations that included not just US democracy promoters but also regional democracy promoters and dedicated local activists willing to take a lot of chances (Bunce and Wolchik 2006, 298-9). However, the authors do not explore these collaborative networks. This dissertation fills this gap and describes democracy assistance networks and demonstrates why these close collaborations have a potential to diffuse democratic ideas and practices to civil society groups across borders.

Solving the Puzzle through the Polish Democracy Assistance Case

In order to examine democracy assistance efforts taken by a young democracy, the study focuses on Polish democracy assistance. The study selects the case study as a method to address research questions, because it allows for fully-detailed description, in-depth examination, and

---

13 Since 2000 there have been four mass mobilizations that have occurred in the post-communist region, such as the “Bulldozer Revolution” in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2000, “Rose Revolution” in Georgia in 2003, “Orange Revolution” in Ukraine in 2004, the “Tulip Revolution” in Kyrgyzstan in 2005. The common usage for these events is “Color Revolutions” which were characterized by the massive street protests followed disputed elections and led to the resignation or overthrow of political authorities considered to be authoritarian and bringing into power elites in favor of democracy. For more about revolutions in the postcommunist region see Fairbanks (2004); Karatnycky (2005); Thompson (2004); and special issues on the Orange Revolution in Problems of Post-communism 52 (2), March April 2005 and in the Journal of Democracy 16 (2) April 2005. Outside Europe there was a so-called “Cedar Revolution” in Lebanon.
explanation of a single instance (George and Bennett 2005, 12, 21; King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 4-5). The examination of instance allows the researcher to look for factors that may have been neglected. As a result of the case study, a researcher may gain a sharpened understanding of why and how democracy assistance is provided as it is, and of a mechanism of diffusion of democracy to recipient countries. The additional advantage of a case study is that it may reveal what might become important to look at more extensively in future research.

There are several motivations for the choice of the Polish democracy assistance case to answer the research questions. First, Poland is known for its active civil society that was the major force in bringing down communism and that influenced other regime alterations in the communist space. The Solidarity Movement, which emerged nearly thirty years ago as attempt by workers in Gdansk’s shipyard to improve labor conditions, was an autonomous civil society organization in 1980-81 and such a distinct rarity in the communist region. The movement gave impetus to the Poles to demand the right to organize and to speak up. Eventually, Solidarity became a political movement embracing workers, intellectuals and dissidents that negotiated and then won the first free democratic election in June 4, 1989. The Solidarity movement not only liberated Polish people from communism, but gave impetus to the events leading to the Fall of Berlin Wall, the collapse of communism in Central Europe and the Soviet Union, and the end of the Cold War.

Second, from many countries that emerged after the collapse of communism, Poland is an example that democratization is achievable and that it contributes to the prosperity of the state and its citizens.\(^{14}\) Poland was a pioneer in political and economic transformation in the post-

\(^{14}\) The comparative transition literature that highlights the fact that Poland was a special case is represented, for example, by Crawford and Lijphart (1995) or King (2000).
communist region. It is one of the countries from Central and Eastern Europe in which political and economic reforms were particularly successful.  

A different historical model has emerged from Solidarity—a model of peaceful resistance to communism that led to the “roundtable talks” model of negotiated (pacted) transition. Solidarity is a symbol of citizens mobilizing for sovereignty of individuals and human rights, freedom of speech and association under dictatorial conditions. This is a model of what is possible if workers, intellectuals, and civil society activists can come together in a movement of mass resistance to authoritarianism. The model helped shape thinking about democracy assistance and made civil society an important target of Western donors.

Third, during the communist era and transformation process, Polish civil society—including opposition groups, civic groups, as well as intellectual and business elites favoring democratization—was the major Western aid recipient in the whole post-communist region (Quigley 1997). Many Polish non-governmental organizations were established with the great help of external funds, and these associations played an important role in the transformation

---

15 According Polity IV or Freedom House rankings, and many economic data, Poland is a consolidated democracy with a prospering free-market economy. Poland’s accomplishments in political and economic spheres have been internationally recognized by its inclusion in international organizations. Poland became member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in 1996 (it was a founding member in 1946, and withdrew from the IMF and World Bank in 1954); the Council of Europe in 1991; the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1996; the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995; and NATO in 1999 (Sources of this list are from the IMF, Articles of the Executive Board Consultation, various years; Worldbank Country Brief; OECD Countries List; The Council of Europe’s Member States List; WTO: Understanding the WTO: The Organization Members and Observers; NATO Update: NATO Welcomes Seven New Members). However, the main indicator of Poland’s successful transformation was the achievement of the Copenhagen criteria regarding accomplishments in democratization and creation of a market economy and accession to the European Union (EU) that Poland joined on May 1, 2004.

16 The “Roundtable Talks” refer to negotiation between the representatives of the communist regime and the opposition held in Poland in 1989, as a result of which the transformation in Poland began (Ćwiek-Karpowicz and Kaczyński 2006; Osiatynski 1996). See also Elster (1996), and Huntington (1991) for the typology of different types of transitions.

17 Carl Gershman, the president of NED during the conference “Solidarity and the Future of Democratization” commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Poland’s Roundtable Talks, organized in May 2009 at Georgetown University said that the idea of assisting civil society groups through cross-border work originated from the Solidarity movement and spread to other countries around the world.
process from communism to democracy in Poland (CSCE 1994; Friszke 2006; Juros et al. 2004; Zimmer and Priller 2004).

Thus, taking into account past experience, it is reasonable to assume it would impel the government and non-government organizations toward democracy assistance, and particularly civil society assistance. Because of Polish NGOs’ prominent role in the democratic changes in Poland, one may expect that they may be also active in the field of assisting other countries with their democratic transformation. Moreover, the study argues that, based on experience as a recipient of Western aid, Polish democracy assistance providers had a chance to learn from Western donors, including also from their mistakes in delivering assistance. Having gone through political and economic transition themselves and having experience as recipients of democracy aid, Polish NGOs might have a better understanding of which projects are likely to work better and to produce more substantial results in different stages of movement toward democracy—from the authoritarian opening, through liberalization and increased participation to regime change, and then work toward consolidation.

Research questions of this study are answered using the case study of Poland’s democracy assistance to two post-Soviet states that are Poland’s direct neighbors: Belarus and Ukraine. The study argues that Poland is more likely to provide democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine, because these two countries are placed high on Poland’s foreign policy priorities for security and cultural reasons. The role of Polish diplomacy during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine is well acknowledged in the literature (e.g. Aslund and McFaul 2006b; Wilson 2006). Poland proved both to be ready and able to play a key role in Ukraine; and in doing so, the Polish
government raised the EU’s own profile in the region and helped place Ukraine high on the EU’s agenda.  

Belarus and Ukraine are important for the security of the whole post-communist region, and this premise is acknowledged by scholars and by policy makers (Legvold and Wallander 2004). Poland’s government has many times emphasized its support for Ukraine’s future membership in the EU and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO); the Polish Government is actively involved in shaping the EU policy toward its Eastern neighbors, as well. Taking into account these Polish diplomatic efforts, democracy assistance, which is a foreign policy tool, may be used together with other Polish actions.

In addition to security reasons, it is reasonable to argue that historical and cultural ties with Belarus and Ukraine also are factors influencing the Polish Government’s decision to grant most of its aid to Belarus and Ukraine. Also, the diffusion literature suggests that the greater the similarity between transmitters and prospective adopters on one or more socio-cultural dimensions, the greater the prospect of diffusion (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Lahusen 1999;

18 In December 2004, Poland provided the impetus that led to the EU intervention in Ukraine. In the event, EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, joined Polish President Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Lithuania’s Valdas Adamkus, and traveled to Ukraine to resolve the ongoing stand-off over the disputed presidential vote. As the result, the agreement between Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich and his challenger Viktor Yushchenko was reached; and the conflicting sides agreed to work toward eliminating the use of force in resolving the election crisis (RFE/RL Newsline 2004a).

19 From the fourteenth to the twentieth centuries Belarus and Ukraine together with Poland and Lithuania shared histories (Burant 1993). Poles, Belarusians, Ukrainians and Lithuanians were united under a common sovereign with the marriage of Lithuania’s Grand Duke Jagiello to Poland’s Queen Jadwiga in the fourteenth century. Later these countries for over four hundred years together with the Polish crown jointly formed the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodow, literally Republic of Two Nations) (Snyder 2003). In 1918, after one hundred and twenty three years of partitions by Austria-Hungary, Germany, and Russia, Poland regained its independence. The Second Polish Republic and Bolshevik Russia disputed their borders and control over lands leading to the Polish-Soviet War (1919–1921). After World War One, in December 1919, the Allied Supreme Council declared a demarcation line between these countries, called the Curzon Line; but the line did not play any role in establishing the Polish-Soviet border in 1921. Instead, the Riga Peace Treaty (1921), which ended the Polish-Bolshevik war, divided Ukrainian and Belarusian Western and Eastern lands between Poland and Soviet Russia (Leslie 1983, 137-8). The areas that belonged to Poland were called Kresy (the Eastern territories) and were polonized. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939 united most of the Ukrainian and Belarusian areas; however, the Soviet influence from 1945-1991 had a critical influence on the countries’ political, economic, social and cultural developments and determined their later transformations (Ekiert and Hanson 2003; Lieven 1999, 32; Magdziak-Mieszewska 2002).
Snow and Benford 1999). This dissertation argues that those similarities facilitate closer ties, which in turn make diffusion of democratic ideas and behavior more likely to happen. A lack of cultural and language barriers, and geographical proximity, may facilitate the engagement of Polish NGOs to form networks with counterparts in Belarus.\(^{20}\) Through close partnership and an almost “personal” aspect of cross-border work, Polish civil society groups may be better informed about the political situation of the recipient countries and internal factors that create obstacles for the provision of assistance. Thus, nearby civil society groups giving assistance may be better-equipped to address problems of civil society in the recipient country. Finally, geographical proximity may give a chance for the development of long-term cooperation, and thus may improve the work and status of civil society groups in the recipient country.

Finally, Belarus and Ukraine receive the attention of this study, because they present an interesting example of countries which have common historical past and the same initial conditions and starting point toward democratization following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, but ended up with different political systems today. Belarus has been labeled “Europe’s last dictatorship” (Garnett and Legvold 1999; Marples 2005; Schmidtke and Yekelchyk 2008). Ukraine, however, has only recently begun a difficult road toward democratic consolidation (D’Anieri 2007b; Flikke 2008). The purpose of presenting the features of an authoritarian country versus a country moving toward democratic consolidation is also to highlight the challenge to democracy-assistance donors that these two countries create and to shed light on the ways in which the political context and relations between government the Polish government and each of the recipient governments affect the selection of Polish assistance strategies. Findings

20 Social scientists acknowledge the role of international networks in civil society building, but there are not many studies that address this topic empirically (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997, Tarrow 1998 and 2005); and there is almost no research on civil society assistance networks composed of domestic civil society groups and neighbor-based democracy assistance providers.
from such a comparison should make the assessment of the Polish democracy assistance more plausible.

The research findings are based on fieldwork conducted in the summer of 2008. The study relies on interviewing those actors that have had the most involvement with the process of democracy assistance in Poland. Drawing a sample that includes the most important political players, who have participated in this work—Polish governmental elites and representatives of Polish non-governmental organizations—allows avoiding selection bias in research (Tansey 2007, 766-9). Specifically, the dissertation relies on information and opinions expressed in interviews with (1) representatives of the Department of Development Co-operation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who manage Polish aid; (2) staff members of Polish NGOs responsible for establishing policy guidelines and administering projects; and (3) representatives of the Zagranica Group, which is an association of Polish non-governmental organizations involved in the cross-border work.

The purpose of these interviews was to gather first-hand information and to go beyond the images, official documents, and NGOs’ and government statements. A list of questions was composed in order to find out the following: whether democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine is the part of Poland’s foreign policy or the goal of the organization; whether assistance is directed toward specific regions in recipient countries; what the aims of the projects have been; and why there are programs targeting civil society in the recipient country. Respondents were asked about their evaluation of Poland’s assistance programs for NGO development and civil society in Belarus and Ukraine, as well as about any obstacles that impeded the successful implementation of project. All interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility and for new questions to be brought up during the interview as a result of what the interviewee said.
In addition to employing in-depth interviews, research questions are answered using literature collected during the meetings with interviewees. This material, which includes newsletters, journals, publications, reports, internal memoranda of donors, project documents, and evaluations, provides additional background on donors’ and their partners’ profiles and activities, and allows for a better perspective on their projects over time. Based on gathered materials, an in-depth analysis is possible through tracing networks (relationships among donors and recipients), and by demonstrating how these networks function, as well as what strategies Polish NGOs use to disseminate democratic ideas and practices.

The dissertation is organized as follows: Chapter 2 takes a closer look at the political situation in Ukraine and Belarus, in order to understand factors behind Belarus’s failure to democratize and Ukraine’s transitions to democracy and problems with its democratic consolidation. Such an investigation lays out a basis for analyzing whether Polish democracy assistance to these two countries is tailored in accordance with their political situations. Chapter 3 investigates whether the Polish Government’s democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine resembles either of the popular approaches to democracy assistance—political or developmental. The chapter also deals with reasons for and ways of Polish Government engagement in democracy assistance. Chapter 4 traces the origins of Polish NGOs’ engagement into democracy assistance work in the post-communist region. This subdivision presents Polish NGOs as initiators of democracy assistance and their connections with the Solidarity Movement and Western donors. The chapter also analyzes the importance of Polish non-governmental work for Polish democracy assistance efforts and the role of Polish NGOs in shaping Polish Governmental aid. Chapter 5 presents in greater detail how Polish NGOs conceptualize democratization and democratic consolidation and how they go about assisting Belarus and Ukraine—whether
approaches and strategies are different toward countries that are authoritarian, versus those that newly democratic. Such a study lays grounds for the analysis of the possible influence of Polish NGOs’ actions on democratic diffusion in Chapter 6. Using the voices of criticism in the democracy assistance literature as well as opinions of Polish NGOs and Western donors regarding cross-border work, Chapter 6 assesses Polish democracy assistance. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation.
CHAPTER 2

BELARUS' AND UKRAINE'S QUESTS FOR DEMOCRACY

This chapter takes a closer look at the political situation in Ukraine and Belarus since the outset of their independence after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It analyzes Belarus’ backsliding toward the authoritarianism and Ukraine’s democratizing efforts as well as features of their current systems using secondary materials, ratings, the publications collected during fieldwork in Poland as well as the gathered opinions of staff members of Polish NGOs who have been providing democracy assistance through cross-border projects to these countries since the breakdown of the Soviet Union. The aim of this analysis is to understand factors behind Belarus’s failure to democratize and Ukraine’s transitions to democracy and problems with its democratic consolidation. Such investigation lays the groundwork for the analysis as to whether Polish democracy assistance to these countries is tailored to their political situation conducted in subsequent chapters.

In greater detail, this chapter focuses on the situation of civil society in the two countries, because of the crucial relationship between civil society and democratization and democratic consolidation, as well as because of the recent focus of donors on civil society while assisting countries’ struggle for democracy.
Belarus’ Backsliding to Authoritarianism

On August 25, 1991, the independence of the Republic of Belarus was declared, and the end of centuries of foreign control by Poland, Russia, and the Soviet Union came in December 1991. In the 1990 election to the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic’s legislature, Stanislau Shushkevich, Vice-Rector of the Byelorussian State University was elected First Deputy Chairman. Following the August putsch against Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Byelorussian Supreme Soviet Chairman Nikolai Dementei was forced to resign; and Shushkevich replaced him (Hill 2005). Shushkevich served as head of state from 1991 to 1994. Pluralism became more visible—and new political parties and organizations emerged. However, these positive developments were disrupted by the July 1994 election of Alexander Lukashenko as Belarus’s first post-Soviet President, which marked the beginning of the present authoritarian system (Hill 2005).

Lukashenko won Belarus' first presidential elections in 1994 with promises to halt market reforms, fight corruption, and re-establish Soviet-era social guarantees which were simply reasons for popular acquiescence to him (Silitski 2003; Specter 1994). Immediately after taking office, his main goal was to significantly strengthen the power of the Presidency in legislative and executive terms through amendment of the Constitution in 1996. The Constitution notably expanded the powers of the president and finished a short period of fragile Belarusian democracy established after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 (White and Korosteleva 2005).

1 Rudling (2008) divides Belarus’ political evolution into three phases: independence, liberalization, and establishment of democratic national institutions (1991-94); conflict between president and parliament, strengthening of the presidential powers, and weakening of democratic institutions and independence (1994-96); and one-man authoritarian rule (since 1997).

2 Hall (2005) reports that in a referendum on the ballot there was an amended version of the constitution and 78 percent of voters supported the idea of a strong president.
The year 1996 was a deciding moment in the history of the state, creating a super-presidential republic—equipped with all the essential organs of democracy—a parliament, Constitutional Court, political parties of various orientations, and trade unions—but controlled by the president himself (Eke and Kuzio 2000). The current Constitution, as amended in 1996, vests the president with unlimited prerogatives. The Government of the Republic of Belarus in its activity is accountable to the President, and he or she has the right to chair the meetings of the Government; to determine the structure of the Government by appointing and dismissing the deputy Prime Ministers, ministers and other members of the Government and to declare any Government regulation null and void (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994, Art. 84).

The 1996 referendum also replaced the unicameral Supreme Council with a much weaker bicameral legislature. It consists of a sixty-four-seat upper house, the Council of the Republic (with fifty-six seats elected by regional councils and eight appointed by the President) as well as a 110-seat House of Representatives popularly elected for four years on the basis of single-member districts (Hill 2005; Silitski 2005). Although the Parliament holds the legislative power, the functions of the parliament are also closely connected with the President’s administration. The Constitution severely restricts the legislative powers of the National Assembly, and gives priority to decrees and orders signed by the President. Therefore, the Parliament is practically a rubber stamp mechanically endorsing decisions of the President. The President decides on the dissolution of the Parliament and may also take the decision to terminate the powers of both chambers of Parliament (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994, Art. 93). The Constitution gives the President control not only over the government and the legislative process but also over courts, including the Constitutional Tribunal, and other states bodies (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994, Art. 84).
The President is elected for five-year terms, and there are no term limits (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994, Art. 81). According to the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Council of Europe, the electoral regulations do not guarantee free and democratic elections. Both the presidential elections of 2001 and 2006, in which Lukashenko was reelected, were claimed to be undemocratic by the international community. Moreover, presidential elections held in 2006 were accompanied by widespread violence, intimidation, and government repression (OSCE/ODIHR 2001 and 2006; Padhol and Marples 2005). Consolidation of absolute presidential rule in Belarus has eliminated the possibility for meaningful electoral contestation. The most recent parliamentary elections took place in October 2004. According to the Central Election and National Referendum Commission of Belarus (2006), all of the declared winners were pro-government and supported the president.

The absolute authority of the president spreads over all institutions of power (White and Korosteleva 2005). Since 1994, all levels of local government have been united into a single system of state authority. Lukashenko abolished the autonomy of local governments by having heads of regional administrations appointed by and subordinate to the president (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994, Art. 119). Local elections held on January 14, 2007, took place without meaningful competition or genuine choice. Opposition candidates faced obstacles in registering their candidacy, and authorities warned some that electoral participation put their jobs in danger.

Lukashenko has no party affiliation, and political parties play a negligible role in the political process. In fact, they have been deprived the chance to participate in the official political system (Korosteleva 2003). As of 2007, a total of fourteen political parties had

---

3 Nearly 1,700 local governments exist, subdivided into three levels: regional (voblast), district (raion), and village or (in urban areas) township (Silitski 2008).
4 For more information see reports by the Belarusian Helsinki Committee at http://www.belhelcom.org/?q=en.
registered in Belarus: seven pro-president, one neutral, and six opposition. Several parties, such as the Belarusian Social Democratic Party and the Party of Freedom and Progress, lack official registration. Recently, the government moved to restrict further the activities of political parties by closing down regional party branches and de-registering several parties. For example, the authorities closed down two small parties, the Belarusian Environmental Party (BEZ) and a women’s party, Nadzeya (Hope), for the failure of both to comply with registration requirements—that is, insufficient membership and lack of the required number of regional branches. The Belarusian Party of Communists, a major opposition party, was suspended for six months in August 2007 for similar reasons (Silitski 2008).

Lukashenko’s regime also is claimed to be undemocratic, because the President uses military and police to stabilize the regime (Lindner 2007). There is no political space for the real opposition (Marples and Padhol 2002). By strengthening power of presidency, the 1996 constitutional referendum eliminated all meaningful political competition and evicted the opposition from the decision-making process. Since then, the opposition has had no opportunities to present its views in parliament or in other state institutions, because of failure to be elected. Opponents of Lukashenko also are deprived of access to state television and radio. As a result, their contact with society is limited. Opposition leaders take efforts to unite the parties and NGO groups, for which they are subjected to repression, but are still unable to form a credible alternative to Lukashenko (Marples and Padhol 2002). A more detailed account of the Belarusian regime’s strategies to repress civil society will follow.

Another symptom of Belarusian authoritarianism is an attempt of the Belarusian authorities to seize control over economy. Today’s Belarusian economy is highly centralized and controlled by the state, with the private sector generating only about 25 percent of GDP
Since the Belarusian judicial system is entirely dependent on the president and his administration, Lukashenko has used the subordinated legal system (just as in the case of actions against civil society) as a tool aimed against both public and private companies, making the private sector very weak.\(^5\)

Belarus’s unreformed and extensively bureaucratized economy experienced significant economic growth, as reflected by the GDP, for most of the last decade; but the economy performed strongly owing to a financial upturn in countries traditionally importing Belarusian goods, and generous discounts on energy prices provided by Russia. Belarus, which does not have its own sources of crude oil and natural gas and is primarily dependent on Russian energy sources, benefited from a rise in oil prices. This was possible thanks to the fact that Russia has sold to Belarus oil at lower prices (60 percent below the world price), while Belarus sold petroleum products to the EU at market prices (Gromadzki and Veselý 2006, 13). However, the "energy war" between these two countries throughout the winter of 2006-2007 shook the prospect of long-term stability for Lukashenko's regime, since socio-economic benefits are source of support for Lukashenko.\(^6\)

According to Marples’ (2006) findings, economic stability proposed by the regime of Lukashenko may be more important than many opportunities offered by democracy, because Belarusians believe that they have been “protected” from dramatic changes that Russia

---

\(^5\) Corruption is widespread in Belarus. Transparency International publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and classifies countries of according to "the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians." Scores range from 1 to 10, and a higher score means less corruption. Belarus was ranked 150 out of 180 countries surveyed in Transparency International 2007 Corruption Perceptions Index. It has been assigned the rating of 2.1 (Transparency International 2007).

\(^6\) The winter of 2006/2007 brought the Russia-Belarus energy crisis, with a short-term oil cut off to Belarus in January 2007. The Russian Government made a decision to raise energy prices and develop market-based relations with Belarus. The dispute ended with a deal allowing the Russian gas monopoly Gazprom to purchase a 50 percent stake in Beltransgaz—the Belarusian key gas distribution and transportation network—in exchange for a five-year-long transition to European-level energy prices for Belarus (Silitski 2008). Lindner (2007) is in the opinion, that the days when transactions with Russia were bringing the Belarusian economy huge profits are gone. Realizing this, in May 2007, the government began to look for some savings by abolishing the wide-scale system of social privileges and subsidies, such as free public transport for students and medical subsidies for pensioners.
experienced, such as shock therapy, the presence of oligarchs, mass privatization, and high prices for housing, heating, and food. One Polish NGO activists, Pawel Kazanecki (2008), observed that democracy sometimes has a negative connotation in the post-communist countries, since it is associated with poverty, queues, lack of food, and corruption during Gorbachev’s perestroika, simply what the Poles went through under Jaruzelski.

Another focal characteristic of Lukashenko’s regime is government control over media in Belarus. Article 33 of the Belarusian Constitution (1996) declares that “everyone is guaranteed freedom of thoughts and beliefs and their free expression,” and the media law also guarantees these rights; but in practice the Lukashenko regime systematically curtails media freedom. Media outlets are being silenced by repressive laws and licensing rules, arbitrary closure, discriminatory pricing for print and distribution, and systematic harassment of journalists. The government generously supports the state-owned media. While more than two-thirds of periodicals are private, the state-owned press heavily dominates the information field in terms of copies distributed; the circulation of independent newspapers and magazines is very small in comparison with the government media (Freedom House 2008a; Taras 2007). As a result, most Belarusians do not have access to independent newspapers; and many are unaware of their existence (Taras 2007, 61).

The state-controlled media play a key role in shaping the public’s opinion and political views, just as during the Soviet era; and poor access to independent or alternative sources of information makes people vulnerable to government’s propaganda (Usau 2007b). The purpose of the Belarusian government’s propaganda also is to provide assurance for the Belarusian regime through promoting the national (government’s) ideology, and strengthening the personal popularity of the President (Marples 2006). Such propaganda creates an impression that there is
no distinction between the president and the state, which helps rally voters around the President as well as refining the image of Lukashenko (Usau 2007b, 40-41).

The ideology created by Lukashenko recalls that of Soviet times and is based on the concepts of “friends and foes,” political and social myths, and views of the national history (Usau 2007b, 40-41). Lukashenko is presented as the father of the nation, irreplaceable, and the guarantor of stability. Just as in Russia, there is the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) as the pivotal event in the history of Belarus. Moreover, sports play the same role as in totalitarian countries of the twentieth century. Belarusian authorities use sports as a means of propaganda, because sport inspires patriotism and loyalty to the state that. Whereas the authorities under-finance culture and humanities, sports is well-funded (Pankaviec 2007, 27).

Indoctrination has been intensive at schools, colleges and universities (Šałajeva 2007). Belarusian students receive twisted facts about the history and current situation. The state ideology course was introduced into school in 2003. According to official history and ideology textbooks, Belarus has been a buffer for a long period in its history, protecting the Eastern Russian Slavic civilizations from aggression and attacks from the West (Usau 2007b, 41). The regime also stepped up its control over the educational system; and the culmination came in July 2004 with the shutting down of the European Humanities University that provided Western-style higher education (Šałajeva 2007).

Similarly to the Soviet times, Belarusian authorities deliberately isolate their country from Western influence. There are attempts to consolidate Belarusian society by disseminating opinion that Belarus is exposed to foreign conspiracy. Lukashenko and his staff are looking for external enemies who, just as in Soviet times, are the United States and NATO, now with its allies Poland and Lithuania, the West as a whole, and the EU. As expressed in Lukashenko’s
interview by representatives of the mass media from the People’s Republic of China on November 28, 2005, Belarusian foreign policy priorities are Russia, the People's Republic of China, Arab countries, and the Middle East. Russia, especially, exercises more influence than other countries over Belarus not only for historical and cultural reasons but also political ones (Marples 2006). Since Alexander Lukashenko’s election to the presidency in 1994, Belarus has been oriented toward Russia and the expansion of existing economic links to Russia through initiatives aimed at bilateral integration within the Union of Belarus and Russia created in 1997 (Rontoyanni 2005). Russia also uses its leverage to influence internal matters (Maksymiuk 2003; Rontoyanni 2005; Wallander 2004).

Lukashenko’s regime tries to convince Belarusian citizens that any “color revolution” would not improve their lives. During an annual address to the country's National Assembly on April 19, 2005 President Lukashenko said categorically that he opposes democratic changes that are pleasing the West. Referring to the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia, the 2004 Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and the 2005 Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan, Lukashenko said that no such option is feasible in Belarus: all those regime changes were in fact not revolutions but “they are banditry under the guise of democracy” and that the limit of such revolutions was fully exhausted by the Belarusian people in the past century (Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 2005, 14; Maksymiuk 2005a).

In order to ensure political loyalty to the regime, the government has established a propaganda and ideology system that penetrates the society. All people who work in the state administration must also pass ideology tests before being appointed a position. The ideology

---

7 The text of the interview is available at the official website of the President of Belarus, http://president.gov.by/en/
8 Belarusians show a high degree of russification, and Russian language is a preferred tongue of everyday communication (Eke and Kuzio 2000). About the Russian factor in the development of Belarusian culture, see Yekadumaw (2003).
offices and departments are headed by so-called “ideology workers” (Usau 2007, 43). Those workers, however, regularly participate in seminars and workshops organized by the Management Academy of the President—the major training center—so that they stay informed about changes in the official position of the Government.

Lukashenko holds the Soviet stereotype that the Belarusian identity, especially language, is something secondary, temporary, additional, and transitional (Dynko 2007, 56). Upon gaining independence there were some measures taken to build a distinct Belarusian identity: the Soviet symbols were replaced in favor of a white-red-white flag and a coat-of-arms depicting a knight in horseback; and Lukashenko declared Belarusian to be the state language (Hill 2005; Ioffe 2003). However, after the election of Lukashenko as a President in July 1994, nation-building went into reverse (Eke and Kuzio 2000; Zaprudnik 2003). One of Lukashenko’s first acts upon coming to power was to replace Belarusian national symbols, which included the Grand Duchy’s of Lithuania coat of arms, with Soviet Belarusian ones, without the communist hammer and sickle.9

Whereas the Belarusian language is not employed in politics, it did dominate in speeches, songs and signs during the protests in the wake of the 2006 election (Dynko 2007, 56). The Belarusian language is also frequently used by oppositionists and young people, thus the fate of the Belarusian language and culture seem to be inseparable from the fate of democracy (Dynko 2007, 58). Such an argument corresponds with scholars’ analyses of Belarusian national identity (Eke and Kuzio 2000; Ioffe 2003; Jocelyn 1998). Eke and Kuzio (2000) in their analysis of failures of democratization in Belarus distinguish lack of national identity as a factor that

---

9 According to Central Election and National Referendum Commission of Belarus (1995), referendum results show that 83 percent of people voted to recognize Russian as a second state language; and also 83 percent supported the idea of modified versions of the Soviet-era flag. However, it is questionable whether this referendum was free and fair.
prevents Belarus from having democracy. Jocelyn (1998, 73-93) argues that in Belarus “national consciousness is a highly problematic concept,” and adds that “Belarusian national identity is fragmented, and its roots lead in different directions.” Throughout the history of Belarus, there were many efforts to destroy Belarusian society, its sense of statehood, and cultures; and as a result no single Belarusian identity has ever had a chance to develop (Ioffe 2003). During the Soviet period, while there was a strong Ukrainian identity, the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had a much weaker identity and thus was less prepared for independence than Ukraine (Stent 2007).

Taking into account features of the Belarusian regime presented above, such as the heavy-handed treatment of the opposition, disregard for democratic institutions and procedures, control over the economy, growing reliance on the police and special forces, efforts to destroy nascent civil society, and violations of civil liberties and human rights of the Belarusian people, who classify Belarus as an authoritarian country. This movement away from democracy to authoritarianism caused the European Union and the United States to label Belarus as a “Europe’s last dictatorship” or an “outpost of tyranny” (Garnett and Legvold 1999; Marples 2005). MacMahon (1997, 129) classifies this kind of the phenomenon in post-Soviet Belarusian politics as “Lukashenkim.”

10 Eke and Kuzio (2000) draw on the definition of Smith (1991, 9), which involves some sense of a political community, some common institutions, a single code of rights and duties, an economic and a social space with clearly demarcated boundaries with which the citizens identify and on Parekh’s (1975, 225) definition which adds that national identity refers to a “territorially organized community” or “polity.” Also, Linz and Stepan (1978, 62-65) refer to national identity as an important factor contributing to democratization; but at the same time the authors point out that cultural and linguistic nationalism in multinational states makes the stability of democracy less likely to happen.

11 US president George W. Bush included Belarus in his “Axis of Evil,” while Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, in her Senate hearings prior to her confirmation as Secretary of State in January 2005, included Belarus as the sole European country among countries such as Cuba, Myanmar, and Zimbabwe in a list of “outposts of tyranny” (U.S. Senate Committee 2005). When Condoleezza Rice appeared at her Senate confirmation hearings to become Secretary of State she said, “to be sure, in our world there remain outposts of tyranny—and America stands with oppressed people on every continent—in Cuba, and Burma, and North Korea, and Iran, and Belarus, and Zimbabwe.” For many of the “Outposts of Tyranny,” the main concerns are about weapons of mass destruction
Belarus is considered an authoritarian regime not only by scholars but also by international non-governmental organizations that conduct research and advocacy on democracy, such as the Freedom House (FH). The FH ratings take into account political rights and civil liberties, which are basic to democracy according to scholars. Dahl (1989, 233) argues that political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including through the right to vote; compete for public office; and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate. In turn, civil liberties allow for the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state.

According to Freedom House (2009b), Belarus has been considered “Not Free” since 1996. In 2008, its political rights rating was seven and its civil liberties six; and these ratings mean that Belarusian regime is considered extremely oppressive and people experience severely restricted rights of expression and association.

and support for terrorist organizations. However with Belarus, the United States seems primarily concerned about the authoritarian rule and lack of human rights. Although relations with Belarus are frosty, it remains one of only two "Outposts of Tyranny" (along with Zimbabwe) to still maintain official diplomatic relations with the United States.

12 Freedom House rates countries on political rights and civil liberties (1 being most liberal). According to this ranking, political rights enable people to participate freely in the political process, including through the right to vote, compete for public office, and elect representatives who have a decisive impact on public policies and are accountable to the electorate. The political rights questions are grouped into three subcategories: Electoral Process, Political Pluralism and Participation, and Functioning of Government. In turn, civil liberties allow for the freedom of expression and belief, associational and organizational rights, rule of law, and personal autonomy without interference from the state. The FH rating process is based on a checklist of questions. Then, Freedom House assigns numerical rating to each country and territory —on a scale of 1 to 7—for political rights and analogous ratings for civil liberties. A rating of 1 indicates the highest degree of freedom and 7 the lowest level of freedom. Those countries whose ratings averaging 1.0 to 2.5 are considered Free, from 3.0 to 5.0 Partly Free, and from 5.5 to 7.0 Not Free (Freedom House 2009a).
Lukashenko’s War Against Civil Society

Belarus is seen as one of the countries of the post-communist world in which a Soviet model of the cooperation between state and society is preserved (Howard 2003, Żejmis 2003). Similarly to state-socialist regimes, the Belarusian Government uses its repressive capacity and institutional and ideological control over everyday lives of citizens (Ekiert 1996). From the beginning, the attacks of Lukashenko’s regime were aimed to destroy civil society; and primary targets of the Belarusian regime are non-governmental organizations (Lenzi 2002).

The Belarusian government sends the signal that it is not interested in the development of organizations independent from the state and their activities in the third sector (Zhuchkov 2004). Government officials in Belarus have the right to control fully and monitor the work of local NGOs. Whereas between 1994 and 1996, the number of socially and democratically oriented NGOs grew dramatically, circumstances have changed since Lukashenko was elected as a President (Wilde 2002). Some of the organizations that have been persecuted include: the Youth Movement for a Democratic and European Belarus Zubr (Bison) or Malady Front (Young Front). Also persecuted were human rights NGOs, and other organizations, such as the well known Vyasna (Spring); Hrodna-based Ratusha (Town Hall), headed for a long time by opposition candidate Alexander Milinkevich; Civil Initiatives of Homel; Vezhna from Brest; the Association of Belarusian Students; the Belarusian Helsinki Committee founded in 1995; and many more (Sannikov and Kuley 2006). Those civic organizations have been closed down or condemned to financial ruin using a variety of different methods, including politically motivated fines for holding unauthorized seminars or distributing non-registered information materials.
The regime created a number of regulations against non-governmental organizations. The Belarusian Government also has full rights to harass existing NGOs by denying or delaying the registration that is required by the re-registration law (Conkievich 2002; Lipskaya 2000). A civic organization is required at registration to provide the personal information of all members. Between 1 February and 1 July 1999, the re-registration of the entire third sector took place; and many NGOs and political parties were forced to cease their official activities. During this process, 211 organizations were refused registration (Zhuchkov 2004).

Due to the government fears about the role played by the independent civic sector in the democratic, so-called “color revolutions” in Georgia and Ukraine, the Belarusian Government launched another major campaign to liquidate NGOs in 2003/2004. The regime forced almost one hundred NGOs to close down or more than one hundred decided to self-liquidate themselves in 2003 and 2004 (Chernov 2008). The most widespread reason for liquidations was the failure to obtain a legal address or a lease, and to meet high and impossible requirements demanded by law regarding rents.

While denying registration to independent groups, the government continues to create its own special interest organizations that the regime fully and directly controls. According to the Ministry of Justice of Belarus, as of 1 January, 2009, as many as fifteen political parties; thirty-six trade unions; 2221 NGOs (224 international, 702 republican, and 1295 local); twenty-two NGO unions (associations); seventy-five foundations (eight international, three republican, sixty-four local) were on the register in the Republic of Belarus.\textsuperscript{13} Most of these organizations represented non-politically oriented NGOs loyal to the regime. The spectrum of the Belarusian NGOs’ activities is very broad. Most of them focus on education, and issues of youth, children, and veterans, and problems of disabled and women. Some organizations operate in the sphere of

\textsuperscript{13} Information of The Ministry of Justice, available at \url{http://www.minjust.by/struct/ua.htm} and \url{http://en.ngo.by/}
culture and art. The majority of NGOs function in Minsk and the Minsk region (Gromadzki and Veselý 2006, 14).

The Belarusian Government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) enjoy generous support by the government, office space, and preferential presidential attention. These entities are excluded from many repressive regulations applied to independent organizations. Two well-known organizations that receive this preferential status are the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) and the Belarusian Union of Women (Wilde 2002). BRSM is a replica of the Soviet-era Komsomol, imitates its predecessor in structure and ideology, and serves as a tool to instill loyalty among the younger generation. BRSM tries to attract members with privileged university admission and various discounts (Charter 97 2007; Usau 2007).

These Government-controlled entities also serve two purposes. First, by means of GONGOs, authorities coopt civil society, just as under communism. The creation of GONGOs demonstrates that Lukashenko wants to create an uncivil society, in which behavior and opinions of their members are regulated and controlled by the regime (Raik 2006, 172). Second, through the network of Government-controlled entities, authorities seek to get control over authentic NGOs as well as the activities of citizens.

The Belarusian authorities still tolerate civil society organizations as long as they do not have a significant impact on public sentiments. However, the authorities closely monitor the situation to make sure that the influence of NGOs does not increase (Čavusau 2007, 9). Such a hostile environment in Belarus affects public image of independent NGOs and threatens their existence. These few organizations that still function today have lost many of its members and volunteers. The NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia reports on the strength and viability of NGO sectors in each country in the region and demonstrates that the
overall conditions of the NGO sector are worse than in other countries of the region (USAID 2007). Because of the hostile environment in which Belarusian organizations operate, they have problems with defining their missions, strategic planning, management structure, financing staff, modernization of office equipment, and so forth, as the NGO Sustainability Index reports. Organizations also suffer from a poor administrative and communication skill base.

Financial viability also remains the weakest aspect of “sustainability.” Domestic funding sources are almost non-existent. A weak private business community in Belarus supports the NGOs, but funds are scarce mainly due to government disapproval and sanctions against such actions. Belarusian NGOs receive financial and technical support from foreign donors, membership fees, and through partnership with foreign NGOs for specific projects. Żejmis (2003, 279) reports that Belarusian civil society depends substantially on foreign funding—eighty percent of the financing for organizations in Belarus has been raised from foreign foundations, associations and private companies.

However, external donors face many problems in Belarus. First, it is difficult for donors to distinguish which organizations are truly independent women’s NGOs, for example (Sannikov and Kuley 2006). Second, the Belarusian Government toughened the access to international assistance as an attempt to limit the independence of Belarusian organizations. In fact, since 1997 when Lukaszenko issued a decree regulating foreign aid for NGOs, from year to year it has been more difficult to support civil society in Belarus. Lukashenko also uses direct methods of punishing pro-democratic social activists for their cooperation with external donors by influencing family members and the activists’ personal lives, threatened by dismissal from workplace, schools etc. (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008).
In 2001, Lukashenko issued a presidential decree number 8 which limited the conditions on receiving aid and restricts circumstances for special-purpose use of foreign aid. Many Belarusian organizations were forced to end their cooperation with foreign partners and donors, putting them in a very difficult financial situation (Zhuchkov 2004). Moreover, Lukashenko authorized almost every governmental body to carry out control of the use of foreign aid received. In addition to the State Control Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Taxes and Charges, the State Technical Committee, the Administrative Department of the President, the right to control has been also vested in the Committee of State Security (KGB) since December 12, 2003 (NGO.by 2003). Later, another decree prohibited organizations and individuals from receiving and using assistance for preparing and conducting elections, referenda gatherings, rallies, street marches, demonstrations, picketing, strikes, as well as for producing and distributing campaign materials and other forms of mass politicking among the population (Gershman and Allen 2006; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law online library 2006).14

The NGOs’ record of influencing public policy is almost nil, and Belarusian NGOs have no availability to communicate their messages through the media to the broader public (Zhuchkov 2004). Also, because of this difficult access to media, the ability to reach people and to expand organizational memberships is a problem for Belarusian independent organizations. Moreover, as the result of negative reporting in the Government-controlled media, a positive public image of NGOs, including a broad understanding and appreciation of the role that NGOs play in society, is also hampered (USAID 2007). The public image of the NGO sector in Belarus is low, since many perceive these entities to be interconnected with the opposition to the

14 Čavusau (2007, 12) reports that KGB Chief Ściapan Sucharenka accused the United States of using funds of international and foreign NGOs to form and train special groups for staging street protests in Belarus, and non-registered opposition groups *Malady Front* and *Zubr* were expected to play leading roles in protests.
regime—which is dangerous. Any affiliation with independent organizations brings risk, especially since the Criminal Code of the Republic of Belarus (Article 193.1) foresees criminal penalties for activities carried out by non-registered organizations or associations (Human Rights House Network 2009).

The question arises why does Lukashenko not like NGOs? Undoubtedly, these repressions against independent organizations have been meant to consolidate Lukashenko’s power but also show that the Belarusian authorities acknowledge the potential of civil society groups for bringing down the regime during the colored revolutions in the post-communist region. Therefore, the Belarusian Government tries to discourage NGOs from involvement in politics, so that “there will be no rose, orange, or even banana revolution” in Belarus (Gershman and Allen 2006, 38).

The Belarusian Government’s battle with civil society goes beyond non-governmental organizations. The authorities target groups that had been involved in election campaigns and election observation, those linked to political parties, human rights activists, and journalists (Čavusau 2007, 9). The Law on Mass Events in the Republic of Belarus seriously restricts the freedom of assembly and freedom of expression (Sannikov and Kuley 2006). Lukashenko’s regime classifies any activities uncontrolled by authorities as anti-state. This means that not only political leaders and their activists, NGOs and journalists, but also ordinary people are seen by authorities as opposition forces and have been subject to criminal and administrative persecution for participation in demonstrations. For example, many teachers were fired because of their political activity in 2006 (Šałajeva 2007).

The regime had become progressively more repressive towards independent journalists. The Belarusian government closed down many independent newspapers, and these measures
were accompanied by large-scale harassment of journalists. The Committee to Protect Journalists lists Belarus as one of the most dangerous places for journalists and as one of the most censored countries in the world. Independent journalists have faced arbitrary lawsuits under Criminal Code Article 367 (slander against the president), Article 368 (insulting the president), and Article 369 (insulting government officials) (Council of Europe 2008). These articles stipulate large fines and prison sentences for those found guilty. For example, during the week of protests following Lukashenko’s reelection for a third consecutive presidential term in March 2006, in an unprecedented crackdown, authorities arrested more than forty journalists who were sentenced to jail up to fifteen days. Radio station workers operate in almost as difficult conditions as newspaper journalists. In contrast, state media journalists are well-paid and socially secure as long as they do not write something that may put their career and personal life, as well as privileges, at risk (Taras 2007, 60-62).

Also vulnerable to the Lukashenko regime are trade unions. Traditionally, trade unions seek better conditions and living standards for their members; but in Belarus the independent trade unions also focus on human rights defense. Independent unions have made efforts to expand their influence and have formed the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP) as an alternative to the state trade union center (Buchvostau 2007). In response, Lukashenko sought to restrict the rights of trade unions affiliated with the BKDP by using police and military forces to disperse workers’ demonstrations, intervening in trade union conferences, and making an attempt to bring these groups under the government’s control. Although

---

According to Taras (2007, 59) in 2005, the Ministry of Information closed down newspapers, such as Navinki and Molodyozhny Prospekt. In 2006 the Belarusian Supreme Economic Court in 2006 ordered the closure of the Zhoda weekly, the newspaper of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party. Financial constraints forced other newspapers, such as Delovaya Gazeta and Salidarnaśč, to stop publishing.

Lukashenko’s large-scale campaign against independent trade unions weakened them (e.g. membership fell drastically), however he failed to eliminate them completely. The BKDP continues to function and relies on international support (Buchvostau 2007, 23).

The situation of independent women’s organizations is similar to that of other non-governmental organizations. Such organizations as the Belarusian Organization of Working Women, the Women’s Independent Democratic Movement, the Belarusian Women’s League, and the Belarusian Association of Young Christian Women are struggling for survival and find it very difficult to work together. Nevertheless despite all impediment and repression they continue to exist and work, because they have one thing in common—each is too small to have a real impact on the women’s political, economic and social situation in the country (Vidanava 2007, 38).

Repression also reached Polish minorities living in Belarus. In Brest, located at the border with Poland, along with Belarusian organizations, there are many organizations representing the Polish and Ukrainian minorities. For example, nationally, there is the organization of Polish minorities in Belarus called the Union of Poles (ZPB), established in 1990. Through its activity, diversity, and innovative action the Union could add a positive element to the third sector in Belarus; thus, Belarusian authorities took offensive actions against ZPB. In 2005, the Belarusian Government cracked down on the Union and its activities, accusing Poland and the EU of trying to create an uprising similar to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. The Belarusian authorities do not officially recognize the organization and its leader Anzhelika Borys, who openly criticizes Lukashenko’s regime (Poczobut 2007). Since 2005, all activities, including meetings and congresses of the union have been regarded as illegal (RFE/RL News 2009). Some Belarusians are frightened to participate in projects organized with Polish money,
because according to Belarusian propaganda, the Poles are agents of NATO and the United States and Poland is one of the main enemies to Belarus (Zagranica Group 2003).

The Belarusian Government’s attitude toward the Roman Catholic Church is also determined by “the Polish syndrome” (Uładamirski 2007). The Roman Catholic Church, which represents the largest religion in Belarus (the largest minority group), has a shortage of Belarusian priests because there was no place where they could be trained; and those priests who come to Belarus are often denied visa extensions by the Belarus Government. At the end of 2006, seven Polish Catholic priests and five nuns were forced out of Belarus (Uładamirski 2007, 26). The authorities have also harassed other religious minority groups, such as Protestants, suspecting them of being instruments of Western influence in Belarus.

To conclude, one may argue that the Belarusian Government’s action against civil society, which, as shown in this analysis, entails non-governmental organizations, trade unions, women’s groups, dissident groups, academics, students, independent media, minority groups and so forth, demonstrate that Lukashenko’s regime is afraid of organized groups and independent initiatives, and instead prefers to deal with atomized society (Lindner 2007; Zejmis 2003).

**Signs of Hope for Democratization in Belarus**

Despite all of these negative tendencies in Belarus, one can observe that civil society sustains its activity and acts against Lukashenko’s regime. Some of those illegal (unregistered) organizations, which were closed down by the authorities, such as Grodno-based Ratusha, led by presidential candidate Alexander Milinkievičh, did not cease their operation (Komorowska and Kuzawińska 2004, 60-62). Organizations that operate without official approval define
themselves in opposition to the government and are working underground (Gromadzki and Veselý 2006, 14). Even in such hard conditions, in Milinkievich’s opinion, they pursue the process of de-communization, de-sovietization, Europeanization and democratization, thus these NGOs are the future democratic elite of Belarus (Komorowska and Kuzawińska 2004, 60-62).

The illegal (unregistered) NGOs are sometimes personally linked with the political opposition, because many politicians seem to use nongovernmental activism when other political channels are closed. For this reason, some organizations are directly involved with politics. Most of the participants in the Opposition Congress that was held in Minsk on October 1 and 2, 2005 were drawn from NGOs. Just after this congress of democratic forces, the Ministry of Justice started collecting data on members of NGOs who took part.17 It is strongly suspected that such information was used by the security forces to complete lists of people to be arrested on the eve of the March 19, 2006 presidential election (Sannikov and Kuley 2006).

Undoubtedly, illegal NGOs engaging in oppositionist activities can be a useful and even indispensable force in the political process focusing on the democratization of Belarus, since these organizations play a key role in the fight against the regime of Lukashenko. Developments accompanying the recent presidential elections can be appreciated as an encouraging step toward change in Belarus. During the preparation for the presidential election and afterwards, coordination and cooperation between different groups increased substantially. In the Fall of 2005, the Congress of Democratic Forces elected Alexander Milinkevich as the candidate to run in the presidential elections in March 2006.

On March 19, 2006, presidential elections were held in Belarus. Beforehand, state authorities exerted massive pressure on the democratic opposition and civil society by arresting

---

17 Chernov (2008) reports that 68 and 26 organizations were closed down by the decision of courts in 2005 and 2007, respectively (There is no data for 2006).
key leaders and activists, especially those taking part in “For Freedom” campaign, depriving organizational structures of financial resources, as well as creating obstacles for these antagonists to reach Belarusian society at large (Forbrig, Marples and Demeš 2006). The election results granted an overwhelming victory (83 percent) to Lukashenko, compared with 6 percent for United Democratic Forces (UDF) leader Alexander Milinkevich, 4 percent for pro-presidential leader Siarhej Hajdukevich, and 2 percent for the Belarusian Social Democratic Party leader Alexander Kazulin (Central Election and National Referendum Commission of Belarus 2006). Lukashenko won a third term; but the OSCE declared that the elections were neither free nor fair and that the voting did not meet democratic standards. Alexander Kazulin’s criticism of Lukashenko in media led to his imprisonment for organizing mass disorder; but together with other Belarusian political prisoners, he was released by the Belarusian Government in August 2008. 18

The elections provoked the largest public protests since Lukashenko took the power in 1994, bringing 10,000 to 15,000 activists onto Minsk’s October Square on Election Day (BBC News 2006; Freedom House 2008a). The wave of popular protests against the rigged elections lasted for a week after they were held. Peaceful demonstrators withstood both threats of violence by the regime and icy temperatures. Milinkevich (2006, 9) reports, himself:

…the tens of thousands of ordinary Belarusians that came out into the freezing streets of Minsk sent a message not only to the regime but to the whole country and the wider world. The content of that message is clear and unambiguous: We refuse to be lied to! We demand to be free! We are no more afraid!

Hundreds of democratic leaders and civil activists have faced arrests, interrogations and prison sentences or heavy fines; and the repression has been gradually beginning to affect a growing number of Belarusian citizens, rather than just isolated and small groups of activists.

---

During the crackdown, hundreds were insulted; abused; imprisoned; fired from jobs (women are especially vulnerable because they tend to work more in professions controlled by the state, such as schools and hospitals), and expelled from universities (Vidanava 2007, 35). The majority of young people who took part in the 2006 mass protests emigrated.19

During the 2006 election, it had become clear that society was gradually expanding and becoming capable of organizing nationwide campaigns (Lindner 2007). The demonstrations showed that civil society was visibly engaged in the struggle for democracy in Belarus, and thus creating prospects for democratization.

However, despite those positive signs, scholars and practitioners acknowledge the weakness of opposition forces, resulting mainly from the extremely difficult conditions of operation. Gromadzki and Veselý (2006; 17-19) find significant differences between the situation of Ukrainian opposition before the Orange Revolution, and the Belarusian counterpart. First, the Belarusian opposition was deprived of participation in the official political system in 1996, and has no representation in parliament. The Ukrainian opposition, however, belonged to the Ukrainian political system; its politicians were members of the Parliament. The leaders of the Orange Coalition had held high office, and they led parties.

Second, opposition forces in Belarus do not have the typical channels of communication with the public, given the movement’s total absence on television and radio and lack of support from business circles. Although, before the Orange Revolution in Ukraine the opposition also had no access to state media, there were private channels; and most of them more or less openly supported Viktor Yushchenko. Part of private business in Ukraine supported "Our Ukraine."

---

19 In December 2007, Lukashenko lifted a requirement for citizens to obtain a travel permit before going abroad, effective from the beginning of 2008. At the same time, the government created a database that was expected to include nearly 100,000 people who cannot leave the country (Freedom House 2008a).
Moreover, Yushchenko also was known before 2004 because of his public service and opposition to Kuchma. Thus, the Ukrainian opposition leader was one of the most popular politicians and well-recognized in society. However, Belarusian opposition leaders are less known.

In addition to the overall situation in which the opposition has to operate, there are also internal problems and contradictions that make the opposition forces weak, as was visible during the 2006 Political Campaign. It could be observed that not all representatives of the pro-democracy forces accepted the choice of Milinkievich as the coalition’s common presidential candidate, and some partners became more self-centered and sought to advance their specific interests. Moreover, the oppositional coalition failed to create an attractive picture of Belarus without Lukashenko and was reluctant to admit new members and partner organizations (Karniajenka 2007).

Despite those weaknesses among opposition forces, the 2006 elections demonstrated that civil society is the hope for changes in the country. The opposition did not win, but civil society showed a strong will to resist injustice and election fraud, and to mobilize, for example the “For Freedom” campaign. This positive trend could be further encouraged.

---

20 Marples (2006) poses the question why the opposition was not united and why another opposition candidate, Kazulin, decided to oppose Milinkevich. Was his decision made because of party loyalty, personal ambitions, or rivalries with other opposition candidates? It also remains debatable whether Kazulin’s campaign helped or hindered that of Milinkevich. Marples (2006) argues that because the election was held much earlier than anticipated, opposition forces lacked sufficient time to prepare adequately to campaign, visit all areas of the country and unite. He also gives a credit to Kazulin for his bravery and Milinkevich for his growing confidence and the way in which he managed to attract large crowds despite working in exceedingly difficult conditions.

21 Recent development in the Belarusian opposition reported by the ForBelarus.eu (2009) internet portal demonstrates that divisions in opposition went even further.
Ukraine’s Transition to Democracy and Current Problems

*From Ukraine’s Hybrid Regime to Democratic Breakthrough*

Like other post-Soviet countries, Ukraine faced a historically unique challenge to create a state, the rule of law, democracy, a civil society and a market (Linz and Stepan 1996). Former Soviet institutions together with post-Soviet elites created an impediment for reform (Kubicek 2000). When the process of transition began, Ukraine did not have many institutions essential for the successful completion and continuation of this process. As Motyl (1993, 51-2) notes, Ukrainian post-Soviet elites lacked the political, social and economic institutions and resources necessary for the adoption of radical policies. At the same time, the post-Soviet population lacked the social and economic bases that would permit them to survive transformation without hardship and disruption. In terms of these challenges, Ukraine was no different than other successor states; but in terms of the abilities of Ukrainians it was. This section presents a closer view on these abilities to undertake democratic changes during this thirteen-year period between independence and the pacted transition of 2004.

The failed putsch in Moscow in August 1991 encouraged the Ukrainian party elites to declare Ukraine’s independence from the USSR in order to defend its existence (Kuzio 2000b; Nahaylo 1999; Wilson 2002; Zimmer 2006, 277). The Ukrainian independence referendum took place on December 1, 1991 and was presented by the Ukrainian political leadership as a choice between Moscow dominance and Ukrainian independence (Lieven 1999). Ukraine’s voters (90 percent) approved independence from the Soviet Union; and on the same day, the presidential election took place. Ukrainians elected Leonid Kravchuk (head of parliament at this time) to serve as the President of the Republic (Lalpychak 1991).
The transition in Ukraine was very different from that in most of the CEE countries after the 1989 “revolutions.” A traditional split within the party elite—between potential hard-liners and soft-liners did not occur (Zimmer 2006, 275). The Ukrainian opposition movement, Rukh, regionally based in Western Ukraine, was partially co-opted by the ruling elite (Prizel 2002, 368). Unlike roundtable talks, as in Poland, there were no negotiations regarding a new framework for constituting political authority; and Ukrainian political elites did not create bases for the wide-ranging reform (D’Anieri 2007b, 14; Wolczuk 2002, 78).

Ukraine’s paths of development after the collapse of communism, under Kravchuk as well as under Kuchma—could be explained in terms of an aftereffect of the “Leninist legacy” highlighted by political scientists studying post-communist transition. Political, economic and social arrangements stemming from communist times specifically, as Crawford and Lijphart (1995, 179) distinguish, the absence of a successor elite, the persistence of old institutions, and the legacy of the command economy could be observed in Ukraine. Moreover, a culture of corruption and nepotism from the former Communist Party of Ukraine had strong influence on policy making (van Zon 2005a, 12-22).

Soon after gaining independence, new Ukrainian institutions were built very much within the existing institutional framework. Ukraine had a Supreme Rada that had been elected under the Soviet regime in 1990 and remained in office until 1994. A number of existing institutions were either renamed and re-modeled or simply remained as before (Fritz 2007, 116). New forms of government were chosen by the same people; and for a long time, power was held in the

---

22 The distinction between the ‘hardliners’ and the ‘softliners’ of political change is in the seminal work of O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986, 16).
23 Observing different outcomes of transition from communist rule, scholars find that some countries more than others were influenced by communist legacies (Bunce 1999; D’Anieri 2007b; Crawford and Lijphart 1995, 179; and 1997; Geddes 1995; Hanson 1995; Jowitt 1992; Linz and Stepan 1996; McDaniel 1996). Hanson (1995) calls the legacy of communism “the Leninist legacy” and refers to a common ideology hostile to capitalism and democracy; the Communist Party that functioned as an economic, political, and social monopoly; the political culture; social structure; and institutions created under communism that have impacted the choices made by the leaders.

Although the number of political parties grew, and they could be divided according to left-right dimension, their influence remained limited due to low membership. The party with the largest number of members was Communist Party, which also was the largest faction in the 1994-1998 and 1998-2002 parliaments (Kuzio 1997, 8-9). The political scene was rather dominated by various informal networks (Fritz 2007, 117). Moreover, until the mid 1990s, the constitution of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic remained in force, yielding supremacy to the legislature (Markov 1993; Wolczuk 2002; Zimmer 2006, 278). The Parliament had the right to veto executive decrees, the right to override a presidential veto, the right to reject the appointment of key ministers, and the right to dismiss the entire cabinet. The President had no right to dissolve the parliament or call new elections (Constitution of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic 1978, Art. 97-114; Art. 117).

The absence of clear institutional rules, as well the fact that some people were trying to keep the President in check, resulted in constant tensions between the President and Parliament which in turn delayed the adoption of a new constitution and agreement on the fundamental “rules of the game” (Fritz 2007, 116; Wolczuk 2001). As the result of these inter-institutional tensions and lack of clarity with respect to powers and responsibilities of the government, Kravchuk’s administration was unable effectively to deal with the deteriorating economic situation in Ukraine (Fritz 2007, 112-3; Kuzio 1997, 7).

Taking into the account the situation in Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, the Prime Minister from 1992 to 1993 and a candidate from industrial part of Ukraine, during his campaign for the 1994 presidential elections repeatedly emphasized the need for economic reform and the creation
of a strong executive structure, headed by the President, which won him popularity in terms of polls and votes (Kuzio 1997, 99). The 1994 presidential elections resulted in Kuchma’s victory. Shortly after being elected, Kuchma announced an economic reform—privatization and price liberalization as well as fiscal reform were declared as the top priorities (Fritz 2007, 123). However, it became clear that for Kuchma, political reform was regarded as inseparable from economic reform.

Perceiving the Parliament as an obstacle to his consolidation of power, Kuchma issued a decree to strengthen the position of president and place government under his control (D’Anieri 2007b, 81). In 1994, contradicting his electoral promises of decentralization, he issued another decree aimed to subordinate local councils to the president, under the rationale that economic reforms cannot be implemented without political reforms (Fritz 2007, 139; Kuzio 1997, 100). Although Kuchma was in favor of expanding the economic powers of the regions, he was against granting them political autonomy, thus trying to curb the powers of local authorities (Kuzio 1997, 101).

The presidential administration also began discussing proposals for a draft law “On State Power and Local Self Government” which was approved in mid-1995, but could not be implemented because it required constitutional amendments, which in turn required a two-thirds vote in parliament (Kuzio 1997, 101-102). Because of difficulties with obtaining a parliamentary constitutional two-thirds majority to implement this law, Kuchma considered asking Ukrainians for their approval, but Parliament vetoed the decree calling for referendum. In order to avoid impasse, a Constitutional Agreement between the president and those parliamentarians who supported the implementation of the law (240 deputies) was signed (Kuzio 1997, 105).

---

24 Kuzio (1997, 46) reports that Kravchuk also was in favour of the president to be head of state and the executive, but he also emphasized “a policy of harmony” between the Supreme Council and President and warned that Kuchma might demand additional powers.
This Constitutional Agreement was also described as a “little constitution” and moved Ukraine towards a super-presidential system similar to that introduced in Russia by Yeltsin in December 1993 (Wolczuk 2001, 191-6). According to this agreement, until the adoption of new Ukrainian constitution the President had the authority to appoint a government without parliamentary approval; veto parliamentary bills, which could be overridden with a two-thirds parliamentary majority; and local councils at oblast and raion level were abolished and converted into state administrations directly subordinated to the president (their chairmen would answer directly to the President, who had a power to dismiss them) (Kuzio 1997, 108-09; Wolczuk 2001, 1996).

A new constitution was adopted on June 28, 1996; and this document further strengthened the position of the President. According to the Constitution, the President is the head of state with the Cabinet of Ministers subordinated under him as the highest executive body (Constitution of Ukraine 1996, Art. 106). An essential reinforcement of the President’s position was the establishment of a “power vertical” reaching down to the oblast and localities (Constitution of Ukraine 1996, Art. 106; Zimmer 2006, 279). Other significant features of the constitution included the following provisions: the President appoints a Prime Minister following his approval by Parliament; the President appoints members of the cabinet of ministers and chairmen of local state administrations; the President dissolves the legislature; Parliament can override a presidential veto by a two-third majority, and can hold a vote of no confidence in the Cabinet of Ministers by a simple majority (Constitution of Ukraine 1996, Art. 106; Kuzio 1997, 130-131; Wolczuk 2001, 198-204).

Whereas legislative authority was meant to remain with the unicameral Parliament, according to the Constitution, the President had the right to issue economic decrees approved by
his Prime Minister for a three-year period (Constitution of Ukraine 1996, Chapter XV). Because of the power to issue decrees, the Constitution of 1996 reduced the legislative power of Parliament, especially since this power was widely used by Kuchma to regulate many fields of executive power (D’Anieri 2007b; Harasymiw 2002; Protsyk 2004; Wilson 1999; Wolczuk 2002, 256). In 1996, for example, a presidential decree instructed all executive bodies and personnel to execute orders given by the head of the presidential administration and its deputies (Schneider 2005, 79-81).

In addition to formal leverage granted to the President within 1996 Constitutional arrangements, Kuchma used also its informal leverage, which was apparent especially during his second presidency that started in 1999. Because of Kuchma’s strategies to strengthen his position and his employment of many informal practices, Ukraine under Kuchma came to be regarded as a “competitive authoritarian” regime with uncertain prospects for further transition to democracy (Levitsky and Way 2002). Ukraine had a many features of hybrid regime—many attributes of a democracy (institutions, elections) but with authoritarian features, such as widespread clientelism, limited political competition, harassment of the opposition, control of the media, and the existence of opaque elites (D’Anieri 2007b; Fritz 2007; Kuzio 2000; Nahaylo 1999; Wilson 2006; Zimmer 2006).  

Zimmer (2006) and van Zon (2001) argue that Ukraine under Kuchma developed into a neo-patrimonial state with the ruler using public administration for its own interests, and political and economic elites subordinated to him. In such a system, elites were in constant competition

---

25 “Hybrid regimes” have some attributes of democratic political life (regular elections and democratic constitutions), but suffer from serious democratic deficits—including poor representation of citizens’ interests, low levels of political participation beyond voting, frequent abuse of the law by government officials, elections of uncertain legitimacy, very low levels of public confidence in state institutions etc. There are different expressions used to name these countries, representing a different range of regimes, such as semi-democracies, formal democracies, electoral democracies, pseudodemocracies, weak democracies, partial democracies, but the most popular is “semi-authoritarian countries” (For more on such regimes see Carothers 2002; Diamond 2002; Epstein et al. 2006; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Ottaway 2003; Zakaria 2003).
and conflict with one another; and their recruitment for public offices, offering access to resources and opportunities for rent-seeking, depended on personal loyalty based on fear and rewards (Zimmer 2006, 282-87). Such relations based on authority and domination, material incentives and rewards resembled the Soviet style of running politics and confirmed that “communist legacy” in Ukraine was preserved (Kitchelt 2003).

Over time, and especially during his second presidency that started in 1999, Kuchma implemented many features of Soviet political culture, such as return to censorship, use of force and threat which became central aspects of politics in Ukraine. Kuchma’s government became the target of domestic and international criticism for extensive, high-level corruption and the erosion of political rights and civil liberties (Harasymiw 2002; van Zon 2001; Zimmer 2006). Much of Ukrainian politics was occupied with efforts to limit political competition through harassment of the opposition, and control of the media. Ukraine had elections; but until 2006, they were not open, free and fair (OSCE/ODIHR 2005). Clientelism and corruption were behaviors widely accepted or even encouraged by Kuchma’s regime, and served as an instrument of control and power (Darden 2001).

Another feature of Kuchma’s regime was that individuals, not institutions, dominated politics. The network of Kuchma’s followers linked the state administration and Parliament, various political parties, media and economic actors (Bondarenko 2002; Zimmer 2006, 303). During Ukraine’s transition period, similarly to Russia, strong oligarchs emerged. They gained economic wealth through different deals when state regulation was weak and unclear (Fritz 2007, 120; Puglisi 2003; Way 2005a). The most important “opaque” groups which emerged were related to economic interests—they closely intertwined with the ruling class, and thus exerted economic and political dominance in the country. The pro-Kuchma oligarchs were accused of
using government connections to promote a wide range of businesses and industries (Fritz 2007, 110; Nahylo 1999, 499).

However, Kuchma also used linkage with oligarchs to boost his status and political power—partly in exchange for access to state resources—and oligarchs helped to mobilize political support for Kuchma (Åslund 2006; Way 2005a, 134; Wilson 2006, 42). For example in 2002, Kuchma appointed Viktor Medvedchuk, the chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (SDPU) and business oligarch as a head of the presidential administration in order to have increasing control over media. Evidence demonstrating Kuchma’s ability to manipulate the oligarchic group was apparent when transcripts of secret tapes recorded by Mykola Melnychenko (a security guard) in the presidential office were published (Zimmer 2006, 286). This incident revealed Kuchma’s role behind fraud in the 1999 presidential elections (Fritz 2007, 147; Wilson 2006, 51–56).

The expansion of opaque networks into the political sphere included also the Parliament (Fritz 2007, 140; Whitmore 2005). The Verkhovna Rada was strongly used by oligarchs and businessman as oligarchs gained power over some political parties (Bondarenko 2002; Zimmer 2006, 290). Under Kuchma’s regime political parties received low state funding for their electoral campaigns, and insufficient legal rules and a lack of law enforcement encouraged some oligarchs to establish their own parties or “buy” candidates (Zimmer 2006, 291). Thus, political parties as a potentially balancing force in politics remained weak in Ukraine (Fritz 2007, 110).

Despite all of these measures, Kuchma went even further with attempt to strengthen presidential power by means of a referendum in 2000, which he won. Voters supported the presidential powers to dissolve the Parliament, as well as the reduction of the size of the

---

27 Translated “episodes” are available in RFE/RL (2005b).
Parliament, and creation of a second chamber (Central Election Commission of Ukraine 2000; Fritz 2007, 147). However, changes were not implemented because of a scandal over the murder of a journalist, Heorhiy Gongadze, a longtime critic of the regime and a crusader against corruption, since suspicion focused upon Kuchma’s government (D’Anieri 2007b, 92; Wilson 2006).

After a murder of the journalist Gongadze and the release of transcripts of secret tapes made in the president’s office by Melnychenko, Kuchma’s popularity began to have a downward trend (Fritz 2007; Wilson 2006, 51-56). Three months, street demonstrations occurred in Kyiv under the banner “Ukraine without Kuchma” (Karatnycky 2006). These were the first mass democratic demonstrations in Ukraine since independence. These scandals also divided presidential “coalition” and Kuchma’s position was seriously weakened (Fritz 2007, 147).

The most significant change in the political arena was brought by the Parliamentary Election in 2002. This election helped polarize Ukraine’s political landscape. Before the elections, there emerged new political blocs, or coalitions of parties. One was an alliance of previously fragmented right-wing parties united in opposition to Kuchma, called Our Ukraine (*Nasha Ukraina*). This coalition was formed by Viktor Yushchenko, former head of the National Bank and former Prime Minister; but he was reluctant to adopt a decisive anti-Kuchma position. Other anti-Kuchma forces included the Socialist Party of Ukraine (*Sotsialisticheskaya Partiya Ukrainy*, SPU) led by Oleksandr Moroz, and the Bloc of Yulia Tymoshenko (*Blok Yulii Tymoshenko*). The winner in the party list vote was Our Ukraine. However, as the result of the mixed electoral system and the ability to manipulate votes, Kuchma’s party For a United Ukraine

---

28 Yushchenko was appointed as Prime Minister, and Yuliya Tymoshenko as a Deputy Prime Minister responsible for the energy sector by Kuchma in 1999 (Fritz 2007, 147). However, in April 2001, Yushchenko was brought down as Prime Minister through a vote of no confidence because of the criticism over the government’s market reform; and he was replaced by Anatolii Kinakh (Fritz 2007, 180).
(Za Yedinu Ukrainu) received a largest bloc of delegates. Pro-presidential factions were able to create a parliamentary majority (D’Anieri 2007, 94-5; Freedom House 2008b).

Viktor Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine bloc, by winning the party-list vote in the March 2002 Parliamentary Election, marked the first electoral success for the democratic opposition since independence. The election also was accompanied by “Arise, Ukraine!” and “Back to Europe!” protests that attracted many participants (Kuzio 2006, 55; Wilson 2006, 58-62). It also might be argued that without the elite conflict that began in 2000 and without the establishment of the Our Ukraine bloc in the 2002 parliamentary elections, it would be doubtful that there would be have been Yushchenko’s victory in 2004 presidential elections (Åslund and McFaul 2006b; Kuzio 2006, 48; Wilson 2006).

The Presidential Election in 2004 represented a watershed in Ukraine’s political system. Kuchma could not run, but instead put forth as a candidate Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych, former Governor of the Eastern Ukrainian Donetsk Oblast—"a hard-liner with little respect for the democratic rules of the game" (Fritz 2007, 180). Yanukovych’s main opponent was Viktor Yushchenko, who represented a new image of a politician—energetic, professional, and Western-oriented (Tudoroiu 2007, 328). Yushchenko’s pre-election campaign was hindered by controlled media that nearly excluded him from coverage and by dioxin poisoning, which severely weakened the candidate’s health and disfigured his face (Way 2005a, 131-132, Wilson 2006, 96).

---

29 According to the Ukrainian Constitution, Kuchma’s second term ended in 2004 but he used many attempts to ensure a third term (Zimmer 2006). Since he was elected in 1994 before the enactment of the constitution of 1996, he argued that he had only served for one term.


30 Emerson (2007, 220) argues that Yushchenko’s position was even enhanced when it became clear that he had been poisoned during the dinner with the director of the Ukrainian Security Service.
In the first round of the election, with a very close vote, Yanukovych was declared the winner. However, since neither candidate received 50 percent of the returns, the second round was scheduled for three weeks later. In the run-off election, held on November 21, exit polls predicted a Yushchenko victory; but the Central Electoral Commission declared Yanukovych the victor with 49.5 percent of the vote, compared with Yushchenko’s 46.6 percent (Central Election Commission 2004a). Given that the third-placed candidate from the first round (Moroz) had explicitly endorsed Yushchenko, these results were hard to believe. Moreover, observers (Ukrainian and international, i.e. the OSCE) reported the fraud in the second round of the election.

Protesters gathered in the Kyiv’s Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti called simply “the Maidan”) marking the beginning of a democratic breakthrough dubbed the “Orange Revolution.” Conciliation meetings were arranged between Kuchma, Yanukovych and Yushchenko, to which Lithuanian President Valdas Adamskus and Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski, the EU’s High Representative Javier Solana, and Russian State Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov were invited (Fritz 2007, 182). The Constitutional Court issued a critical decision when the tribunal overturned the Ukrainian Central Election Commission decision and declared the second round of the presidential elections null and void. The rerun of the second round was carried out in a new political and social atmosphere. As a result, Yushchenko won easily with 52 percent of the vote, to Yanukovych’s 44 percent, marking a new period in Ukraine’s struggle with democracy (Central Election Commission of Ukraine 2004b).
The Role of Ukrainian Civil Society and External Actors in Bringing Democracy

The fall of Kuchma’s regime and peaceful election of Yushchenko in 2004 were clearly due to an exceptional role of civil society and mass mobilization (Åslund and McFaul 2006b; Diuk 2006; Kuzio 2006; Wilson 2006).

Ukraine has one of the most vibrant civil societies of any post-Soviet state, and it was even before the Orange Revolution (Diuk 2006). Already in the mid-1980s, as soon as it became possible to register NGOs under the new policies of glasnost and perestroika, a large number of civic organizations and initiatives emerged. Three organizations—the Popular Movement in Support of Perestroika (Rukh), Student Brotherhood (Studentske Bratstvo), and Lion Society (Tovarystvo Leva)—paved the way for many civic associations that emerged in the 1990s. Youth, women’s, charitable and humanitarian organizations were established during glasnost and perestroika (Diuk 2006, 71). Later emerged other organizations, including monitoring groups of various types and nongovernmental analytical centers, so called “think tanks,” that were critical of the government. One such entity was the Center for Economic and Political Studies of Ukraine (the Razumkov Center).

Circumstances for the emergence of civil society were more favorable than in Belarus, especially because the third sector could be more autonomous, and well-organized and financed. This development was allowed because local authorities, especially in Western Ukraine, were more permissive. An important feature of civil society was the tendency to form coalitions, such as Pora (It’s time). Pora was founded as a national council of nongovernmental organizations to mobilize civil society. The association demanded free and fair elections in 2004 and succeeded in getting several hundred thousand people into the streets of Kyiv during the Orange Revolution.
Revolution, contributing to its triumph (Åslund and McFaul 2006b; Demes and Forbrig 2006; Diuk 2006, 77; Wilson 2006, 73–74).\textsuperscript{31} Moreover, although media were owned by pro-President oligarchs, some critical media managed to survive, thanks to the support of some dissident businessmen like Petro Poroshenko. His TV Channel 5 proved to be very important during the Orange Revolution (van Zon 2005b, 376; Wilson 2006).

Regardless these developments, some scholars were skeptical about the future expansion of civil society and its ability to influence political changes in the country (Kupryashkina 2000; Nanivska 200; Sułek 2003). Civil society in Ukraine was described as weak, passive, fragmented and demobilized (Kuts \textit{et al.}200; Narozhna 2004, 256). Also, some scholars remain skeptical about the NGOs’ role in the Orange Revolution. Yet, the question arises whether such massive social mobilization visible on the \textit{Maidan} could be possible, if NGOs were not powerful enough to motivate citizens. Moreover, one should stress that civil society in Ukraine was not comprised only of non-governmental organizations. The success of the Orange Revolution was, foremost, a popularly driven movement, which would not have been possible without millions massed peacefully in Kyiv and other cities to protest fraud in the second-round vote that made this democratic change achievable (Åslund and McFaul 2006a). “Though the role of some Ukrainian NGOs, such as \textit{Pora}, For a Clean Ukraine, Know How, and others, in mobilizing and triggering activism during the Orange Revolution should be acknowledged, this was above all the revolution of the people, not of the agencies” (Stepanenko 2006, 579).

Jan Fedirko (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy in Lublin said that there was an overwhelming faith among people gathered that their protests would bring desired changes, and with such hope these people filled the \textit{Maidan Nezalezhnosti} in Kiev:

\textsuperscript{31} The \textit{Pora} campaign officially closed at the end of January 2005 but has its successors. One of them is the \textit{Pora} political party, officially registered on June 1, 2005 (Demes and Forbrig 2006, 99).
...It is an amazing feeling of brotherly love and joy, also to the opponents of the revolution, which must result from the confidence of having the truth. This gives strength and determination in the pursuit of justice. Thus, even if the current crisis has not ended as millions of people wish, no one or nothing will prevent the success of the national awakening of the consciousness and sudden explosion of civil society.\footnote{The author’s translation from Polish.}

The active part of Ukrainian society that contributed to the success of the Orange Revolution included local officials, some state-university deans, and city-administration officials who helped to organize transportation for those trying to get to Kyiv (Way 2005, 142). Decisive was the support of the business and political elite for the opposition (van Zon 2005b, 373). Finally, an important and powerful civil society group also was journalists (Prytula 2006).

The phenomena in Ukrainian civil society during the Orange Revolution was the awakening of media, especially television channels, which a few days after the second round of elections, provided objective information and apologized on-air for misinforming people over the last few years (Fedirko 2008; Prytula 2006; Wilson 2006, 131; van Zon 2005b, 376). In Fedirko’s (2008) opinion, the media’s openness encouraged people especially those in small towns, who did not have access to the opposition’s Channel 5, to stand up against rigged elections.

In addition to the role of civil society, the second important factor in the Orange Revolution was an external one—international support (Åslund and McFaul 2006a; McFaul 2007). Many international NGOs and civil society groups provided key assistance to their Ukrainian counterparts before and during the Orange Revolution (Ledsky 2005, 21). The youth group \(\textit{Pora}\), which played a crucial role in the protests, had received funding from external actors. International assistance included also political declarations, foreign observation missions, and mediation during the November political crisis. International election observers, as well as
domestic observers trained by foreign NGOs, made a critical contribution by exposing and reporting election fraud and voting irregularities (Kuzio, 2005b). Also, some prominent Americans, such as Madeleine Albright, Zbigniew Brzezinski, George H.W. Bush, and George Soros, chose to exert with their visits in 2004 direct individual influence on Ukrainian authorities. The US also used the threat of sanctions (Sushko and Prystayko 2006, 132).

Authorities from the new EU members in Central and Eastern Europe very actively and strongly committed themselves to helping Ukraine to enter a democratic path. Presidents of new EU member states Poland and Lithuania, Aleksander Kwaśniewski and Valdas Adamkus, provided the impetus that led to the EU intervention in Ukraine in December 2004 and asked the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, to travel to Ukraine to resolve the ongoing disagreement over the disputed presidential vote (RFE/RL Newsline 2004a).

New EU member states not only provided assistance through mediation but also mobilized support in their countries. The Polish Sejm sent an appeal to the Verkhovna Rada, calling for a free and transparent election in Ukraine (Gazeta Wyborcza 2004; RFE/RL Newsline 2004b). Similarly, the Slovak Government declared that the elections should be conducted in a free and fair manner and sent election observers (Sushko and Prystayko 2006, 131). Poland also expressed support for Ukraine’s future role in the EU and in NATO.33

Whereas the Polish Government’s involvement during the Orange Revolution has been well acknowledged in the literature and mass media, it is worth highlighting here the role of Polish civil society during the Orange Revolution that was remarkable (Maddox 2004). Some activists of Polish organizations, as Jan Fedirko (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy in Lublin, took an active role in the Orange Revolution. He assisted Ukrainian

33 See the official website of the President of the Republic of Poland, http://www.president.pl/x.node?id=2011998
opposition forces and civil society activists with everything from communicating their message to supporters to the logistics of staging a street protest (e.g. decorating a place in orange). He helped thousands of people traveling from other cities to Kyiv in organizing housing and food. He also gave speeches and joined demonstrators in singing and protesting. Also, having experience with protest, he knew that it was difficult to keep social emotions at a constant level; therefore, he helped to introduce new activities.

Whereas some Polish NGOs were actively involved in the Orange Revolution, others—although very active before the events—preferred to stay aside during the revolution, arguing that it was the Ukrainians’ national struggle in which foreigners should not interfere (Kujawska 2008). Some preferred not to engage directly in the politics of the neighboring country, and set limits on their activity. The Orange Revolution was this limit for them (Kujawska 2008).

The activity of students from Warsaw University also was particularly noticeable. At some point after the 2004 elections, students established an association of all those Polish students at Warsaw University actively involved in the Orange Revolution called Free Ukraine. Also, students from other Polish Universities followed the actions of their counterparts from the Warsaw University. For young Polish people, a visit to Ukraine during the elections and being involved in struggle for democracy was the same as their fathers experienced being in Solidarity (Fedirko 2005; Michałowski 2005).

Whereas the whole world was showing Kyiv as a center of all events, Fedirko (2008) noticed that “such Maidans like in Kyiv were hundreds in the whole Ukraine, but few noticed them” (Fedirko 2008). Ukrainians seemed to be pleased with the overwhelming help coming from the neighbors. Worth citing is the fragment of Fedirko’s (2008) memoir written during his stay in Ukraine, received during the interview:
Residents are particularly happy with the arrival of external guests, especially from abroad. I think that Ukrainians will remember for a long time our words of support, solidarity and recognition for their behavior. Perhaps these symbolic oranges and mandarins that we distributed to children, who came with their parents in the cold day for the demonstration of support for Yushchenko, will be remembered better than white-red flags among the numerous Ukrainian banners and orange pennants. Although highly valued in Ukraine is the participation of Polish politicians, I think that more for the consolidation of friendly relations between the Poles and Ukrainians has been achieved by reaching the province. The mere fact of being with these people gives them huge encouragement and assures them in the belief that they are fighting for the right thing.\textsuperscript{34}

Poles’ involvement in the Orange Revolution was also a perfect moment to improve Polish-Ukrainian relations, as well. Fedirko (2008) notes that although political relations were good, there is still in peoples’ awareness of Massacres of Poles in Volhynia that took place during and after the Second World War, so that the Orange Revolution contributed to the improvement of interpersonal relations (Fedirko 2008). The Orange Revolution, the mass support of the Poles (especially the younger generation) for a democratic transition in Ukraine, and finally the successful lobbying on behalf of Ukrainians in the European Union, created a unique climate for the establishment of new sustainable initiatives of Polish-Ukrainian cooperation.

\textit{The Difficult Road Toward Democratic Consolidation}

The Orange Revolution marked a new period of Ukrainian political development and identified the end of the previous political era of the hybrid Soviet-type system. A civil society upsurge against falsified elections, international mediation, and the elite pact that followed opened up the possibility of a resolution of conflict by means of changes to the political system.

\textsuperscript{34} The author’s translation from Polish.
(Åslund and McFaul 2006a, 3). Despite all of these changes, using Linz and Stepan’s (1996), Diamond and Platter’s (2001), Przeworski’s (1991) and Dahl’s (1997) criteria for the consolidation of democracy, this section attempts to demonstrate that Ukraine’s achievement with democratic consolidation has been elusive so far.

Problems with Commitment to Democratic Rules

The negotiations in 2004-2005 were focal to Ukraine’s transition to democracy—Our Ukraine, together with the Social Democratic Party of Ukraine (SDPU) led by Victor Medvedchuk and the Bloc of Yuliya Tymoshenko reached the agreement with the regime authorities. As a result of negotiations, Ukraine’s elite agreed on a transition involving power-sharing between the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament), and the Government (Prime Minister and Cabinet of Ministers) on one side, and the presidency on the other. The constitution was amended to reduce the powers of the President, shifting Ukraine closer toward to the political model of Central and Eastern European countries, which grants a substantially stronger role of the Parliament and Government.

Specifically, according to the pacted constitutional structure in 2004, which came into effect on January 1, 2006, the major changes were that the President proposes candidates for the positions of the Prime Minister as well as for the Ministers of Defense and Foreign Affairs, but the parliamentary majority choose and dismiss the governments and approve the Prime Minister (Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine 2004, Art. 85 and Art. 114). The Chairperson of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, no longer the Prime Minister, takes over the official duties of the
President if he is unable to perform his duties (Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine 2004, Art. 112). The new electoral law was to be based on a fully proportional system.\textsuperscript{35}

Nevertheless, Ukraine’s constitution retains some old structures from Kuchma’s regime, which make the division of powers of the President and the Government unclear and thus subject to different interpretations. Unchanged remained presidential prerogatives regarding the conduct of foreign and security policy. While the government is appointed by the Prime Minister and must be approved by the Ukrainian Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, the President retains the right to appoint Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defense, and the head of the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) (Constitution of Ukraine 1996). According to the Constitution, the President is entitled to use advisory and other subsidiary bodies for the exercise of his or her power (Article 106). One such body was the National Defense and Security Council (Article 107), which controls activities of the executive powers in the field of national security and defense, is formed by the President, and is composed of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense, the Head of the Security Service, as well as the Ministers of Internal and Foreign Affairs. The Council’s decisions are implemented by presidential decree (Bos 2004, 481; Constitution of Ukraine 1996).

Undoubtedly, the system provides a vital check on the government; and current institutional arrangements will make harder for anyone to accumulate the power that Kuchma had, because of the redistribution of legal power away from the President, and because a control over the executive branch is divided between the President and Prime Minister (D’Anieri 2007b). However, unclear division of powers of the President and the Government causes struggle over constitutional provisions between elites. For example, disagreement between Yuliya Tymoshenko, the Prime Minister, on the one hand, and Petro Poroshenko, the head of the

\textsuperscript{35} More on the debate over electoral systems in Ukraine and their impact see Herron (2007).
National Defense and Security Council, on the other, that led to serious lack of cohesion in
government policies and finally threatened the stability of the new government (Fritz 2007,
183-4).

Whereas the risk of a permanent conflict between the President and the Cabinet of
Ministers, as the result of the "dual executive" roles, is present also in other countries like Poland
or France, the question remains how such conflicts might affect a new democracy like Ukraine
and whether Ukrainian authorities are able to deal successfully with these issues. Moreover, as
Diamond and Plattner (2001, xiii)—based on Linz and Stepan’s definition of democratic
consolidation—argue, there might be problems with governance; but no significant political or
social actors attempt to achieve their objectives by illegal, unconstitutional or antidemocratic
means. Unfortunately, in this respect Ukraine does not meet criteria for democratic
consolidation.

Between 2005 and 2007 Ukraine entered a period of protracted elite struggle in
government institutions, with subsequent government rotations (Flikke 2008, 376; Kuzio 2007b,
30). Because of the disagreement between elites, the government accomplished little that had
been on the Orange agenda. Fewer draft laws were submitted than by any government during
Ukraine’s post-Soviet period (Fairbanks 2007, 56). Because of such circumstances, the Orange
camp was less popular in the parliamentary elections in 2006. 36 Yushchenko and Tymoshenko
were unable to agree on formation of a cabinet, and Yushchenko agreed to form a coalition with
the Party Regions, and nominated Yanukovych as Prime Minister.

36 In the March 2006 parliamentary elections, which were judged free and fair and were carried out according to a
fully proportional electoral system, Victor Yanukovych and his Party of Regions (Partiya Regioniv) had risen to
take the largest share of votes in (32 percent). The Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc (Blokh Yuli Tymoshenko) received 22
percent; Yushchenko’s Our Ukraine7 party got only 14 percent of the votes, the Socialist Party of Ukraine 5.5
percent, and the Communist Party of Ukraine 3.5 percent (Central Election Commission of Ukraine 2006).
The return of Yanukovych to head the government and its constant effort to change the pacted constitutional arrangements might certainly be interpreted as evidence that Ukraine was not going toward the consolidation of democracy (Flikke 2008). Yanukovych was unconstitutionally getting Rada members to change their affiliations and was thought to be trying to build a large enough majority to change the Constitution. By limiting Yushchenko’s power and targeting his ability to control foreign and national security policies, Yanukovych demonstrated his ambiguous commitment to democratic rules and procedures. An ongoing power struggle between the President and the parliamentary majority resulted in the dissolution of parliament by Yushchenko in April 2007. In the early Parliamentary Election on September 30, 2007, the political forces that supported the Orange Revolution in 2004 obtained a slim majority in the new Parliament (228 parliamentarians out of 450) (Central Election Commission of Ukraine 2007).

Linz and Stepan (1996) have stressed that democratic consolidation involves a shared normative and behavioral commitment to the specific rules and practices of the country's constitutional system. Also, in consolidated democracy democratic procedures, rules and methods of political competition, not so much the outcomes, produce a crucial element of consolidation. Taking into account such measures in Ukrainian politics, Ukraine does not meet those criteria for democratic consolidation. The current government established in 2007 also has not contributed to the consolidation of democracy. It is questionable whether the constant struggle between the President Yushchenko and the Prime Minister Tymoshenko is primarily attributable to the lack of clarity on the two powers in the constitutional reforms or simply inability of elites to accept the “rules of the game.”
For example, Yushchenko is being accused by Tymoshenko of interfering in almost every decision, instead of letting her run the government as promised (Economist 2008). Both undermine their positions by publicly accusing each other of being involved in corruption affairs or blaming one another for lack of or unsuccessful economic policies (Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 2009).  

The rivalry between elites not only paralyzed decision-making in Ukraine but, more importantly, resulted in taking unconstitutional actions. Following a vote on a bill to limit the President's powers in September 2008, President Yushchenko's Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense Bloc withdrew from the governing coalition with Prime Minister’s political party Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc. In October 2008, President Yushchenko tried to dissolve the Parliament and call early Parliamentary elections in Ukraine for December 7, 2008; however the right of the President to dismiss the Parliament was challenged in Ukraine's Constitutional Court (UNIAN 2008b). The President's decree has since failed, because it was never put into action.  

Furthermore, under Ukrainian law, a newly formed parliamentary coalition must decide on a candidate for Prime Minister and submit the nomination to the President for consideration. However, the parliamentary majority ignored this provision knowing that even if Yushchenko decided to ask the government to resign, he will not have enough votes in parliament.

---

37 The President Yushchenko made a statement in an interview with Inter TV, that in accusing him of corruption, the Prime Minister was trying to escape responsibility for her own failed economic policy: “The problem today is not my relationship with that lady...She has announced that she is going into opposition to the nation, the state…Unquestionably, the situation has long since spiraled out of the prime minister's control. Who is going to answer for 22 percent inflation? The external crisis? The crisis now sits on Grushevsky Street, on the seventh floor, in the office of the prime minister” (Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 2009). Tymoshenko, however, replied publicly: “I am very sorry that this person (Viktor Yushchenko), whom I stood up for at every 'orange' demonstration, for whom I campaigned and whom I presented to people as an honest and ethical politician, has now fallen so low that I am even ashamed to utter his name” (Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 2009).

38 Yushchenko publicly announced that elections were postponed due to financial crisis (AFP 2008).

39 On December 16, 2008 a revised coalition government was formed representing a 245 seat majority of the Parliament, between the Lytvyn Bloc, Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc and Our Ukraine–People's Self-Defense Bloc (UNIAN 2008a). The coalition that was formed in the Rada had no place for supporters of the President. Part of the Our Ukraine-People's Self-Defence faction openly went into opposition to the Ukrainian head of state by supporting
Scholars point out that Ukraine’s political system is prone to stalemate, elite strife, institutional confusion and constant government rotations which may paralyze Ukraine’s politics also in future (Flikke 2008, 395). Due to recurring struggle over constitutional provisions, Ukraine is experiencing political crisis, as a result of which the government seems to be unable to bring about the major changes expected by its supporters. During the period following the democratic breakthrough, the government of Ukraine has not demonstrated full commitment to key political reforms as well as economic and social reforms, such as further re-privatization, local self-government etc. (Fritz 2006, 201). Such ineffective performance demonstrated by the inability to fulfill expectations of the majority, however, may eventually undermine the legitimacy of a democratic order (Linz and Stepan 1978; Lipset 1959, 91). The government dismissed a number of public officials, but overall administration reform was delayed (Fritz 2006). The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted that the political reforms that would set “the rules of the game” and enable law-based institutions to function properly have not been completed to date. Moreover, politically motivated law enforcement still has not disappeared after the Orange Revolution (D’Anieri 2007b).

Unfinished political reforms at the local level create unclear lines of accountability, which further undermine democratic consolidation. Schmitter (2005) and Rose-Ackerman (2007) argue that accountability is an important dimension of democratic consolidation. Political accountability must be institutionalized if it is to work effectively and should be embedded in a mutually understood and established set of rules (Schmitter 2005, 19). The current division of the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc unification initiative. The loss in the Rada has basically made it impossible to remove Yuliya Tymoshenko as the head of government. The Prime Minister’s policies currently have the support of the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc (155 deputies), part of the Our Ukraine–People’s Self-Defense Bloc faction (37 seats), the Communists (27) and the Litvin Bloc (20), a total of 242 seats. Only the Party of Regions (175 deputies) and about 35 members of the Our Ukraine–People’s Self-Defense Bloc faction would be willing to vote for her dismissal (Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press 2009).


77
rights and obligations create confusion as to who is responsible for actions taken at the local level.

Although the territorial division is clear, precise divisions of power among bodies at different levels, including administrative bodies such as urban communities, village councils, and township councils is less clear (Piekło 2008). Decentralization, i.e. the process of expanding the functions and authority of the local government bodies, was an issue for Ukrainian democratizers under Kuchma. However, he opposed devolution of power stressing the lack of accountability and resistance to reforms in regions, and called for “the creation for strong executive organs of the state extending to the regions” as Wolczuk (2002, 162) reports. In fact, the president advocated curtailing the powers of self-governing bodies and the creation of a highly centralized model of the state in order to extend his control and strengthen his position. Legislation on regional governance has changed several times since 1989, and these many revisions reflect the fight between the center and the regional actors (Zimmer 2006, 293-4).

There is the duality of authority at the local level which dates back at least to Kuchma, lies in the conflict between the locally elected self-governance authorities and local administrations appointed by the central government. Genuine self-government only exists at the municipal level—the population of a village, town or city elects a local rada (council); and then the entire electorate in the city elects the city mayor. At the raion and the oblast level, self-government bodies and bodies of the central state collide. Oblast heads, called governors, are nominated by the Prime Minister. At the raion level, the head is nominated by the Government and confirmed by the Oblast’s administration. There is a direct dependency of the raion on the

41 Local governance in Ukraine has a four-level administrative structure. Ukraine is divided into twenty-four regions (oblasts), the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, and cities with oblast status (Kyiv and Sevastopol). Each region is divided into between eleven and twenty-seven districts (raions) and cities with raion status. The districts are divided into towns and villages (Zimmer 2006, 293-4).
Oblast. Such “vertical dependency” is also reinforced by the way the oblast and local budgets are formed. In other words, local and regional actors are dependent both with regard to budget resources and with regard to career opportunities and political survival (Zimmer 2006, 296).

_Problems with Adherence to Democratic Practices_

The constitutional changes introduced in 2006 are a step in the right direction. Also, elections after the Orange Revolution were in line with OSCE and Council of Europe guidelines, as well as other international standards for democratic elections (OSCE/ODIHR Election Observation Mission 2007). However, as D’Anieri (2007b, 256) argues, “[i]t is dangerous to assume, as many have, that the Orange Revolution represents the establishment of liberal democracy in Ukraine. Rather it represents a departure that might or might not result in consolidated liberal democracy.” Despite the appropriate institutional design, a real challenge for Ukraine’s political development is to reverse the legacy of the Soviet Union and features of the old regime (D’Anieri 2007b, 241).

Informal practices still dominate in Ukraine’s politics. Ukraine modernizes at a rapid pace; but some reform, such as the privatization of land, is done in a chaotic and thievish way. Members of the government fought over privatization issues, with many implicated in a variety of scandals (Emerson 2007). The number of firms under the re-privatization scheme, as well as the criteria for choosing them and the mechanics of re-privatization is unclear (Economist 2005). Corruption, one of the country's biggest problems before the Orange Revolution, is little better (Economist 2008). According to the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) Ukraine was ranked 118 out of 180 countries surveyed with the score of 2.7 in 2007
Some businessmen say things are improving, albeit confusingly (Economist 2005). The tensions within the government led the President to dismiss in September 2005 Tymoshenko and Petro Poroshenko and other top officials accused of corruption (Zimmer 2006, 293). Corruption reaches also to local government. President Yushchenko replaced regional governors and other officials associated with the previous regime, but a large part of power structures at the local and regional level remain intact (van Zon 2005b, 395). Petro Oliynyk, the new governor of the L’viv region, said that 200 of the local tax administration's 3,000 employees have been replaced, but the clean-up has had unintended consequences—bribes are said to have gone up (Economist 2005).

Opaque groups continued to play an important role in the new era (Fritz 2006, 187). Similarly to post-Soviet Russia, there is a group of oligarchs who acquired tremendous wealth and significant political influence in Ukraine. Yet since the end of Kuchma’s regime, the oligarch’s assets and political influence have been only cut back to some extent. Debates about re-privatization as well as the accusations of corruption in the first government after the Orange Revolution were closely linked to the relative power and influence of the oligarchs in Ukraine. In the re-privatization of the Nikopol steel pipe plant, Tymoshenko was accused of siding with one oligarchic group against another (Fritz 2006, 187). Also, during the privatization in 2004 Yanukovich’s allies received valuable economic assets (Zimmer 2006, 293). The Party of Regions continued to collaborate closely with oligarchic groups, especially with Rinat Akhmetov, Ukraine’s wealthiest businessman—he and managers of his company were entered on the Party of Region’s election list (Harmas 2005; Maksymiuk 2005b).

Linz and Stepan (1996, 3) argue that consolidation of democracy has been accomplished when the executive, legislative and judicial powers are not constrained by other actors. The
dominance of oligarchs as well as Russia’s influence on Ukraine’s politics suggests that Ukraine
does not meet this criterion for democratic consolidation. Jan Piekło (2008), Polish NGO activist
from the PAUCI organization, argues that “the fruits of the Orange Revolution are wasted in this
moment mainly due to Ukraine’s large neighbor—Russia, who in all possible ways wants to
prevent these efforts … and the term “season state” used by Putin towards Ukraine demonstrates
Russia’s attitude toward changes in Ukraine (Piekło 2008). 42

Ukraine is heavily dependent on Russia’s energy resources. 43 But this dependency
stretches to political sphere and poses a threat to the stability of Ukraine’s democratic system.
Russia has a strong impact on the Eastern regions of Ukraine—especially heavy industries. In
Ukrainian Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk, the Russian influences can be detected in real
life, because they are long-term, and deeply rooted (Fedirko 2008). Yanukovych, former
Governor of the Eastern Ukrainian Donetsk Oblast was endorsed by Russia’s President Vladimir
Putin, who went to Kiev the week before the first round and supported Yanukovych’s candidacy
(Lozowy 2004). Thus, Russia’s presence contributes to political cleavages in Ukraine. Less
economic dependence on Russia will also mean less political leverage (Piekło 2008). Jan Fedirko
(2008) and Paweł Kazanecki (2008), Polish NGO activists, observe that some oligarchs seem to
be aware of this leverage and have become more interested in modernizing the country through
their business contacts with the West, which will help Ukraine to be less economically dependent
on Russia.

 Whereas oligarchs’ impact on democracy consolidation is doubtful; some oligarchs also
supported the Orange Revolution (Piekło 2008; Wilson 2006). They also want the West to have a

42 At a NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008 Putin told President George W. Bush, “You understand, George, that
Ukraine is not even a state!” (Economist 2009).
43 In 2005/2006 Russian Gazprom decreased gas deliveries to Ukraine after negotiators failed to resolve the price
dispute. The move caused drastic shortfalls in Europe, which gets about one-fifth of its supplies from Russia via
Ukraine (RFE/RL Newsline 2006).
good impression about Ukraine. A good example is George W. Bush’s visit to Kiev on April 1, 2008, which was preceded by protests on Kiev’s streets. Akhmetov immediately acted to stop these protest to preserve a good image of Ukraine (Fedirko 2008). Moreover, one of the two biggest Ukrainian companies owned by oligarchs, the Sistema Company, funded a conference organized by a Polish NGO in Ukraine (Radziwiłł 2008). Anders Åslund from the Institute of International Economics in Washington and former Director of the Russian and Eurasian Program, who is on the Advisory Council of CASE, argues that the emergence of oligarchs is a positive element in economic development, because oligarchs have conflicting interests and emerge as favorable stimulators to democracy (Radziwiłł 2008).

_The Weakness of Civil Society and Problems with Political Culture_

The Ukrainian “Orange Revolution” shows how important civil society can be in democratic transformation and that involvement of civil society can stimulate mobilization against authoritarian regimes and lead to the creation of a democratic political system. Clearly, the Orange Revolution has improved the chances for liberal democracy in Ukraine, but it has not automatically created the outcome (D’Anieri 2007b, 22). The eventual outcome of transition also depends on the civil society, the role of which does not stop at democratic transition point.

Many Ukrainians say that, since the huge street protests in December 2004 that culminated in Viktor Yushchenko’s victory in the Presidential Election, they are much freer; and the new government’s critics are not afraid to give their names to journalists contrary to the past regime (Economist 2005). Ukrainian media reports the biggest improvement since the pre-revolutionary situation—media sector continues to grow (many new independent newspapers)
owing to the appearance of new domestic and foreign investments and the development of the advertising market (Freedom House 2008b)

However despite the growth of media, its freedom is doubtful as the influence of political and economic groups remains strong in the media sphere. The National Union of Journalists of Ukraine publicized the list of officials and judges who are silencing the press in Ukraine, indicating that censorship and government pressure is still present in Ukrainian media (ZIK 2009). The Independent Media Trade Union in Kyiv also raised an issue of many murders of journalists in Ukraine since the country gained independence that have not been solved (RFE/RL 2009a). Moreover, the solution of that infamous mystery—the murder of investigative journalist Gongadze, in 2000—has been hampered by the inconvenient deaths of key witnesses (Economist 2005). The statement made by President Yushchenko that an investigation into Gongadze's murder and its results could affect the Presidential Election scheduled for January 2010, imply that those who had ordered the killing were in high offices (RFE/RL 2009b). An alternative explanation for not revealing or investigating the case is that those involved in the murder are supporters of a Presidential campaign. Lack of information regarding this and other murders create a blurred picture of how dangerous it is to work as a journalist and to what extent Ukraine is now a recognizable democracy with free media and a strong opposition.

After the Orange Revolution, civil society grew especially in terms of the number of organizations that emerged. Ukrainian NGOs provide services in many areas – consumer rights, women’s rights, Chernobyl, HIV/AIDS, human rights, and environmental protection. For the most part, authorities do not interfere with the activity of NGOs; and organizations rarely face harassment. NGOs register only through the Justice Ministry, and it takes usually ten days to
three months to register depending on the type of NGOs. However, it is still easier to register a business) (USAID 2007).

According to the NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia, Ukraine is considered to be in the consolidation phase for advocacy (USAID 2007). This position means that the NGO sector demonstrates the ability and capacity to respond to needs, issues and interests of the community in the country. Some NGOs initiated and continued projects aimed at consolidating third sector activity, such as the Civic Assembly held in Kyiv in July 2007 or the Civic League Ukraine-NATO. The presence of NGO experts in both electronic and print media is generally visible, but a large number of NGOs still lack training in media outreach (Sushko and Prystayko 2008).

However, the third sector presents also some internal weaknesses. Undoubtedly, Ukrainian organizations grew in terms of number, size and variety. However, it should be recognized that the majority of these organizations are based in the capital (Kyiv)—the center of political and economic activity—and a few urban and industrial areas such as L’viv, Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk or the Crimean Autonomous Republic (Sushko and Prystayko 2008). Agricultural regions, which comprise the majority of Ukraine, however, have few NGO networks.

There is still a low public image of NGOs and weak links with their constituencies overall, as the NGO Sustainability Index reports. According to a Democratic Initiatives poll, 85 percent of its respondents were not members of or did not participate in NGO activities (USAID 2007, 233). Moreover, although improved over the few years, financial viability is impaired. Financial viability improved because of increased diversification of domestic funding (especially
from the business sector), but contributions are still scarce, as compared to international assistance.

The question arises whether non-governmental organizations’ strength and involvement in political matters relates directly to the quality of democracy in Ukraine. Diamond (1994, 8-9) argues that civil society’s strength can generally be measured by how much it can influence all levels of government. According to the Counterpart Creative Center (2006), 99 percent of active Ukrainian NGOs surveyed claimed to have had some contact with governmental bodies (including central, regional, and local authorities); 47 percent of these NGOs said they had regular communication, at least once a week, with various authorities. These statistics demonstrate that NGOs, via frequent communication, can slightly strengthen their positions vis-à-vis the government. However, due to political stalemates, the NGOs advocacy efforts were delayed. For example, in 2007 a coalition of Ukrainian NGOs worked with Justice Ministry officials on the new draft Law on Association that is more in line with European law (USAID 2007). Because the Parliament was dissolved, the bill had to wait for review. NGO coalitions also have on their agenda the creation of a permanent connection with top political bodies and officials through public councils held at ministries and parliamentary committees.

Scholars examine the overall role of civil society in the post-revolutionary situation. They have concluded that although civic activists made an important contribution to the mass mobilization underlying the revolution and leading to political change, the civil society did not play dominant role afterwards (Laverty 2008; Tudoroiu 2007). Tudoroiu (2007, 316) argues that the struggle for power within the ruling elite under Yushchenko negatively affected civil

---

44 Scholars exploring the concept of “quality of democracy” are Diamond and Morlino (2005), for example.
45 Counterpart Creative Center (since April 2008: CCC Creative Center) is a Ukrainian non-governmental organization created in 1993 and registered in 1996 with the mission to enhance the development of civic initiatives aimed at strengthening of civil society in Ukraine (more information at http://ccc-tck.org.ua/en-default)
society’s chances to participate in the political transformation and participate in debate over reforms.

Laverty (2008) argues that this weakness Ukrainian civil society in the post-revolutionary political environment stems from divisions in the Ukrainian society with respect to the democratic transition. Moreover, they were apparent during the Orange Revolution (D’Anieri 2007a; Konieczna 2002; Kuzio 2007b). Geopolitical, historical and economic factors play a role in this polarization. Ukraine is a country of three, culturally different units, but the West and the East parts are particularly distinct. The West is dominated by Ukrainian speaking people with pro-Western views. The Eastern is occupied by Russian speaking people living in Donbas and Crimea with predominantly Russian identification or even a Soviet style political culture (van Zon 2005b, 394).

Part of residents of Russophone eastern Ukraine feels closer to Moscow than Kyiv and consume Russian popular culture, including television, books, and newspapers (Osipian and Osipian 2006, 500). According to the perception of one of the Polish NGO activists, in some Eastern regions, Russian TV, radio and press are predominant media in terms of availability; it is difficult to find even Russian-language Ukrainian mass media (Bobołowicz 2008). As Bobołowicz (2008) reports: “Who is interested in what is happening in Kiyv?” said a waitress when asked about the newspapers covering Ukrainian politics. People know names of Russian politicians better than Ukrainian ones, Bobolowicz (2008) observes. In Central Ukraine (in geographical and cultural sense) are people speaking both languages (Kuzio 2000a).\footnote{Some of the electoral studies see more subdivisions. Birch (2000) distinguishes five distinct regions in Ukraine.}

The issue of regionalism in Ukraine and impact on politics has been extensively discussed by scholars (D’Anieri 2007a; Barrington 2002; Barrington and Herron 2004). The fact that those linguistic and regional divisions drive Ukraine’s political development was visible
especially during the 2004 Presidential Election (Kuzio 2006, 65; Wilson 2006, 167). Eastern and Southern Ukraine largely but not exclusively voted for Yanukovych; the Western part, however, supported Yushchenko (Kuzio 2005b, 35). The vote not only reflects a political preference but also a political culture (van Zon 2005b, 394). The Orange Revolution, which was mainly based in Western and Central Ukraine, created the impression that the revolution was conducted by western and central Ukrainians rather than a collective action on behalf of the whole nation (Osipian and Osipian 2006, 504; Shulman 2005). Ukrainians with a more pro-European national identity have been easier to mobilize than those with an eastern Slavic identity (Kuzio 2006, 62).

The question remains how polarization in society with respect to democratic transition affects the strength of civil society and eventually democratic consolidation. Scholars point out that a democratic system requires a political culture—comprised of citizens’ behaviors, practices and norms concerning political life—that is consistent with that political order (Almond and Verba 1963, 369; Inglehart 1988, Putnam 1983). Particularly appealing here is the work of Inglehart (1988), who finds that such elements of political culture as interpersonal trust, satisfaction and support for the existing social order are important factors affecting democratic stability. Thus, disparities and distrust among societies may have negative political consequences. If all citizens share common political culture, it can lead to better governance and democratic consolidation. Putnam (1983, 65) explains that when society is interested in social and political issues, and shows “more commitment to modern, secular and democratic values,” then society is less willing to approve of other political systems than democracy.

Moreover, as O’Donnell (1988, 283) suggests “if political democracy is to be consolidated, democratic practice needs to spread throughout society, creating a rich fabric of

---

47 The work on consociational democracy suggests an alternative view, which is discussed later.
democratic institutions and authorities.” In this vein, Linz and Stepan (1996, 16) point out that a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion, even in the midst of major economic problems and deep dissatisfaction with incumbents, holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life, and when support for antisystem alternatives is quite small. Finally, Dahl (1997) argues that the consolidation of democracy implies and requires the emergence of a democratic political culture: political trust, tolerance and willingness to compromise, and belief in democratic legitimacy.

Thus, it is fair to say that division of Ukrainian society with respect to democratic transition translates into the weakness of civil society that undermines democratic consolidation.

Huntington (1991) points out that one of the factors that contributed to the reverse waves of democratization was weakness of democratic values as well as, social and political polarization. Also, Sani and Sartori (1983, 337) argue that “working democracy and polarization are inversely related,” and that the best single explanatory variable for stable versus unstable, functioning vs. non-functioning, successful versus immobile and easy versus difficult democracy is polarization.

Undoubtedly, one also cannot ignore in this analysis Lijphart’s consociational mechanism which argues that reinforcing cleavages can be managed beneficially (Lijphart 2004, 96). However, it should be stressed that this mechanism is not in place in Ukraine since political elites, instead of mitigating disparities among groups, regularly pursue polarizing strategies. Ukraine’s regional divisions were apparent during the Orange Revolution, and Yanukovych and Yushchenko were polarizing figures (D’Anieri 2007a; Kuzio 2007b, 36). Viktor Yanukovych is representative of the eastern, Russian-speaking Donbas region, where economic oligarchs tightly control the local media and political life, whereas Yushchenko represents a Western-looking
politician (Kuzio 2007b, 51). Thus, it seems that overcoming cooptation and the alienation problem of the civil society may be crucial for reducing the potential for system volatility observed in Ukraine.

The fact that instead of applying consociational strategies, Ukrainian leaders are using the polarization of society with respect to democratic transition as a tool in their struggle for political power was evident during 2007 demonstrations. Several thousand people protested in Kiev against President Viktor Yushchenko’s threat to dissolve the Parliament, which was controlled by a pro-Russian coalition (Agence France Presse 2007). The *Maidan* 2007 gatherings were not voluntary work of spontaneous, self-organized civil society as *Maidan* 2004. Rather, they were the product of a funded and managed civil society by Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych’s Party of Regions through the use of so-called “political tourism” (Kuzio 2007a). The website *maidan.org.ua* reprinted information distributed in eastern Ukraine, offering the opportunity to undertake paid political tourism in Kyiv (Kuzio 2007a). Residents of Kharkiv were offered a full day’s “pay” of 150 hryvni ($30). Poltava students were offered 80 hryvni (without food) or 50 (with food) (Kuzio 2007a). Senior political tourists obtain between 100-150 hryvni per day while students are offered 90. Political tourists were not necessarily committed Party of Regions supporters.

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe’s experts on Ukraine have pointed out that the “blue *Maidan*” demonstrations in downtown Kyiv’s Independence Square were incompatible with democracy (Kuzio 2007a). However, at the same time pro-Yushchenko supporters rallied in favor of early elections and this action seemed to be artificially managed as well (Agence France Presse 2007; Kuzio 2007a).
Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that Belarus and Ukraine, having similar initial conditions for democratization following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, ended up with different political situations; one has consolidated authoritarianism and the second is aiming toward democratic consolidation. Taking into account the differences between these two countries and challenges they face, the states provide interesting cases for democracy assistance studies.

This analysis showed that the political power in Belarus is concentrated in the hands of the President who, with prerogatives given to him by 1996 Constitutional Referendum, controls the government, the legislature process and judicial branch. Electoral fraud and manipulation is a factor, too. President Lukashenko disregards democratic institutions, does not allow for the presence of any opposition and relies on the police and special forces to ensure the loyalty to the regime. Human rights abuses, indoctrination through media and the educational system, as well as his reluctance to build Belarusians’ cultural identity are some of regime’s features.

Most apparent, however, is the Belarusian regime’s attitude toward civil society groups, such as non-governmental organizations, journalists, trade unions, Polish minorities and the Roman Catholic Church. Belarusian civil society faces growing impediments from the Belarusian government—constant surveillance, closure of independent organizations, and harassment. Whereas the situation of Government organized NGOs, supported by the Belarusian authorities, is good, the situation of many independent civil society groups is poor; and they are tolerated by the regime, unless their influence increases. A series of laws has both restricted public gatherings and significantly limited civil society activities.
Despite all of these negative tendencies in Belarus, civil society sustains and acts against Lukashenko’s regime. Those organizations considered “illegal” by the Belarusian authorities are working underground and in alliance with opponents who were visible during the Opposition Congress in 2005. Moreover, the 2006 protests before and after the Presidential Election demonstrated that civil society is capable of organizing itself against the regime amidst facing the risk of being imprisoned or expelled from the universities. Also, Belarusian oppositionists find means of communicating with each other, such as the internet, as well as common unifying symbols, such as the Belarusian language.

Ukraine shifted from a regime in transition in the early 1990s, to a hybrid regime under Leonid Kuchma, with growing concentration of power in the hands of the President in the late 1990s; and then made shift towards a democratic regime in late 2004, which however remained unconsolidated. Kuchma’s ten years of presidency and its impact on the institution-building and methods of conducting politics in newly independent Ukraine cannot be ignored. The Constitution of 1996 created the semi-presidential system with strong Presidential powers reaching down to lower administrative units. Although the amendments to the Constitution introduced in 2006 reduced some presidential powers, the “vertical dependency” that goes from the lowest local level up to the central government still exists. Moreover, Kuchma’s informal practices—clientelism, control of media, and existence of opaque elites—seem to echo in current Ukrainian politics.

Thirteen years after its independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine finally found itself on democratic vector started by the Orange Revolution in 2004. Ukraine shows many features of political liberties and civil liberties, but is at the beginning of difficult road toward democratic consolidation that will not be successful if Ukrainian elites do not show the commitment to
democratic rules of games and adherence to democratic practices. Moreover, whereas civil society in Ukraine is the strongest as compared to other post-Soviet societies and as demonstrated during the Orange Revolution, in the post-revolutionary environment Ukrainian civil society remains weak vis-à-vis a government and culturally and ideologically divided.

The question remains whether democracy assistance providers recognize these challenges and to what extent the Polish Government with its partners takes them into consideration.
CHAPTER 3

POLAND AMONG OTHER DONORS IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE

After examining obstacles toward democratization in Belarus and problems with
democratic consolidation in Ukraine, it is important to ask how donors go about assisting these
countries’ struggle with democracy.

The aim is to address the question to what extent Polish Government, in giving foreign
aid, is motivated by the desire to spread democracy in its neighborhood, and specifically in
Ukraine and Belarus. This chapter investigates who priority recipients of Polish aid are, how
Poland engages into aid giving, and what shapes the structure of Polish assistance. This study
also demonstrates Polish aid volumes, areas, channels of aid distribution, and partners, drawing
on data provided by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) that has not been collected by
scholars previously.

Since this is the first effort of examining democracy assistance provided by young
democracies, this chapter begins with the analysis of the assistance efforts of the European
Union (EU) and the US to influence changes in Belarus and Ukraine. Some policy makers and
scholars observe that there are two approaches to democracy assistance—political and
developmental. US democracy assistance are seen as basically political and the European
Union’s democracy-building efforts as largely developmental (Carothers 2009; Jarábik 2006, 86;
Kopstein 2006). A political approach highlights the importance of citizens’ participation in
democratic political processes and focuses on assisting civil society groups and politically

93
oriented NGOs. A developmental approach, however, gives more emphasis to assisting socio-economic development in the first place, rather than supporting political openness.

This analysis will help to answer the question whether Polish democracy assistance falls strictly into one of these approaches used by two main world donors, or maybe the Polish Government conceptualizes democracy assistance in a different way.

The EU’s Democracy Assistance Approach to its Eastern Neighbors

The EU for a long time focused on developmental aid, and democracy assistance was not a top priority (Carothers 2009, 13; Jarábik 2006). The first recipients of EU assistance were the ACP (African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group) countries—most of them colonies of Great Britain, France and Belgium.¹ Colonial heritage, common historical ties, religion, or ethnic ties play important roles in aid allocations and might have little to do with rewarding democratic trends in recipient countries. Scholars find that the older EU members, especially Britain and France, have been more likely to exert influence on the EU to provide aid to non-democratic former colonies than to other countries (Alesina and Dollar 2000; Lancaster 2007; Schraeder et al. 1998).

Such an image of European assistance is still present among some democracy assistance practitioners. Joanna Rohozinska from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) argues that the majority of Western European NGOs are not interested in democracy work, but rather development assistance (Rohozińska 2008). She also claims that most of European countries are not interested in working in Eastern Europe – the priority is Africa. Scandinavians are the only Western Europeans really interested in working in the same places as the NED does, but with a

¹ For example, the Lomé IV Agreement of 1989 between the EU and the ACP countries can serve as the source of the emphasis.
less political approach (Rohozińska 2008). The US is still the major donor in this region, in Rohozinska’s (2008) opinion.

The EU as a regional actor assisting democracy on the European continent and beyond was given credit for facilitating democracy after the EU Eastern enlargement that included former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. The political conditionality regarding democratization and marketization that the EU for the first time attached to eligibility for pre-accession funds, such as PHARE (Poland and Hungary Assistance for Reconstructing their Economies) and future membership was a dominant force behind consolidation of democracy in CEE states that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 (Burnell 2008; Crawford and Lijphart 1995; Henderson 1999; Schimmelfennig 2007; Schimmelfenning and Sedelmeir 2005). Because of the success of the EU Enlargement Policy, the Community extended political conditionality in aid-provision to the Western Balkans and also to countries lying in the EU’s immediate neighborhood—countries that do not have a chance for the EU membership or whose membership lies in the distant future.

The EU hopes, in the case of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), to influence democratic progress through political conditionality. The ENP was developed in 2004 and its main objectives have been an avoidance of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbors and, instead, the strengthening of prosperity, stability and security in the neighborhood (Mingarelli 2006). The ENP financial instrument is the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) that replaced the TACIS (Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States) and MEDA (Mediterranean Development Assistance) programs. The ENPI

2 The European Neighborhood Policy applies to the EU’s immediate neighbors by land or sea – Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine. Although Russia is also a neighbor of the EU, the relations are instead developed through a Strategic Partnership covering four “common spaces” (European Commission: ENP 2009).
is simply a new single cooperation instrument for the EU’s eastern and southern neighbors plus Russia. These states became the EU’s direct neighbors after the 2004 and 2007 enlargements. ENPI continues the objectives of TACIS and MEDA and refers to specific cross-border cooperation between the EU neighbors and border regions in the EU Member States (European Commission: External Cooperation Programs 2009).

If the recipient countries meet political conditionality specified in the ENP, they can be granted better access to the EU market or more privileged status in bilateral trade relations, and so forth. Most ENP instruments are based on the presumption of partners’ good will and their interests in integration into the EU. However, scholars point out that political and aid conditionality exerted by the EU seems to be more effective only when reward at stake is accession to the Union (Burnell 2008; Ethier 2003; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeir 2005). Even if future membership is realistic one day, as in case of Ukraine, this incentive is too distant for this country at this moment to compel their government to comply with the EU requirements (Lynch 2006; Zhurzhenko 2005).

The impact of the EU on the democratization of countries ineligible to join the EU reveals many shortcomings, and there seems to be no other incentive instrument to push reform forward that would be as successful as EU membership (Crawford 2000; Cremona 2004; Emerson 2005; Emerson and Noutcheva 2004; Ethier 2003; Gillespie and Youngs 2002; Haukkala and Moshes 2004; Kelley 2006; Milcher, Slay and Collins 2007; O’Brennan and Cox 2006; Olsen 2000; Pinder 1991). Similarly to Ukraine, the EU intends to provide assistance to Belarus through the new European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument and “conditionality” is a key tool in relations with Belarus within this policy. In the ENP’s main document, published in May 2004, it is concluded that with radical change and economic
policies, Belarus will be able to fully take advantage of the ENP. Yet, the political system in Belarus is now authoritarian; and in this situation, offering Belarus full advantages of the ENP is not yet possible. Thus in accordance with current policy, the EU should wait for a positive change in Belarus and then engage more intensively.

It seems that the major problem is that the ENP does not provide instruments good enough to deal with non-democratic neighbors, because the policy envisions cooperation only with the governments, rather than directing inducements at society. EU programs in third countries are implemented in cooperation with the government of the country, and financial

---

3 Earlier, EU assistance was provided through TACIS on focused on humanitarian aid and activities related to the effects of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Aid strategies included humanitarian aid in the form of baby food and medicines or vacations abroad for thousands of children living in the Chernobyl radiation zones. Almost 70 percent of the radioactive fallout emitted in the Chernobyl explosion on April 26, 1986 fell on the territory of Belarus (Hill 2005).

4 On November 21, 2006 Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Commissioner for External Relations and ENP, launched a document entitled “What the European Union Could Bring to Belarus,” which contains a strategy of how the people of Belarus could gain from joining the ENP process, if the Belarusian government engages in democratization and respect for human rights and rule of law (European Commission: External Relations 2006). The EU finds it difficult to address the erosion of democracy under Lukashenko; and the scale, scope and impact of EU support seem has been very limited. The fact is that the EU only deals with the Belarusian government. Since Lukashenko consolidated his authoritarian regime, actions taken by the EU toward Belarus have been always in response to the actions taken by Lukashenko. This type of policy can be described as reactive. The EU has condemned the Belarusian authorities for the authoritarian methods used toward the political opposition, media and civil society, and has demonstrated its disapproval using different restrictive measures. The EU rejected recognition of Lukashenko’s unconstitutional actions. In 1997, along with the decision of Council of Europe to suspend the guest status of Belarus, the European Union suspended high-level political contacts and the continuation of the ratification of the Partnership for Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with Belarus, signed in 1995 (Wieck 2002, 372). The EU did not renew technical assistance programs with a few exceptions in the humanitarian, social, and democratization fields. Moreover, the EU, as whole, introduced sanctions against the Belarusian authorities—among others, the visa ban against the highest political officials. Also, the EU froze all funds and economic resources of persons who were responsible for violations of international electoral standards and the crackdown on civil society during and after the 2006 Presidential Elections (Council of the European Union 2006).

In December 2006, in response to violations of civil and trade union rights, the EU authorized the exclusion of Belarus from its Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) (Lindner 2007). Taking some liberalizing measures in the first half of 2007 to regain trade preference status, Lukashenko emphasized that the government acted in the interest of the economy first and that no real political change was an intention of Belarusian government. Once the EU made it clear that without a full stop to political repression, no compromise on GSP was possible, the Belarusian Government fully resumed its previous practices (Belarusian Institute for Strategic Studies 2007). To date, the policy of restricted relations over the years in protest against the lack of democratization and economic reform in Belarus had not produced the serious moves towards reform and co-operation desired by the EU (Dumasy 2003).

In addition to restrictive measures aimed at the Belarusian government, there are some actions that harm Belarusians and hamper EU democracy assistance efforts in Belarus. Sixty euros for a single entry visa is certainly the wrong signal to Belarusian citizens (Lindner 2007, 71). It is harder for Belarusians to enter the European Union, to travel to meet people, to participate in conferences. If it is harder to get in touch with the EU and its people, it is less likely that the legitimacy of the Belarusian regime will be weakened in the eyes of Belarusians; and at the same time the EU efforts to encourage democratization process is questioned (Lindner 2007).
support is dispersed through government structures. Where the government of a recipient country has no interest in cooperating with the EU in the field of democracy, assistance cannot take place. The ENP does not contain a specific analysis of the role of civil society and a way for supporting it.

Taking into account the critical role civil society has played for democratization in Central and Eastern Europe, the importance of the third sector is not sufficiently taken into account by EU democracy assistance to Ukraine and Belarus. Whereas in case of the CEE countries, the third sectors of these countries were embraced by the PHARE assistance, in the case of Belarus and Ukraine, the EU still looks for the channels to target civil society in these countries. According to the OECD data, the EU has been the largest Western multilateral donor to Belarus ($13.7 million) and Ukraine ($228.1 million) with only a maximum of 40 percent and 21 percent, respectively, of that assistance going to the civil society sector in these countries (OECD.Stat 2009). The low level of assistance to civil society is particularly problematic in the case of Belarus, because in an authoritarian regime democracy assistance has to be directed to non-state actors, whereas in Ukraine the EU has been able to support democratic reforms carried out by the government (Raik 2006, 170).

The EU policies require adjustments to reflect the role of civil society for democracy and to transform EU democracy assistance to Belarus where democracy has not yet taken hold (Meckel 2006). The European Union does not have the Belarus Democracy Act as does the United States, which supports Belarusian democratic forces, opposition parties, NGOs and youth organizations. According to Gromadzki and Veselý (2006), the EU policy towards Belarus should combine both negative measures against Lukashenko's regime as well as positive actions to promote civil society and democracy. Similarly, Lindner (2007, 75) argues that the main
instrument for further cooperation with the Belarusian regime should include support for
democratic parties, NGOs, the Congress of Democratic Forces, and so forth. Alexander
Milinkievich—third sector activist in Belarus, chairman a Grodno-based NGO Ratusha, and the
opposition candidate in the recent presidential elections—made the following remarks about EU assistance:

I have just been to Brussels, where the European Commission debated on how to
deal with Belarus. When Belarusian NGOs were being assessed, we heard that the
only successful ones are those capable of cooperating with the authorities in the
current situation. We do understand that such cooperation is important, and
sometimes we do so at the local level, but it won’t succeed on a bigger scale
because the authorities do not want an active society; they are interested in its
passivity. Belarusian organizations shouldn’t be assessed for their ability to
cooperate with the authorities. Let us take human rights organizations, for
example; for obvious reasons they, will never initiate contact with the authorities
…. At the abovementioned meeting in Brussels, there was also talk of isolating
Minsk. We argued that it wouldn’t mean isolation, but only supporting self-
 isolation of Belarus, which makes all the difference. If Minsk is unwilling to
cooperate with Europe, it should not be aided in its policy. Help should be offered
to those willing to cooperate, namely the democratic third-sector forces
(Komorowska and Kuzawińska 2004, 60-62).

In recent years, the EU has begun to realize deficiencies in its democracy assistance and
the lack of instruments effectively to promote democratic change in countries which have no
perspective for membership in the near future. The EU has increased its pressure on
Lukashenko’s government, while at the same time seeking to identify approaches to engage with
Belarusian citizens, civil society and independent media, acknowledging the important role that
civil society can play in the democratization process (Tapiola 2006). As it has become
impossible to allocate EU funds to civil society in Belarus for both political and institutional
reasons, most of the money is used for activities outside the country, such as the work of the
European Humanities University (EHU) in Vilnus (Raik 2006, 175). The European Humanities
University is a non-state establishment, which was located in Belarus from 1992 to 2004, when
the institution was forced to terminate its activities there. However, thanks to political,
administrative, and financial support from the Government of Lithuania, Governments of the European Union, NGOs and US and EU foundations, EHU managed to resume its operations in Lithuania and open bachelor’s and master’s degree programs for Belarusian students in autumn 2005. The American MacArthur, Heritage and Open Society Foundations were among the donors to the EHU as well, but the EU initiated the whole idea.

Moreover, the EU has started to finance television and radio broadcasting programs for Belarus, organized by Deutsche Welle Bonn and Media Consulta Berlin (Lindner 2007, 72). Another project was supporting scholarships for Belarusian students wanting to study abroad. Finally, the EU established in 2008 an independent European organization, the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), to remedy the problem that when the European Commission gave funds directly to NGOs and civil society groups, the system of financial controls was so complex that the programs became rigid. The EPD was created according to the model of United States National Endowment for Democracy. The idea behind this initiative is to enable the EU to boost its activities in promoting democracy and civil and political rights vis-à-vis its neighbors.

Explanations for the changes in the EU’s recent approach to Belarus and Ukraine need to address the role of new member states, which will be elaborated in the final section of the chapter.

---

6 More information on European Partnership for Democracy’s website is available at http://www.eupd.eu
The United States’ Approach to Democracy Assistance in Belarus and Ukraine

While for a long time, the EU did not pay serious attention to the question of democracy in former Soviet states, the United States began supporting civil society in Ukraine and Belarus and other post-communist countries already in 1992-1993 (Conkievich 2002, 421; Forbrig, Marples and Demeš 2006; Narozhna 2004; Stent 2007; Sushko and Prystayko 2006, 132). Americans have been leaders in providing such democracy assistance, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the National Endowment for Democracy, and through major private donors such as the Open Society Institute (OSI) and a small group of other private charitable foundations. The other principal funders of US democracy aid include the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and Freedom House. According to the OECD, only in 2007 the US Government gave 86 percent of its total aid to Belarus and 46 percent of all aid to Ukraine to the civil society sector in these countries, two times more than the EU.

US relations with Ukraine and Belarus changed when the latter countries were moving away from democracy toward authoritarianism. Despite the situations in these countries, the US has continued to be involved in assistance to civil society. The United States had long seen Ukraine at the forefront of democracy in the post-Soviet space. After the election of Kuchma in July 1994, Ukraine became the third largest recipient of US assistance and some support went to the NGO sector (Kuzio 2007b, 26; Sushko and Prystayko 2006). American NGOs have been active in Ukraine and played important role during the Orange Revolution through their training of Ukrainian electoral monitoring groups (Kapusniak 2008,183-192; Stent 2007, 18). Civic groups working on pro-democracy issues in Ukraine received international funding for their
operations and preparation for the popular movement (Diuk 2007, 82; Kelly 2004; Mulvey 2004).

The resistance to democratic reform by Lukashenko led the United States to announce its decision to pursue a "selective engagement" policy with the Belarusian Government (Wilde 2002, 435). Since neither the Belarusian Government nor the business sector in Belarus held significant intent for achieving democratic change, the US Government decided that it would expand contacts with Belarusian civil society—non-governmental organizations, political parties, independent trade unions, and other associations not directly linked to the Belarusian Government—to promote democratization (Wilde 2002, 429-30). Emphasis was on the development of a civil society capable and willing to interact with the government and business sectors (USAID Strategy Report 1999-2002).

Subsequently, in response to Belarus’ worsening political record, the US defined its disapproval of the ruling regime in the Belarus Democracy Act passed by the Congress, and signed by the President in October 2004 (U.S. Congress 2004).7 The legislation has become the main US document regarding the Belarusian regime. This legislation condemns political developments under Lukashenko’s leadership and refers to the referendum in November 1996 as “illegal and unconstitutional.” It calls upon Lukashenko’s government to “cease its persecution of political opponents or independent journalists and to release those individuals who have been imprisoned for opposing his regime or for exercising their right to freedom of speech” (U.S. Congress 2004). The act envisions imposing sanctions against Belarus, if the Belarusian authorities did not stop pressure against the opposition and independent media and investigate cases of politically motivated disappearances. Moreover, the law states that strategic exports to Belarus, and investments will not be permitted, and that the US opposes international

---

7 Signed by President George W. Bush and passed unanimously by the US Congress on October 4, 2004.
institutions’ any financial assistance to Belarus. Finally, the Act provides for support to Belarusian democratic forces, such as the independent press and non-governmental organizations.

On December 8, 2006, the United States House of Representatives renewed an amended version of the Belarus Democracy Act of 2004 (U.S. Congress 2006). The Belarus Democracy Reauthorization Act of 2006 extends and specifies approval for appropriations for democracy and civil society activities, and radio and television broadcasting to Belarus. This law establishes specified economic and US governmental sanctions against the Belarusian Government until it makes progress in meeting specified conditions, such as the release of political prisoners and accounting for the disappearances of opposition leaders and journalists, cessation of political harassment, prosecution of senior government leaders for embezzlement of state assets and administration of fraudulent elections, and holding free presidential and parliamentary elections under independent supervision (U.S. Congress 2006).

The US Government’s assistance to Belarus continues to be subject to the policy of “selective engagement” under which little bilateral assistance is channeled through the Government of Belarus, except for humanitarian assistance in the form of baby food and medicines, vacations for children living in the Chernobyl zones, and exchange programs involving state-run educational institutions (U.S. Department of State: Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs 2009a and 2009b). The dominant US strategy for assistance used to be directed toward restructuring government and state enterprises and in general for private sector development, as well as toward security issues. However, due to concerns over human rights violations committed by the Government of Belarus, the United States provides no direct assistance for the economic growth and peace and security issues (U.S. Department of State:
Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs 2009a). Today, most US assistance goes to support Belarus’ transformation to a democracy that respects human rights and the rule of law by building and strengthening civil society (U.S. Department of State: Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs 2009a and 2009b; U.S. Congress 2004).

The US is the biggest donor in terms of assistance to civil society; therefore it is argued that the US democracy assistance follows the political line (Carothers 2009; Jarábik 2006).

However, there are significant differences among the US donors. For a long time, USAID followed the developmental approach, but today uses sometimes a more political approach as well (Carothers 2009, 14). 8 The USAID Missions to Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus focus mainly on increasing citizens’ awareness of their rights, as well as providing training and technology to small rural communities, and offer small grants programs to give special support for independent media activities. In order to achieve these goals, USAID works through its USAID regional representative offices.

In addition to USAID, there are many US-based foundations, such as NED or the Open Society Institute, which have their own ways of assisting democracy, demonstrating that the USAID approach does not dominate American democracy assistance. These organizations support elections-related work, bolster civil society, provide aid to independent media outlets, and so forth.

8 USAID has been the principal independent US federal government agency to provide assistance to countries harmed by disaster, trying to improve their economic situations, and engaging in democratic reforms. The organization spends less than one-half of 1 percent of the federal budget for assistance to five regions of the world – Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Europe and Eurasia, and the Middle East. USAID works in such areas as agriculture, democracy and governance, economic growth, the environment, education, health, global partnerships, and humanitarian assistance. According to the USAID Agency Financial Report 2007, USAID spent $1.303 billion on programs aimed at strengthening democratic institutions, such as parliaments, judiciaries and political parties (Agency Financial Report Fiscal Year 2007, 13). The objectives of investing in people (education) and economic growth represent the largest investments at 32.6 percent and 32.3 percent of the net cost of operations, respectively. The Agency invested 14 percent of its net cost of operations in the democracy and governance objective compared to 14.9 percent on humanitarian assistance. So, the USAID technical assistance aimed at democracy promotion is a small fraction of all aid.
A significant player in democracy assistance to the Post-Soviet states is George Soros’s Open Society Institute. Unlike many other foundations, the OSI, involves local people in the recipient countries and has been financially independent of the US government. The Soros Foundation has established local foundations in each post-communist country, and each of the local foundations has a separate identity with local boards of directors and local staff, and are informally coordinated by Open Society Institute offices in New York and in Budapest. The Soros Foundation was the first Western donor to open such an office in Belarus. The Belarusian Soros Foundation (BSF) provided grants, training, and equipment to educational, political, and local social projects (Wilde 2002). Despite its local approach to civil society support, as well as some achievements in assisting civil society in Belarus, this entity encountered significant barriers to building democracy there. As it became more and more complicated to support Belarusian NGOs from outside, the Soros Foundation, and representatives of other donors finally gave up their long battle with the Lukashenko administration and closed their offices in Belarus (Hill 2005; Zagranica Group 2003).

The creation of the National Endowment for Democracy in 1983 marked a new trend in providing direct assistance for human rights activists and democratic organizations abroad (McFaul 2005, 155). NED receives money from the Federal government, but the Endowment remains independent in its style of work. Unlike USAID, which has focused on the developmental aid, NED was created just to do democracy work.
NED’s Assistance to Ukraine and Belarus

The NED started with direct grant initiatives to bolster independent publications in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, demonstrating that media assistance is also an important area of the support for civil society and democracy in general (Carothers 1999, 235-6). In an interview, Rodger Potocki (2008), Director of Europe and Eurasia Region in the NED, said that NED have never had used a USAID “cookie-cutter” model that democracy develops similarly or that one can apply the same approach. This is the old development model from the 1960s onward and has also been widely used among German Stiftungen and other Western European donors. Moreover, USAID has been known for bringing consultants to recipient countries; NED, however, has always provided direct funds to the recipient countries’ civil society groups. This approach distinguishes the organization from USAID’s external project method widely criticized by practitioners and scholars:

The NED is very different, very unique …. NED was based on the principle that local partners know best what should be done in the country. …they ask us “is that a good idea?” But it is not us telling them what needs to be done in their country. We do not believe in a donor-driven mentality; we really think that idea should come from those places (Potocki 2008).

NED at the beginning of each year outlines the strategy for each country and what the priorities for the funding are, but the Endowment does not really intervene in the proposal writing (Potocki 2008). According to the Democracy Projects Database by NED, there were a total of 291 Ukrainian and Belarusian projects funded by the organization between 1993 and 2006. Of these, 95 percent were Ukrainian projects that have been continuously funded since 1993. There is no data available on Belarusian projects funded from 1992 to 2003, and the first information on Belarusian projects was provided in 2004. In 2006, for example, there were thirty-five Ukrainian projects funded, as compared to five Belarusian ones. Nevertheless, the
organization actually spent more on Belarusian projects—$2.6 million as compared to $2.2 million spent on Ukrainian projects. There is another difference in these projects—whereas it is possible to find out the grantees of the Ukrainian projects, it is impossible to find out the grantees of the Belarusian projects; for NED protects their identity.

Among the long-term Ukrainian partners are, for example: Smoloskyp⁹, Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, Kharkiv Center for Women’s Studies, Dnipropetrovsk Center for Social Research, Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research, Youth Alternative, and Europe XXI Foundation. Although NED recently started to finance projects of other Ukrainian organizations, so far the strategy supports an argument that direct funds tend to have been distributed within a tight circle of recipients (Carothers 1999). Asked how recipient groups find out about NED, Potocki (2008) said:

We have been working for twenty years in these countries, everybody knows us quite well. We travel because we do not have local offices, we are in the field three out of twelve months, and a lot of people know us. …we might not know all these little groups in Eastern Ukraine, but in big cities people know about us.

Whereas NED manages to find new groups consistently, in a given year 70 percent of grants are renewals with longer-term partners; 30 percent are new projects (Potocki 2008). Some small civil society groups can receive grants through re-granting assistance. Joanna Rohozinska (2008), Program Officer for Europe and Eurasia in NED, said that projects are more likely to be funded by NED if there are new organizations brought to project implementation. She stated, a “bonus is given if there is interaction with other groups, if there is a kind of networking

⁹ Smoloskyp’s activity is divided into several areas: book publishing, a monthly information newsletter Smoloskyp Ukrainy, a quarterly journal Moloda Natsiya [Young Nation], a student aid foundation, seminars, workshops and conferences, and Ukraine’s first Archive, Museum and Documentation Center of Ukrainian Samvydav (samizdat) in Kyiv. Smoloskyp places a high priority on working with young people (students, scholars, aspiring writers, journalists, young politicians). For more information about the organization see its website at http://www.smoloskyp.kiev.ua/docs/englishe.htm
together.” The question is what are the projects? What did they do? Did they operate in Ukraine or bring Ukrainians to America?

Although the majority of direct grantees have been Ukrainian organizations, American NGOs have received funding. Examples include the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE); the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS)—formerly the Free Trade Union Institute; the International Republican Institute (IRI); and the National Democratic Institute (NDI). For example, in 1997, a grantee of one of the projects was the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the subgrantee was also an American organization – The American Foreign Policy Council (AFPC), which within the project worked with several Ukrainian organizations to conduct a series of regional seminars on economic reform. NED also gave funds to the NDI for their activities to bring representatives from three democratic political movements (Rukh, the Christian Democratic Union, MIST) to observe local elections in the United States. Sometimes, Ukrainian organizations have been subgrantees for American organizations funded by NED. For instance, the Association of Entrepreneurs "Infobusiness" in Kyiv was a subgrantee of CIPE and within the project conducted a public education and advocacy campaign to promote the development of a market economy in Ukraine.

In 1998, six Ukrainian projects were implemented by American organizations (half with Ukrainian partners) out of a total of sixteen; but these six projects comprised 60 percent of all funds granted for Ukrainian initiatives in the year. The most expensive project in which a US organization was as a sole grantee was the International Republican Institute’s (IRI) international election observation mission of the March 29, 1998 Ukrainian parliamentary elections. An example of project in which the Ukrainian organization acted as subgrantee and the US organization as a grantee is the project in which the CIPE, with the Ukrainian Center for
Independent Research (UCIPR), received support to increase the flow of information critical in the economic and democratic transformation process.

The year 1999 marks an increase in projects implemented by Ukrainian organizations as compared to American entities’ projects. In fact, in recent years, American organizations have received money less frequently from NED. In 2006, out of thirty-five Ukrainian projects, only three American organizations received funding—the American Center for International Labor Solidarity, the Center for International Private Enterprise, and the International Republican Institute. These three American organizations received 35 percent of all funds granted for Ukrainian projects in 2006. CIPE received two grants. One was to organize a conference for think tank representatives and key policymakers who are committed reformers from the Balkans and the former Soviet Union, and the second one was to educate major Ukrainian political parties in five regions on economic reform. ACILS received funds to continue to improve the capacity of the free trade union movement to bring Ukrainian laws into compliance with international labor standards. Finally, IRI conducted a short-term election observation mission with the NED money.

The Endowment is more likely to support projects that focus on media and publishing (30 percent of all direct projects in Ukraine) and legislatures and elections (17 percent). Other fields of emphasis in Ukrainian projects are public policy, education, and youth programs.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{10}The content of fifteen NED direct projects in Belarus funded between 2004 and 2006. The database does not include earlier data, however, projects can be divided into seven categories: legislature and elections, media and publishing, education, human rights, public policy, business, and economic development. By taking into account the amount spent on these categories, one can ascertain that NED seems to emphasize projects that directly focus on elections, \textit{i.e.} that educate citizens, mobilize voters, support pro-democratic coalitions, and monitor polling stations. Thus far, NED has spent 33 percent of the organization’s total direct grants to Belarusians on these activities. Another one-third of the monies goes to media and publishing, \textit{i.e.}, strengthen pro-democratic sources of objective information, including independent newspapers, NGO bulletins, an Internet magazine and a media monitoring organization that are to some extent breaking some information blockade imposed by the dictatorial regime in Belarus.
The question arises as to why the NED is shifting its strategy by “going local” and funding more Ukrainian projects implemented by Ukrainian organizations. A few possible answers to this question result from analysis. First, the change may stem from the fact the NED finds this strategy of “going local” more effective and less costly than funding projects implemented by American organizations. Comparing the sizes of grants shows that no single Ukrainian organization received as much as an American organization. For example, in 2006, the American Center for International Labor Solidarity received $396,000 for the grant mentioned above. This amount was four times more than the most expensive project of Ukrainian organization. Second, maybe American organizations have a sense of accomplishing their missions in Ukraine and are not of much help anymore. Third, perhaps there are more funds allocated to Ukrainian organizations, because they are able to ask for funds themselves and also because Ukrainian organizations have earned the status as a trusted grantees. Supporting this statement is the fact that some Ukrainian organizations have acted as subgrantees in the past, but later became sole grantees. For example, the Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research used to cooperate with the Center for International Private Enterprise, and Youth Alternative with the Washington-based Foundation for Democratic Education.

The evaluations of democracy-building work, like McFaul’s writings, seem to be more favorable to the NED approach than to the USAID model, because the direct grants method has many advantages. In direct grants money goes directly into the recipient society, and this method permits greater flexibility in the design and implementation of projects. However, NED’s mode of operation involves difficulties and limitations as well. An obstacle to reaching smaller local organizations in a recipient country is the absence of a representative office. In order to compensate for this lack, NED sends its employees on short travels to the regions. However,

11 See for example McFaul (2005).
NED’s employees cannot get visas to Belarus, so that the organization has difficulties with reaching local communities. Moreover, in order to avoid any misuse of money, donors were more likely to finance those more Westernized groups whose members spoke English and were familiar with grants proposals, and so forth (Carothers 1999, 263; 271-2). These practices, in turn, contributed to the emergence in Ukraine of new types of grant-oriented NGOs, known as *grantoids* [grant-eaters], which were the first to receive financial support (Narozhna 2004, 243).¹²

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that the direct grants aimed at assisting democratizing initiatives of recipient groups in Belarus and Ukraine do not tell the whole story of NED grants in these two countries. The agency also provides grants to NGOs based in Central and Eastern Europe countries, which have their own Ukrainian and Belarusian projects. NED calls these forms of funding cross-border projects; in them, Polish NGOs play major role. Such cross-border projects may also be considered as a way to improve the effectiveness of NED’s monies spent in the post-communist region.

**The Polish Governmental Aid Program**

Democracy assistance is no longer only the domain of Western advanced democracies; for many young democracies, earlier recipients of aid today act as donors. Before presenting the Polish approach to democracy assistance in its neighborhood, it is instructive to present Poland as a new donor in the international arena—the government’s motives and ways of engaging into aid provision.

---

¹² Narozhna’s findings refer to the USAID, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the EU/EC program in Ukraine.
The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development’s (OECD) data on Polish Official Development Assistance (ODA) go back to 1998. ODA is the sum of donations and loans given to developing countries by official government institutions of donor countries or by international organizations and is aimed to support economic and political progress in aid recipient countries. Table A3.1 (Appendix 3) demonstrates amounts of aid provided by Western donors and all young democracies. In comparison to Western countries, Poland provided more aid in 2007 than New Zealand and was only slightly behind Portugal, Luxembourg, and Greece. However, as compared to other young democracies in Figure 3.1, Poland provides fewer financial resources to aid provision than Korea, but clearly stands out as the major donor from the post-communist region, outpacing Hungary, the Czech Republic, and the Slovak Republic.

Figure 3.1. The Amount of Official Development Assistance Provided by Some Young Democracies
Notes: 1) ODA Net Disbursement is the sum of grants, capital subscriptions and net loans (loans extended minus repayments of loan principal and offsetting entries for debt relief).
Total ODA provided by Poland in 2007 was $356 million, the equivalent of 0.08 percent of Poland’s GDP.\textsuperscript{13} As Figure 3.2 demonstrates, year by year, the Polish Government has increased funds allocated to foreign assistance. These consist of multilateral assistance (assistance provided through international organizations) and bilateral assistance (provided directly through Polish institutions, organizations and other bodies).

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{ODA_Provided_by_Poland.png}
\caption{ODA Provided by Poland, 1998-2007}
\end{figure}

Notes: \textsuperscript{1} ODA Net Disbursement is the sum of grants, capital subscriptions and net loans (loans extended minus repayments of loan principal and offsetting entries for debt relief.
Bilateral ODA includes: Project and Program Aid Technical Co-operation ODA Grants in A.F. Packages, Developmental Food Aid, Humanitarian Aid, Debt Forgiveness, Other Action on Debt Support to NGOs, Support to International Private Organizations, Contributions to Public-Private Partnerships, Promotion of Development Awareness, Administrative Costs, Refugees in Donor Countries, Other Grants and Non-Grants ODA.
Multilateral ODA includes: grants to United Nations Agencies, European Commission, International Development Association (IDA), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Finance Corporation (IFC), Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), to Regional Development Banks, The Global Environment Facility (GEF), and other agencies.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13} Author’s calculations based on the OECD. Stat and World Development Indicators (WDI) compiled by the World Bank. According to the WDI, Polish GDP (in current $) was $420.321 billion in 2007 (data extracted on October 13, 2008).
\textsuperscript{14} Other institutions and organizations that receive Polish contributions for multilateral programs include: the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund; NATO Partnership for Peace; International Committee of the Red Cross; International Organization for Migration; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD); Partnership for Democratic Governance; Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); Council of Europe; and Geneva Center for Security Policy (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006).
The question arises as to why the Polish Government is providing assistance to other countries? As emphasized in the public documents and in an interview, there are two main groups of factors affecting Polish Government decisions to grant aid. These are international commitments and domestic interests. Poland’s obligation for aid provision stems from its membership in international organizations. By obtaining membership in OECD in 1996, Poland demonstrated its aspirations to join a club of the developed countries, which are the world’s wealthiest countries, actively involved in aid provision. Because of this membership in the OECD, it is Poland’s moral obligation to provide aid to developing countries. Moreover, the Polish Government has endorsed the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000, the Political Declaration and Plan of Implementation adopted during the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, as well as The Paris Declaration emphasizing the effectiveness of aid implementation. By supporting these international initiatives, Poland pledged to share responsibility and become involved in actions aimed at solving global economic, social, and humanitarian problems.

15 The official documents regarding Polish foreign assistance include “The Strategy for Poland’s Development Cooperation” adopted by the Polish Council of Ministers in 2003 as well as documents produced annually by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA).

16 The main aim of the Millennium Declaration, adopted by the member states of the United Nations in 2000, was to formulate goals which represent an international commitment to ensure better living conditions in the world. One of the goals of this Declaration associated with development and poverty eradication is to decrease by half the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. Other goals are strengthening the efforts to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases, particularly in the Sub-Saharan African countries, as well as in other regions of the world; equal education opportunities; reduction by half of the number of people without access either to potable water or without basic sanitary conditions. With respect to democracy promotion, the Declaration underlines the cooperative effort aimed at strengthening the rule of law, civil society, and human rights. For more information on Millennium Development Goals see United Nations Millennium Declaration, available at http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf.

In February 2005, the OECD organized the Paris High Level Forum in Aid Effectiveness, hosting donor and developing-country governments, multilateral donor agencies, regional development banks and international agencies. The Forum decided that donors’ commitment to aid provision should rest on five principles: ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, mutual accountability (Full text of the Paris Declaration available at http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/41/34428351.pdf). While the Millennium Development Goals set out objectives to be fulfilled in the sphere of reducing poverty, the Paris Declaration outlines the ways of meeting these objectives through respect for developing countries’ priorities and needs, adjustment of development activities to these needs, harmonization of procedures between donor countries; and focus on specific results of development assistance initiatives.
However, above all, membership in the European Union has had an impact on Poland’s aid provision. With its accession to the European Union on May 1, 2004, Poland demonstrated that the state is politically and economically ready to join a club of major European aid donors and to undertake initiatives, including aid provision, not only at the European but also at the global level. The EU is considered one of the world’s largest donors, and requires countries that join this organization to commit to provide help to developing countries. Similarly to other member states of the EU, Poland is obligated to have an institutionalized system of providing aid and to co-finance European Union’s assistance programs. Therefore, since Poland’s accession to the EU, much of Polish aid has been channeled through institutions and programs managed by the European Commission. Figure 3.2 shows that a real breakthrough in the increase of multilateral aid was the year 2004 when Poland joined the EU. According to the MFA Annual Report 2007, the Polish share in the EU total assistance budget in 2006 was 2.5 percent and was the largest from all new member states. The Polish contribution exceeded that some of older members of the EU, such as Austria, Ireland and Finland.

Not only does the EU require Poland to contribute to the Community’s multilateral aid provision and to actively participate in common initiatives undertaken by the EU, but also the EU shapes Polish bilateral aid. The European Consensus on Development adopted in December 2005 laid out common objectives, rules and values guiding assistance efforts undertaken by all EU members.¹⁷ According to this Consensus, the volume of assistance and the expected increase in the volume of Poland’s assistance is subject to close co-ordination within the entire EU. As

---

¹⁷ The European Consensus, for the first time since the existence of the EU, defines the framework of common principles within which the EU and its Member States will implement their development policies. (For more information on this document see [http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12544.htm](http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/r12544.htm)).
the result of its membership in the EU, Poland has committed itself to reach the ODA/GDP ratio of 0.17 percent by 2010 and 0.33 percent by 2015.18

Whereas the volume of Polish foreign assistance and Poland’s overall engagement in assistance activities is conditioned by its membership in the EU, a choice of recipient countries is within the EU members’ domains. The European Union does not interfere in the geographical distribution of financial resources, allowing its members to define the direction of their assistance. According to the European Consensus on Development, the member states enjoy some freedom to choose not only the geographic but also the sector priorities for their assistance activities. Therefore, similarly to other EU members, Poland chooses its priority countries and areas of assistance which are compatible with Polish foreign policy goals and the so-called Polish “comparative advantage”—i.e. specialization in certain types of assistance (Sycz 2008).

Documents emphasize that Poland provides aid, because the Polish Government perceives helping others as a means of boosting its prestige on the international arena as a country that does not forget the problems of other regions in the world (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). More importantly, however, Poland also embeds in aid-giving the country’s national foreign policy interests. Through aid provision the Polish Government supports its diplomatic initiatives. The fact that aid is an important tool of the Polish Government’s foreign policy is supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ (MFA) involvement in dealing with Polish aid.

---
18 In 2005 the Council of the European Union set the level of assistance to the GDP ratio for the old and new EU members. For the old EU members this ratio is 0.51 by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015 (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006, 20).
How the Polish Government Channels Aid

Despite the fact that assistance provision is a new area of Poland’s international activities, Poland was able to expand channels of aid distribution in a short time. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the predominant governmental body dealing with Polish assistance. The Ministry sets the direction and priorities of Polish aid policy, manages the implementation of bilateral and multilateral project assistance, and undertakes initiatives in cases of humanitarian and food catastrophe. Specifically, within the MFA there is the Development Co-operation Department that is responsible for managing aid and is also responsible for the co-operation with international organizations, such as the EU, UN, and OECD. The department has been operating within the MFA since September 2005. Prior to this date, all assistance-related activities were carried out by the UN System and Global Problems Department at the MFA. The Development Co-operation Department is composed of 1) The Development Policy and Programming Unit, 2) The Unit for Implementation of Development Co-operation Programs, and 3) The Democracy Support Unit.

Other governmental bodies that deal with aid provision are primarily the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the Ministry of Finance. Also, other government agencies involved, to lesser extent, in aid provision include: the Ministry of National Education (MNE); the Office of the Committee for European Integration; the Ministry of Economy; the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage; the Ministry of Interior and Administration; the Ministry of

---

19 The amount of financial resources that the MFA receives comes from the special reserve of the Polish budget. According to Polish Constitution (1997), Chapter 10 Article 224, the Cabinet (the Council of Ministers) prepares a draft state budget and then supervises its implementation and passes a resolution on the closing of the state’s accounts and a report on the implementation of the Budget. The Parliament’s lower chamber (the Sejm) adopts the State budget for a fiscal year by means of a Budget Act (the budget law is also subject to consideration by the Senate). Announcement of the Budget Act requires the signature of the President, who may refuse to sign a bill and then sent it for examination by the Constitutional Court.
Agriculture and Rural Development; the Ministry of National Defense; the Ministry of
Construction, the Ministry of the Environment; the Ministry of Health; the Ministry of Labor and
Social Policy.

The Ministry of Finance grants reduction and conversion of debts, preferential loans, and
the like, as well as making transfer payments to international financial institutions of which
Poland is a member. Poland provides preferential loans, which according to the norms of the
OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) are loans that contain a donation amounting
to at least 25 percent of the total loan; debt relief to developing countries and those
democratizing; and contributions to international financial institutions. Polish loans are provided
mainly for environmental, educational and health projects, as well as for modernization of
infrastructure, agriculture and public transportation. In 2007, Polish financial aid recipients were
China, Montenegro, Uzbekistan, Nicaragua, and the International Development Association
(IDA) within the World Bank (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007).

The Ministry of Science and Higher Education focuses on educational aid in the form of
scholarships and internships. Of all types of Polish assistance, scholarships offered to
international students have the longest tradition. Citizens of recipient countries receive funds
from the Polish Government to complete undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral programs at
Polish universities. The biggest group of recipients comprises citizens from Belarus, Ukraine,
Albania, Moldova, Afghanistan, and Macedonia.

Governmental initiatives are integral parts of the Official Development Assistance
Program of the Republic of Poland. Education assistance offered by the Ministry of Science and
Higher Education is classified as bilateral aid. However, financial assistance of the Ministry of
Finance as well as assistance managed by the MFA are of both bilateral and multilateral character, as Figure 3.3 of the model of Polish aid provision demonstrates.

Figure 3.3. Poland’s Foreign Assistance Channels
Notes: *The amount of financial resources that the MFA receives comes from the special reserve of the Polish budget Number 43 called the Implementation of the Polish Program for Global Development and Support for International Cooperation for Democracy and Civil Society.

In 2008 the Polish government allocated PLN 110 million ($ 39.1 million), from the state budget to foreign assistance administered by the MFA. *20* Poland committed itself to provide help based on the recognition of the needs of all developing countries—both neighboring states and

---

20 According to currency exchange rates available at Economist.com, 1 PLN = $ 0.2817 (extracted on December 10, 2009).
geographically distant countries. However, since Poland has less expertise as well as fewer organizational and logistic capacities for providing aid to distant countries, the government is more likely to do so through multilateral channels. As Figure 3.3 shows, multilateral assistance funds come from not only specific state budgetary reserves in use of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also from resources of Ministry of Finance and other government agencies. The bulk of financial resources allocated for multilateral assistance are payments made into the budget of the European Union. The remainder constitutes financial resources allocated to multilateral assistance in the form of projects managed by the United Nations System; World Bank Group; the International Monetary Fund (IMF); the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD); and the European Investment Bank.

The MFA reports that Poland has recently reduced the number of multilateral assistance institutions to which the state contributes, to those that have the greatest capacity for delivering effective aid. This move is motivated by the fact that MFA wants to raise Poland’s profile in these institutions and thus to be able to exert more influence on their activities. In 2008, the percentage of the funds at disposal of the MFA that were allocated to multilateral assistance was 5 percent, as compared to 73 percent allocated in bilateral aid. Remaining 22 percent of the MFA assistance is spent on other activities associated with aid provision (see Figure 3.4).
It is worth discussing some of the assistance activities taken by the MFA, which are shown in Figure 3.4. The MFA provides so-called Budget Support for selected aid priority recipients. The main purpose of this initiative is to provide aid for primary development projects in the recipient countries. It should be mentioned here that budget support initiatives are distributed to the priority recipient countries, and are implemented based on bilateral talks with selected countries. These projects are related to sectors of the economy crucial for recipient countries’ economic stability and development. By incorporating aid into recipient countries’ national budgets, this type of assistance delegates more rights and responsibilities to partner countries and increases the accountability of the recipient countries’ governments for their own development policies. In 2008 Poland allocated almost 5 percent of its assistance administered by the MFA to this category.

---

21 Aid priority countries are defined in the next section.
However, there are also activities directed to countries that do not have a priority status. These countries can directly co-operate with the MFA within so-called International Programs. An example of this kind of activity is the Training for Young Diplomats organized in 2006 for many diplomats, not only from neighboring Eastern Europe but also from Africa, to participate in a month-long program. Participants could debate and deal with issues related to European integration, transatlantic cooperation, international security, and development assistance. Also, the bulk of Polish humanitarian aid and food aid goes to distant countries. Humanitarian aid is granted in the form of contributions to international institutions through multilateral channels. However, the MFA also distributes money for projects supporting countries affected by natural disasters or military conflicts. The MFA works through Polish Embassies and co-operates with Polish NGOs for the implementation of humanitarian aid and food aid projects that deal with emergency situations or with long-term crises. These undertakings also deal with disaster prevention; reconstruction of infrastructure and equipment; overcoming difficulties associated with migration (refugees, displaced persons and repatriates); and reduction of other post-crisis damages. In 2007, the main Polish MFA humanitarian aid recipients were Moldova, Sudan, the Palestinian Autonomy, Afghanistan, Mexico, Bangladesh, Peru, North Korea, China and Burma/Myanmar. In 2008, the MFA allocated PLN 7 million ($2.5 million), primarily to countries with most urgent humanitarian needs such as Sudan, Chad, and Iraq.

Almost 7 percent of the total amount of MFA aid is spent in Poland on development education, volunteer programs, and administrative costs. The major goals of development education and volunteer service programs are to raise awareness in Polish society and to increase

---

22 Polish Humanitarian aid is channeled mainly through the UN system, the Central Emergency Relief Fund, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements. Humanitarian aid also is financed from the EU’s general budget, to which Poland contributes as a member state.

23 According to currency exchange rates available at Economist.com, 1 PLN = $0.2817 (extracted on December 10, 2009).
citizens’ knowledge and involvement in the world’s development problems. This undertaking also is aimed at making people understand relations between developed countries and societies of developing countries or those undergoing democratic transformation. Polish civil organizations and educational institutions, with financial support from the MFA, play a particular role in making Polish society familiar with international development issues and informing citizens about reasons and consequences of poverty in the world. As a result of the call for proposals in 2007, the MFA financed expositions, meetings with professionals working in the field of development assistance, workshops, and training. In addition to subventions for educational initiatives, the MFA cooperates with academic centers in order to facilitate research on development assistance and inclusion of this topic into programs of study.

In order to stimulate the interest of citizens in Polish aid activities, the MFA supports the initiatives that make these initiatives more visible. The Ministry’s goal is to inform citizens where aid goes, how it is channeled, and why Poland is helping other countries. By disseminating information about Polish assistance, the MFA also wants to promote a positive image of the Polish aid program and encourage co-operation with Polish and international partners. The MFA has been achieving these goals through a number of instruments. In 2006, for example, the MFA launched a special website www.polishaid.gov.pl which is a key information instrument about the Polish aid program. On this website, one can find information directed toward institutions and organizations interested in co-operation with the MFA. In addition to this website, the MFA prints publications, generates media interest and organizes public events publicizing Poland’s assistance efforts.

Finally, Polish resources allocated to foreign aid funds are also spent on evaluation and monitoring projects in order to determine the efficiency of assistance activities financed from the
Polish budget. There also are financial resources assigned to cover administrative costs associated with managing and implementing of Polish aid, such as contract work, purchase of materials and equipment, advertisements in the press, legal services for aid activities, business trips, and the like.

Priority Recipient Countries of Polish Bilateral Aid

Whereas Polish multilateral assistance usually goes to distant countries and to specific areas of assistance, e.g. HIV/AIDS or assistance to refugees, the bilateral aid focuses on countries located in Poland’s close neighborhood or where Poland is more useful with its experience and organizational capacities.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as the main governmental body that makes decisions about Polish aid, each year decides on priority recipients of Polish assistance and announces them together with the volumes of assistance to be spent on each country. The priority countries are the main recipients of Polish bilateral aid. Some decision has been made that assistance could be most effectively used in these countries (Sycz 2008). The essential part of bilateral aid has been targeted to Belarus, Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Afghanistan, the Balkan countries, and the remaining countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). These countries are labeled as Polish priority aid recipients. Figure 3.5 demonstrates the allocation of financial resources within the MFA allocated in 2008.

---

25 As of 2008 Iraq is not a priority country in the Polish aid program administered by the MFA, since it claims that lives of activists involved in assistance activities have been endangered. However, Poland continues to support Iraq through multilateral assistance.
Two recipient countries that receive a significant share of Polish bilateral aid assistance administered by the MFA are Belarus and Ukraine. In 2008, the Polish government allocated PLN 80 million ($28.5 million), from the Polish budget to bilateral foreign assistance administered by the MFA; and, as Figure 3.5 shows, more than half of that aid was devoted to Ukraine and Belarus. The MFA underlines in its documents that these countries are ranked high on the list of Polish aid recipients because of Polish foreign policy priorities, geopolitical location, and impact on stability and peace in the whole post-communist region. The situation in the post-communist region, especially in Poland’s close neighbors—Belarus, where basic human rights and democratic values are violated, and Ukraine in which ongoing transformation faces many obstacles—creates precedence for the allocation of Polish bilateral aid to these countries, as expressed by the MFA’s representative, Mieczysław Sycz (2008). The MFA officials believe

---

26 According to currency exchange rates available at Economist.com, 1 PLN = $0.2817 (extracted on December 10, 2009).
that assistance to Belarus and Ukraine raises the Polish position as a donor internationally and domestically.

The Polish Government also provides assistance to priority countries in collaboration with other donor states. One example of Polish trilateral assistance was the Polish-Canadian Development Co-operation Program (PCDC) implemented in 2006. The PCDC Program covered Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, and Sub-Saharan African countries. Projects were devoted to local self-government efficiency improvement; building local partnerships; leadership training; supporting schools (school construction and renovation) and local community centers; and providing support to repair infrastructure.

**The Polish Approach to Democracy Assistance in Belarus and Ukraine**

From the Polish governmental documents we learn not only about the geographical focus of Polish aid but also about goals that the Polish Government wants to achieve with its assistance. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs assistance activities carried out until 2006 were based on “The Strategy for Poland’s Development Co-operation,” adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2003. The main goals for MFA assistance presented in this document were support for sustainable development, poverty reduction, and the promotion of democracy, rule of law, and human rights. However, since 2006, Polish foreign assistance within the MFA has been classified into two main areas: 1) development assistance and 2) support for the process of building democracy and civil society. This new classification means that the assistance programs implemented by the MFA do not only include actions that can be qualified as Official Development Assistance, but also encompass support for democracy.
According to the draft of the new strategy for the Polish Government’s assistance as well as other documents issued in Poland after 2006, it becomes clear that the Polish Government’s goals of aid provision are to promote democratic standards, the rule of law, good governance, and respect for human rights, and to enhance the independence of civil society in recipient countries. The new strategy considers the need to make Poland more involved in the democratization processes of Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and Central Asia. Of pivotal importance also is promotion of European integration and Euro-Atlantic co-operation. Once approved, the new strategy will replace the existing strategy of 2003.

The broadening scope of Polish activities for promoting democracy reflects a growing donors’ consensus and belief that sustainable economic development of aid recipient countries depends on progress in the functioning of state institutions, as well as respect for democratic standards and human rights. The MFA official documents stress that the Polish focus on democracy assistance, in addition to the activities aimed at improvement of the social and economic situations of recipient countries, also stems from Poland’s “comparative advantage” in this area of support since Poland was a recipient of Western democracy assistance and was a leader in bringing about democratic changes in the post-communist region.

In addition to the new aid strategy, there are plans to prepare Country Strategy Papers, each of which will be concise documents describing assistance strategy towards a particular Polish aid recipient. These documents, which will prepared in close cooperation with recipient countries and Polish NGOs actively involved in aid provision, will lay grounds for aid provision to each state in years to come. There are expectations that by focusing on a limited group of countries, Poland will get a chance to use its comparative advantage and thus to achieve a greater impact (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006).
MFA documents emphasize that Poland played important role in the historic changes in its region, Europe and the world. Polish Solidarity was a social movement that enabled the conduct of essential systemic and economic transformation in Poland and served as inspiration for other countries in the communist bloc. Therefore, “in the name of Solidarity we [the Polish people] will grant all-round assistance to countries in need, particularly our [Polish] close neighbors: Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia” (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007b).

The role of Poland in sharing its experience with other countries and in bridging the gap between post-communist countries in the region and this role has been emphasized occasionally by political officials. Polish President Lech Kaczynski, in his address to the UN General Assembly on September 19, 2006, underlined Polish efforts in supporting Eastern neighbors in their reforms:

Poland, which in Central and Eastern Europe paved the way towards market economy and towards civil society building, has extensive experience in these matters. We are prepared to share this experience even further with countries that are transforming their economies and state institutions or that intend to embark upon the reform track.27

The current Polish finance minister, Jacek Rostowski, in the interview for BBC said: "We have received a significant contribution from the international community in the past and our view is that it's important we give something back, now that relatively we're not too badly off" (Hanrahan 2009). 28

Moreover, a document states that Poland provides aid, because Poland was a major recipient of foreign aid during its transformation process. The fact that Western aid significantly contributed to the success of the systemic transformations, as well as to social and economic

27 Speech by the President “May our Efforts be Inspired by Solidarity”, available at http://www.president.pl/x.node?id=6042877
28 The article further reports that the Poles are proud of two things: one is that they started the 1989 revolutions and the other is that instead of receiving international aid, they are now strong enough to donate it.
reforms initiated in 1989, is well-acknowledged not only among scholars but also among Polish intellectuals and politicians (Regulska 1998; 40; Sachs and Lipton 1990, 49; Balcerowicz, Blaszczyn, and Dabrowski 1997; Pridham 1999, Pridham, Herring and Sanford 1997; Schimmelfennig 2007). Since Poland’s socioeconomic success to some extent can be attributed to the foreign assistance that it received for many years from the Western countries and international organizations for the Polish struggle for freedom, it is a “privilege and obligation” for Poland to provide aid to others (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007b, 3). 29

In addition to the belief that others should be helped because Poland was, there are also political and strategic reasons for engaging in democracy assistance to Poland’s neighbors. The MFA underlines in documents, and one of its officials stated in an interview, that the post-Soviet region, specifically Belarus and Ukraine, is ranked high on the list of Polish aid recipients because of Polish foreign policy priorities, geopolitical locations, and the impact of Polish Eastern neighbors on stability and peace in the whole post-communist region.

Poland has existed in dangerous neighborhood, and history taught that Polish democracy would not be secured if the state were not protected by democracies surrounding it. Such a belief was spelled out by Jerzy Giedroyc, political activist, writer and editor of the very influential Polish political journal Kultura, published from 1947 to 2000 in Rome and later in Paris. Giedroyc believed that Poland cannot be truly free and be safe without free Lithuania, Belarus, and, above all, Ukraine. However, relations with these countries should be based on tolerance and friendship and not on Polish imperialism and dominance over its neighbors. Polish eastern policy should be amended, in his opinion, to have a chance to play an important role in Europe. Giedroyc was the first to declare that the Poles should recognize the right of Ukraine to the city

29 A similar statement on the Polish MFA’s website at http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Why_We_Provide_Assistance_204.html
of Lviv, and of Lithuania to Vilnius. Such bold statements made by Giedroyc in 1952 were very unique. His concept for the Polish eastern policy became a reference point for the generation of intellectuals and politicians in independent Poland, like Bronislaw Geremek, the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Thus, Poland’s neighbors, especially Ukraine, are key recipients of Polish assistance, as shown earlier. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine and Poland’s engagement there only support the influential role of Giedroyc’s view on Polish foreign policy. However, the question is whether the bilateral aid that the MFA provides to Belarus and Ukraine can be classified as democracy assistance; for the MFA budget does not contain a line for “democracy assistance.” Most helpful here is the examination of types of activities financed by the Government and the organizational structure of its assistance – that is, how the MFA bilateral aid is being channeled to recipient countries.

Projects financed by the MFA in Belarus and Ukraine demonstrate that the Polish Government seems to understand the difference between actions leading to democratic breakthrough and toward democratic consolidation and that these actions require the employment of different type of assistance by donors. Authoritarian Belarus is mostly aided by political democracy assistance that emphasizes support for civil society. However, in case of Ukraine that is aiming toward democratic consolidation, the Polish Government approach to democracy assistance presents a mix of political and developmental approaches. There are

30 The year 2006 was established by the Polish Parliament as the year of Jerzy Giedroyc. Thus, there were many exhibitions and publications devoted to his person in 2006. One of the sources that discusses Giedroyc view on eastern foreign policy is available at the official website of Poland’s former president Aleksander Kwasniewski http://www.kwasniewskialeksander.pl/int.php?mode=view&id=2207
31 Geremek was the social historian and politician who in August 1980 joined the Gdańsk workers’ protest movement and became one of the advisers of Solidarity, working closely with Lech Wałęsa. Later Geremek prepared proposals for peaceful democratic transformation in Poland, and in played a crucial role during the debates between Solidarity and the authorities in 1989. Geremek referred to Gieroyc’s impact on the shape of Polish foreign policy in his speech in the Polish Institute of International Affairs on November 28, 2000. The text (in Polish) is available on the website at http://www.pism.pl/files/cykl/cyk1%20Geremek.pdf
different types of assistance bundled together because of the complexity of democratic consolidation. Linz and Stepan (1996, 7-13) for example recognize five interconnected and mutually reinforcing conditions that must exist for a democracy to be consolidated. Democracy is more than a regime; it is an interacting system in which no single arena can function properly without some support from one or often all. First, the conditions must exist for the development of a free and lively civil society. Second, there must be a relatively autonomous and valued political society. Third, there must be a rule of law that ensures legal guarantees for citizens’ freedoms. Fourth, there must be a stable bureaucracy that is usable by the new democratic government. Fifth, there must be an institutionalized economic society. Some conditions mentioned by Linz and Stepan (1996) would be aided by developmental and others by political assistance.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs argues that support for civil society groups and the free media is a crucial element in the promotion of democratic change and the strengthening of the civil society in Belarus. The Polish governmental program implemented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasizes activities aimed at promoting democracy, with the assumption that these activities will contribute in the future to political and social changes. The Polish Government endorses initiatives aimed to activate Belarusian civil society, assuming that it might significantly contribute to democratization, and funds activities promoting independent culture and language (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007a).

The MFA provides direct subsidies for two Belarusian projects. First, the Ministry, in collaboration with Polish public television, created the satellite television channel “Belsat TV” which will be broadcast throughout the whole territory of Belarus. Eighty-seven percent of the MFA total bilateral assistance to Belarus in 2008 was spent on the MFA direct subsidies for this
television channel. The station is an undertaking organized on an unprecedented scale—in terms of its complexity, the required accounting, and people involved in its implementation as well in terms of potential impact on the Belarusian society. As stated by the MFA, the idea of this initiative is meant to address the needs expressed, among others, by Belarusian democratic circles, as well as Belarusian and Polish journalists (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008b). Belsat TV began broadcasting in December 2007 and is the first foreign satellite channel of Polish television. Programming is created in the Belarusian language by a team of Belarusian and Polish journalists. This initiative is the largest project of this type in Europe. Belsat TV is meant to provide information and opinion programs, documentaries, serials and feature films. The satellite channel has a chance to become one of the biggest and most famous individual foreign projects promoting democratic change in Belarus.

Another directly-funded project by the Polish Government is “The Konstanty Kalinowski Scholarship Program.”32 This program offers help to Belarusian students expelled from their universities because of participation in activities in favor of democratic values, and provides the opportunity to continue studies in Poland. The program was launched in March 2006 after the conclusion a letter of intent between Polish Government, represented by Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz; Alexander Milinkevich—presidential candidate in 2006 elections and a representative of the Democratic Bloc in Belarus; and representatives of the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland and the Conference of Rectors of Polish Universities. The Kalinowski program is directed toward 300 expelled students who, in addition to receiving scholarships, are also offered exemptions from tuition, accommodation expenses, and Polish and

32 Konstanty Kalinowski was the leader of the January Uprising in the lands of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania. He also referred to the good traditions of democracy, tolerance and freedom of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and opposed national oppression of cultures dominated by Imperial Russia. More information at http://www.belarusguide.com/culture1/people/Kastus.html or Kordowicz (1955).
English language courses. Students are also invited to participate in a cultural program. The Center for East European Studies of Warsaw University together with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education has been implementing the program.\textsuperscript{33}

However, in addition to direct grants, the Polish Government finds it important to cooperate with Polish NGOs to support civil society groups and the free media (radio, television and internet) that are subjects of Belarusian government harassment. In 2008, close to 60 percent of MFA aid to Belarus distributed through the MFA partners was channeled via Polish NGOs (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2008a). As Figure 3.3 has shown, in addition to Polish NGOs, the MFA co-operates with other central administration entities and with local government agencies. These partners receive MFA funds through the procedure of a call for proposals, organized since 2004 for NGOs, 2005 for central administration entities, and since 2006 for local institutions. Assistance initiatives are also undertaken by Polish Embassies within the Small Grants Fund.

In case of Ukraine, the Polish Government emphasizes the importance to support the state’s capacity to enforce its decisions associated with political and socio-economic reforms, as well as European integration. Such emphasis on state capacity recalls Tilly’s (2007, 15) argument that state capacity is an important feature of democratic regimes and that “no democracy can work if the state lacks the capacity to supervise democratic decision making and put its results into practice.”\textsuperscript{34} An emphasis on economic reforms, however, has its grounds in the discussion on the relationship between democratization or democratic consolidation and economic development. Modernization theory postulates that economic development is a

\textsuperscript{33} The author had a chance to meet some of Belarusian students accepted for the first year of the program during her participation in the Warsaw East European Conference organized by the Center for East European Studies at Warsaw University in July 2006.

\textsuperscript{34} See also Linz and Stepan (1996).
domestic factor that may lead to political democratization (Bunce 2000). Przeworski and Limongi (1997, 56) and Przeworski et al. 2000, argue that the emergence of democracy is not a byproduct of economic development, instead that find an evidence that “the more well-to-do a nation, the greater the chances it will sustain democracy.” Linz and Stepan (1996) observe a reciprocal relationship between democracy and economy. The authors point out that modern consolidated democracies require a set of accepted norms, institutions, and regulations that mediates between state and market. Democratic consolidation requires economic society which in turn requires an effective state (in term of capacity) (Linz and Stepan 1996, 11).

There are more MFA funds allocated to projects of Polish central administration to be spent in Ukraine than in Belarus. In 2008 almost as many of the MFA funds for Ukrainian projects were allocated to Polish central and local government projects together (47 percent) as to Polish NGOs (50 percent).

Since 2006, the most expensive Polish central government project has been SENSE (Strategic Economic Needs and Security Exercise) which instructs civil servants, representatives of the legislature, and members of business associations and NGOs in Ukraine about the country’s economic development. The project is organized by the Ministry of National Defense (in cooperation with the MFA), and the Center for East European Studies of Warsaw University. The training consists of a computer simulation which presents the functioning of an imaginary

---

35 The generic form of the thesis is associated with Lipset’s (1959) work and the theme has been shared and developed by others, such as Rueschemeyer et al. (1992), Huber et al. (1993), Boix and Stokes (2003) and Epstein et al. (2006), who have maintained that economic development facilitates democratization. However, the effect is far from linear; and the argument runs as follows: in societies with higher levels of economic wealth, people become more educated (the middle class increases) and tend to generate trust, tolerance, and participation, thus pushing for civil liberties and democratic governance.

36 Whereas the recent empirical research shows mixed results, many studies on democratization find it important to control for this variable. Political scientists’ findings vary on some main issues of whether economic growth leads to democracy, or maybe the other way round, and how to operationalize economic development.
country with a market economy. Participants are also introduced to problems of social, political and economic transformation.

Many Polish projects are directed toward Ukrainian authorities, in order to instruct them about reform in particular sectors of the economy. For example, supporting the creation and development of an agricultural advisory service is one of the most important elements of Polish outreach provided to Ukraine. The initiative responds to the Ukrainian partners’ need to broaden their knowledge on the possibilities of agricultural development and local communities’ activation in rural areas.  

Similarly, a few projects implemented by Polish central administration units refer to Ukrainian authorities’ need for solutions regarding common internal security, cross border cooperation and to combating organized crime.

The question arises why the Polish Government creates a network of assistance involving governmental and civil society agencies and whether it is necessary for the Government’s aid provision. The Millennium Declaration states that the Millennium goals have more chance to be achieved with a strong partnership between governments and civil society organizations. The Paris Declaration underlines the effectiveness of aid implementation. The fact that Poland has endorsed these documents pressures somehow the Polish government to elaborate partnerships with a range of official and societal entities that would allow Poland to fulfill its international

---

37 For example, the Pomorski Agricultural Advisory Center in Gdansk organized a series of training sessions, workshops and meetings with Ukrainian representatives of the advisory sector, students of agricultural universities and journalists dealing with agricultural issues (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006).

38 Within projects of the Higher Police School in Szczyno, Ukrainian participants compared law enforcement and criminal justice in several areas. Forensic specialists exchanged experiences, and discussed the work of police psychologists. Another theme was the discussion of human trafficking and the procedures applied to refugees, taking into account the European law and the solutions in the Polish criminal code. Within the framework of a cross-border project implemented by the Ministry of Interior and the Administration, the Polish border guard forces and Ukrainian state border guard forces dealt with the smuggling of vehicles and people. During workshop and practical training sessions, officials of the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service familiarized themselves with visa policy and administrative procedures undertaken towards foreigners staying in Poland and in the EU as well as with modern methods of personal identification at border crossings. (Information on central administration projects financed by the MFA in 2006, available at http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl/Information.on.central.administration.projects.in.the.field.of.foreign.assistance.in.2006.311.html)
commitments better. In addition to international commitments, there are domestic reasons, as well.

The MFA cooperates with these entities, because their expertise allows for the realization of different MFA democracy assistance goals. For example, the importance of offering assistance at the lowest administration levels in the recipient countries and reaching specific groups of recipients induces the MFA to cooperate with local government entities. Projects implemented by Polish central government agencies, however, are directed towards institutions of the same kind in the recipient countries and thus allow the Polish government to reach public officials and politicians. Finally, the interest of the Polish Government in offering civil society assistance causes the Polish government to share this responsibility with Polish non-governmental organizations, which are the most reliable partners due to their experience in this field.

All official organs of Polish lower level administrative units are qualified to apply for the MFA funds to finance projects. These administrative agencies usually cooperate with their counterparts in the recipient countries and predominantly focus upon strengthening local administration, supporting civil servants of the local governmental bodies, and helping to sustain regional economic development through cross-border cooperation. Therefore, in comparison to the projects implemented by Polish central government bodies, projects designed by the local governments are more specific and able to reach smaller groups of people from the recipient country who will benefit from implementation of the initiative. Polish local government bodies try to achieve their program goals through study visits, publishing multimedia presentations,

39 The administrative division of Poland since 1999 has been based on three levels of subordination. The territory of Poland is divided into voivodeships (provinces); these are further divided into powiats (counties); and these in turn are divided into gminas (communes or municipalities). Poland currently has 16 voivodeships, 379 powiats (including 65 cities with powiat status), and 2,478 gminas.
local administration meetings, job training, interchange of experiences through disseminating information on local administration reforms in Poland, and the like.\textsuperscript{40} The number of projects with local government financed by the MFA increases each year. In 2008, under the call for proposals organized by the MFA for Polish foreign assistance, twenty-six projects of local government were financed.

Similarly to local government bodies, Polish central government agencies submit project proposals that also match their fields of expertise and direct these undertakings towards institutions of the same kind in the recipient countries. Taking into account the potential of Polish central government institutions to strengthen links between central government agencies in donor and recipient countries, these entities are very important partners in providing assistance; and each year the number of projects financed by the MFA has also increased. In 2007, there were forty-eight projects of central government entities financed or co-financed by the MFA. The Polish applicants were various institutions, such as Oil and Gas Institute, Department of Geology and Geological Concessions in the Ministry of the Environment, Polish National Police, Agricultural Market Agency, and the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development. On the recipient side were their counterparts. Projects dealt with such fields as strengthening the agricultural sector, the justice sector, institutional capacity development of

\textsuperscript{40} As an example of Polish local governments’ projects financed by the MFA may serve those organized by the Marshall Office of the Lower Silesian Voivodeship in Poland, such as “Lower Silesian and Ukrainian Local Administration Meetings” and “Local Administration of the XXI century.” Those projects aimed to promote good governance in public institutions and included seminars for employees of central and local administration. During local administration meetings, Ukrainian representatives learned about adapting enterprises to operate in a free market economy and the adaptation of production to the requirements and norms of the European Union.

Another project supporting local administration and regional development is “An Exchange of Experiences on the example of Polish Morawica Municipality and Local Government in Central Ukraine.” In August 2007, in Vinnitsa Oblast were organized conferences on the functioning and organizational structure of local government and non-governmental organizations. Meetings aimed to answer the following questions: how are municipal finances managed? What is the recipe for good management of local government? What should be done to improve the cooperation between local government and the third sector? Thus, on the example the Polish Morawica Municipality, the Ukrainian local authorities could learn about the Polish experience with the reform of state administration.
central administration, improving safety on the border, and as well as support for economic transformation and European integration through the organization of training, study visits and conferences.

To some extent the MFA also engages Polish Embassies in carrying-out democracy assistance projects. In the embassies are Polish diplomats who have developed good knowledge about the local situation in the recipient country. Polish Embassies might have a better understanding about needs and obstacles; therefore their projects have more chance to be successfully implemented than projects designed in Poland (Sycz 2008). A great deal of MFA funds distributed through the Polish Embassies is spent on activities initiated and prepared at the local level in recipient countries. The number of projects financed by the MFA, with so-called Small Grants Funds that are implemented by the Polish Embassies, increases every year. In 2005 there were only 25 projects, whereas in 2006 and 2007, 131 and 172, respectively, were carried out. The financial resources at the disposal of the Polish Embassies are spent on projects such as purchase of equipment for a computer lab for people with special needs, and so forth.

However, as Figure 3.6 below shows, the main domestic partners for the Polish Government’s provision of bilateral aid to the priority countries are Polish non-governmental organizations. Polish NGOs are especially active in Belarus and Ukraine—ninety-eight Polish NGOs’ projects were approved for MFA funds through the call for proposals in 2008; and more than half of them were directed to Poland’s direct neighbors, Ukraine and Belarus.  

---

41 The names of Polish organizations and their projects that were granted with the governmental support in 2008 are included in Table A4.1.(Appendix 4).
Polish NGOs do not deal with politics of the recipient countries in the strict sense, as the associations prefer to leave this sphere in the hands of the relevant authorities. Rather, the NGOs aim to assist recipients at more social and local levels, to support civil society with specific solutions and projects. Since most NGOs focus their activities on supporting democracy, without these partners, the Polish Government’s efforts in providing democracy assistance would be less apparent.

In the opinion of Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy, the reason why the MFA made a decision to disburse its funds for aid through NGOs is that the MFA realized that Polish NGOs have an important role to play in Polish aid. For the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cooperation with Polish NGOs is important from more practical reasons, as well. According to the Polish law, the MFA is not authorized to send money to the foreign account of some organization; therefore the cooperation with Polish NGOs also from this point of view is essential (Sycz 2008).
Paweł Kazanecki (2008) of East European Democratic Center (EEDC) pointed out that the Polish activities in the post-communist region can focus on development aid, humanitarian initiatives and assisting democracy. The first two types of aid require cooperation with the authorities of the recipient country. The situation looks very different in the latter case. Democratizing activities can be implemented by consent and together with authorities, as in Ukraine; but the situation becomes complicated when the regime of the recipient country is authoritarian, as in Belarus. Therefore, in case of the hostility from the authorities, Polish NGOs can perform an important role in democracy assistance by targeting civil societies and reaching local communities (Kazanecki 2008).

It should be mentioned that thanks to Polish non-governmental organizations, in fact, Poland had been actively involved in assistance activities in the neighboring states since the early 1990s. The Polish Government involvement in aid provision extended the scope of activities, number of recipient countries, and the volume of assistance (Sycz 2008). As stated in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2006, 26):

The potential of Polish civil society organizations, co-operating with partners from developing countries, has been considerably strengthened. Their activities are not only limited to projects co-financed from the official development budget, but, in a great measure, they are a result of these organizations’ own efforts. In addition to the added value represented by their knowledge of specific developing countries’ realities and abilities to undertake effective and flexible actions, NGOs have intensified the humanitarian aspect of Polish assistance activities.

Taking into account the role of Polish NGOs in democracy assistance, their work requires a closer investigation in following chapters of the dissertation. Also, the question is whether Poland’s accession to the European Union has been changing the EU’s outlook on democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine.
Undoubtedly, many factors have facilitated the recent change in the EU’s approach toward democracy assistance and toward its direct neighbors, but the impact of the Union’s new member states is among those prominent ones. Polish interest in supporting its direct neighbors has been stronger than that of other countries because of history, culture, geographical location between east and west, and because of large Polish minorities in these countries as well as large Belarusian minorities living in Poland and Ukraine (Sushko and Prystayko 2006).42

Before the enlargement in 2004, the EU members saw Belarus and Ukraine as distant countries (Kubicek 2005; Pavliuk 2001). The situation changed once Belarus and Ukraine became direct neighbors of the EU after the Eastern enlargement. The role of the EU new members was especially visible during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, when the Presidents of Poland and Lithuania stimulated the EU interest in Ukrainian conflict. Vilnius and Warsaw strongly support the democratization of Belarus and Ukraine. Both Lithuania and Poland have had close contacts with the democratic oppositions and civil societies in these countries. There are, however, significant differences in the treatment of the Lukashenko government by Lithuania and Poland. Lithuania supports informal meetings with the highest Belarusian officials. In contrast, Poland is less likely to maintain such contacts, and prefers to support meetings with lower officials in the Belarusian regime (Gromadzki and Veselý 2006, 23-24).

Moreover, Poland’s participation in the EU’s decision-making mechanism enables the state to have an influence on the distribution of the community’s assistance funds through its

---

42 The number of ethnic Poles who, for example, are citizens of Belarus is estimated at between 420,000 and 555,000 (Magdziak-Mieszewska 2002, 350). Most ethnic Poles live in the areas surrounding Hrodna, Brest, Minsk, Vitebsk, Gomel, Mogilev. In 1990 the Union of Poles in Belarus was established. Around 250,000 ethnic Belarusians live in Poland, above all in Bialystok and surrounding areas (Magdziak-Mieszewska 2002, 351).
financial instruments. For the period 2007-2013, the EU has earmarked over 11 billion euros to promote cooperation with the neighboring countries—both in Eastern Europe and along the Mediterranean (Cieszkowski 2007). According to the Polish Government, resources for Eastern Europe are not sufficient; but with, *inter alia*, Polish involvement in convincing the EU partners, allocations have been increased to these countries for the period of 2007-2013. Ukraine received 75 percent more as compared with the previous budget period, Moldova and the Caucasus—over 200 percent more each. Planned expenditure on aid to Belarus also grew by 85 percent (Cieszkowski 2007).

Poland actively participates in European Union assistance not only financially but also with its expertise. Every year representatives from the MFA participate in the Belarus Donors Forum. This meeting gathers all countries actively involved in providing assistance to Belarus, including EU non-member states, such as the US, and international organizations.

Polish elites representing the government and the non-governmental sector seem to criticize the EU’s conditionality approach toward its Eastern neighbors, arguing that this approach does not correspond to the new situation in the EU after enlargement in 2004 or to the deteriorating situation in Belarus. Polish elites have a different opinion of the appropriate methods for influencing the situation in the neighborhood and agree that it is important to facilitate contacts between societies and the EU countries of Eastern Europe through meetings, visits, and educational programs, as well as business and social contacts. In their opinion, such an approach is speeding up democratic processes in these countries and stimulates transition (Cieszkowski 2007). In this vein, Poland acknowledges a need for significant help in movement of people between the EU and the countries of Eastern Europe. Since there is some freedom that new member states have in issuing visas, for example, Polish NGOs lobby the Polish
government for an agreement on visa facilitation and softening of visa regulations (Fedirko 2008). Finally, recognizing the economic sphere as one of the most important areas of cooperation between the EU and countries of Eastern Europe within the ENP, Polish elites have suggested a new generation of agreements which do not focus solely and exclusively on a liberalization of trade in goods and services, but should also ensure the removal of non-tariff barriers (Cieszkowski 2007).

Polish NGOs also try to make an effort to attract Western attention to the post-communist region. For example, the Casimir Pulaski Foundation organized conferences under Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) auspices on the democratization of media in Belarus. In order to underline the importance of the topic discussed, this conference was held when the plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe was devoted to the topic of mass communication. During the last conference, which took place in the Polish Sejm (lower chamber of Parliament), the Foundation brought the situation of the Belarusian media closer to all participants and gave recommendations. Moreover, in the opinion of Zbigniew Pisarski from the Foundation, representatives of Belarusian media, both governmental and in opposition, who have no real chance for free discussion in Belarus, were very grateful for such opportunity of discussion in Poland (Pisarski 2008).

The College of Eastern Europe from Wroclaw, for example, publishes new periodical, *New Eastern Europe*, dedicated to a broad range of subjects on post-communist matters with the aim to provide accurate information on all aspects of politics, economy, society and culture in the former Soviet republics. The periodical is a forum for everyone with an interest in Eastern

---

43 The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe investigates, recommends and advises many European institutions on a wide range of issues significant in the European political context. It meets in Strasbourg. ([http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Sessions/PreviousSessions_e.htm](http://assembly.coe.int/Main.asp?link=/Sessions/PreviousSessions_e.htm)).
Europe. It contains also articles of foreign authors from East and West like Liliia Shevtsova and Timothy Snyder, to present their different points of view, (Dąbrowski 2008).

The East European Democratic Center works also on raising awareness among the EU old members about the Belarusian situation. The Center has organized “The Civic Belarus” Exhibit showing the significant achievements of the Belarusian third sector over the past fifteen years. The exhibit was presented in many countries. Moreover, the Center has been issuing and widely distributing annual analytical bulletins, such as "Belarus - the Third Sector” or “Hopes, Illusions, Perspectives: Belarusian Society” (Debkowska 2008).

In order to reach a foreign audience with the Stefan Batory Foundation’s view on post-communist matters, the organization participates in informal meetings organized by its German counterparts, such as Stiftungen Wissenschaftlich Politik in Berlin. During such meetings of the Polish-German group of twenty to forty people, the topic of discussion is always policy toward the Eastern neighbors. Different perspectives (German, American and Polish) are analyzed; and recommendations for EU policy are developed.

More often, Polish think tanks also actively cooperate with counterparts from the Visegrad Group, such as Prague Security Studies Institute (PSSI), on shaping the EU policy toward the Eastern neighbors. These entities organize conferences, prepare analyses and publish together. The results of their efforts are presented vis-à-vis the Western members of the EU in Paris, and Brussels (Bobiński 2008). In the opinion of Grzegorz Gromadzki and Agnieszka Komorowska (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation, it is difficult to specify precisely to what extent such activities convert into ideas and solutions that later are taken into account by the Western countries’ officials or lead to certain decisions in the EU. However, what can be observed is the ways in which the European donors start to think about democracy assistance in
Belarus—for example that is important to invest not in the registered organizations in Belarus, but in people.

The CEE countries that entered the Community shifted the EU democracy assistance toward a more political approach, as defined by Carothers (2009), since these countries have a different emphasis in their democracy assistance policy toward the post-communist countries than the old members that always dominated the EU approach (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). Such changes also should not be surprising since the EU is not a state, but multilevel governance system, and its decision-making regarding the provision of aid can be influenced by the interested parties. Upon the Polish pressure, the Union decided, inter alia, to support independent radio programming for Belarus transmitted from abroad and create an EU Representative Office in Minsk.

The most tangible result of Polish efforts to change the EU’s approach to democracy assistance is the creation of EPD, presented earlier, and Eastern Partnership policy. With these two initiatives the EU new member states advocated for a stronger presence of democracy assistance on the EU’s agenda and greater focus on the EU’s eastern neighbors.44

The Eastern Partnership policy was presented by the Polish Government with assistance from Sweden at the EU’s General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels on 26 May 2008 and launched by the EU in May 2009 (BBC News 2008b; De Quetteville 2008). This program will maintain the principle of the ENP, and the development of relations with each country will continue to depend on the progress made by the partners in their reform and modernization efforts. However, with the Eastern Partnership, the EU offers its Eastern partners more specific support for democratic and market-oriented reforms (European Commission:

44 In EPD’s board of direction are many prominent activists and scholars associated with Central and Eastern Europe who played an important role in establishing this initiative, such as Jacques Rupnik, Jacek Kucharczyk, Martin Bútora and alike. For more information about EPD see http://www.eupd.eu/
External Relations 2009). The initiative is directed toward the EU’s neighbors such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The main new points in this policy worth highlighting are the inclusion of new association agreements encompassing comprehensive free trade agreements; border management programs; increased people-to-people contacts; and greater involvement of civil society. The initiative stresses that the development and involvement of the civil society is a key factor for the success of the democratic and market-oriented reforms in countries embraced by the Eastern Partnership. Thus, the European Commission proposes to support civil society actors and to engage them in the initiative through the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum that will promote contacts between civil society actors as well as facilitate their dialogue with public authorities.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that Poland as a new aid donor has well institutionalized ways of providing aid. Whereas Polish multilateral assistance usually goes to distant countries and to specific areas of assistance defined by international organizations, the bilateral aid goes to countries that are important from the point of view of Polish foreign policy, and to areas of assistance in which Poland has an expertise. Taking into account both Polish experience as a recipient of aid and the fact that Poland was a leader in democratic transformation in the post-communist region, democracy assistance is one of Poland’s areas of assistance in which the state has a “comparative advantage.” However, the way Poland perceives democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine is in fact unique and does not fall neatly into the dichotomy suggested by scholars since the Polish approach is neither strictly political nor solely developmental. Instead, it responds to the different situation in the recipient country.
After examining the Polish Government’s approach to democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine, it is difficult to tag Polish aid as belonging to one of two types of democracy assistance approaches—political or developmental. Instead, it presents elements of each approach with the addition of specific features evident in programs which carefully fit the political landscape in Belarus and Ukraine.

The study shows that there are major differences in the Polish Government’s democracy assistance efforts in Ukraine and Belarus in terms of types of assistance and choice of domestic partners. In the case of Belarus, in addition to reinforcing civil society, there are great efforts to support its culture and language through Polish NGOs’ activities, recognizing cultural identity as pivotal for Belarusian nation building and self-consciousness. However, the Polish Government-funded programs in Ukraine focus on the state’s capacity to enforce decisions associated with complex political (especially local governance building), economic and social reforms as well as Ukraine’s integration with the European Union; and in order to achieve this goal, the Polish Government cooperates not only with Polish NGOs but also with local and central entities. However, it should be mentioned that the focus on state’s capacity is not given priority over the civil society assistance—these two areas are being bundled together, therefore it is difficult to classify this assistance as developmental.

The Polish Government recognizes that fact that no matter whether a country is authoritarian or going through the democratic transition, it is important to reach civil society groups in recipient countries. The Polish Government achieves this goal through its cooperation with Polish NGOs. In this aspect Polish democracy assistance matches Carothers’ (2009) definition of a political approach to democracy assistance and resembles the US attitude. With a strong focus on the civil society development, the study shows that Poland aims to influence the
EU’s approach towards Belarus and Ukraine, pressuring not only for more attention to the EU’s
eighbor states, but also for solutions of reaching citizens instead of governments of these
countries.

The Polish Governmental Aid Program emphasizes democracy assistance to the country’s
two neighboring countries, Belarus and Ukraine, for moral as well as political and strategic
reasons. Political and strategic considerations stem from the belief that democratic neighbors will
be safer for Poland, the region and Europe. Moral considerations stem from the feeling of
obligation, because Poland received considerable assistance during it struggle for democracy and
after the commencement of its transformation in 1989. This assistance contributed to the success
of political and economic transition.

Finally, this chapter also revealed that Polish democracy assistance in fact consists of
several levels—official (governmental) and unofficial (non-governmental). In fact, Polish NGOs
have been active in the post-communist region since the 1990s, but Belarus and Ukraine were the
first countries from the region that received assistance from Polish organizations. Through the
cooperation with the Polish NGOs, the Polish Government is able to fulfill its foreign policy
goals and to become an important player in democracy assistance to these countries. Thus, the
next chapters present closer Polish NGOs as actors in Polish democracy assistance to Belarus
and Ukraine.
CHAPTER 4
THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT’S LASTING LEGACY:
POLISH NGO S’ CROSS-BORDER WORK

As presented in the previous chapter, Polish non-governmental organizations are the major partners in the implementation of Polish democracy assistance. The question remains what makes Polish NGOs important in the Polish Government’s democracy assistance. Is it their role in enhancing and extending citizens’ participation in Poland before and during the transformation process? When and why did Polish NGOs start to provide democracy assistance to the post-communist region? To what extent did experience gained as recipients of aid from the West translate into Polish NGOs’ engagement in the post-communist region? Can Polish NGOs’ involvement in democracy assistance be considered as a legacy of the Solidarity movement? Finally, using the National Endowment for Democracy as the example, this chapter answers the question whether Polish NGOs activity in the field of democracy assistance to post-communist countries can be important not only for the Polish Government but also for Western donors as well.
Historical Overview of Third Sector Development in Poland

*The Solidarity Movement, the Catholic Church and External Support*

Civil society was very active long before the democratic revolution of 1989. In order to have a complete picture of the Polish non-governmental sector today, it is important to take into account its history prior to 1989.

There were efforts to eliminate the institutions of civil society and control the work of organizations in the communist People’s Republic of Poland. The official organizations that existed, such as the women’s, sports, environmental, or youth associations, were usually controlled by the communist party and could not qualify as civil society. These organizations were quasi-state structures, receiving funds from the state budget and the party elite. However, at the same time, Polish communist authorities did not completely isolate Polish society from external influences. For example, the Polish United Nations (UN) Associations were the strongest in Central and Eastern Europe. From the 1950s to the end of 1980s they had succeeded in building up a grassroots network with eighteen active local branches. Although the majority of their activities were financed by the state, the local branches could have their own fund-raising activities which, later in the 1980s allowed for their independence from the central budget. The Polish UN Associations gave priority to issues such as the problem of security and cooperation in Europe, human rights, UN Peacekeeping operations and the contribution of the Polish contingent in them, and the growing problem of environmental protection in the heavily polluted areas of the Silesia region (Fryzowska 1995).

The Catholic Church was the only Polish institution that managed to maintain its independence from the communist government, especially the Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs.
established in 1956, and later other Catholic communities popular among young people (Sadowska 1996; Weigel 1992). The Catholic Church had relatively large autonomy around which different intellectual circles could unite (Michnik 1993). The Church’s position became even stronger after the Krakow Archbishop, Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was chosen to become the Pope in 1978 and with his visits as Pope John Paul II to Poland in 1983 and 1987 (Weigel 1992, 16). Moreover, as Andrzej Juros et al. (2004, 562-3) observe, for many civil society activists the Catholic Church was a “legacy of the Old Polish Era” and post-war history:

> It is thanks to the Catholic Church that Poland’s culture of social activity could preserve itself in a more or less latent form across the decades following World War II in order to rise again in 1980 in the form of the Solidarity movement.

The origins of contemporary civil society in Poland lie in the dissident movement, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. The first organization established under communism was the Workers’ Defense Committee (KOR) in 1976, created by a modest number of workers and intellectuals. KOR later grew into Solidarność [Solidarity]—the world’s best-known mass civic movement that undermined the Polish communist government. Other groups which played an important role in shaping civil society in the pre-Solidarity era were: Polish Independence Pact (PPN); the Movement for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights (ROPCiO); Freedom and Peace (WIP); student and youth groups and organizations concerned with education, such as the Independent Students' Union (NZS) and the Society for Academic Courses (TKN); social, scientific, and cultural groups, such as the Center for Documentation and Analysis (CDiA) and the Social Committee for Science (SKN); farmers' organizations like Solidarność Wiejska and the All-Poland Farmers' Resistance Committee (OKOR); and political groups and other organizations concerned with national self-determination, such as the Confederation for an
Independent Poland (KPN) and the Committee for National Self-Determination (KPSN) (Kantorosinski 1991).¹

Undoubtedly, the emergence of Solidarity in 1980 “singled a new stage of civil society development across the region and was a harbinger of the processes that eventually led to the overthrow of the communist regimes and the reunification of Europe” (Leś et al. 1999, 325). The Solidarity movement was registered as a trade union in November 1980 and was joined by many other oppositionists to the communist government. Solidarity was not only a trade union uniting workers, but an union of 10 million oppositionists and members of other organizations, such as the Movement of Young Poland or Znak [the Sign] (Leś et al. 1999, 325).

The first and short-lived period of the emergence of Solidarity in 1980-1981 paved the way toward the rebirth of organizations that had been dissolved under the communist regime, such as the St. Brother Albert Aid Society and the Committee for Protection of Children’s Rights. The Solidarity Movement in Poland was involved in the creation of an independent sector of some autonomous groups, such as publishing houses, newspapers, and study circles which evolved in the 1980s into civil society (Siegel and Yancey 1992).

However, the imposition of martial law in December 1981, which was forced by the possible military intervention of the Soviet Union similar to the earlier interventions in the satellite countries, suppressed the development of this burgeoning civil society in Poland.² Solidarity’s growing popularity represented too great a threat to the communist regime and it was a particular Soviet concern. As the result, on December 13, 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski introduced martial law. Overnight, Solidarity became an illegal organization. A thousand people were arrested; Poland’s borders were sealed, and political and civil rights were severely

¹ More on the emergence and the fate of the Solidarity movement in subsequent years see Ash (2002).
² About the Soviet intervention in Hungary and Czechoslovakia, see for example Volkogonov (1998).
curtailed. From 1982 to 1989, civic activity was possible only for those mass organizations remaining under control of the regime. Most of the self-governing organizations that were established in 1980 and 1981 were made illegal; but many of them, including the Solidarity trade union and the Independent Students’ Association (NZS) continued their operations underground.³ In fact, during the martial law period, the Polish regime took slow steps to lift some repressive actions, often in response to international pressure. An important role was played by the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lech Walesa in 1983, one of Solidarity’s founding members, in recognition of the significance of the movement not only for Poland but for East European opposition in general. Also, an important element of the activization of Polish civil society during martial law was the Catholic Church, which tried to prevent isolation or exclusion of interned persons or victims of repression (Ćwiek-Karpowicz and Kaczyński 2006).

According to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe’s 1994 report on democratic development in Poland, the rights to freedom of movement; freedom of speech (independent publishing); and freedom of assembly (non-violent demonstrations) qualitatively improved from 1983 and 1988 (CSCE 1994, 2).⁴ All known political prisoners were freed during this period; a Civil Rights Commissioner was appointed to oversee the protection of civil rights; and Voice of America, Radio Free Europe and the British Broadcasting Service ceased to be blocked. By 1989, the political situation in Poland had improved (in contrast to other communist countries).

Moreover, the Act on Foundations of 1984 was implemented, permitting some Polish foundations to work independently, but the majority were still controlled by the government. It

---

³ The Independent Students’ Association has been a Polish student society that was created in October 1980, in the aftermath of the anti-government strike actions. During the life of Solidarity, the NZS was its student suborganization.

⁴ Some of these changes could be attributed to the fact that Poland was a signatory of the Helsinki Final Act 1975.
should be stressed, however, that this step was the first attempt in the region since World War II to allow the legal existence of nonprofit institutions. This act was in some ways quite liberal because a foundation could be created only by two people. In other ways, however, the legislation was still strict, because the establishment of the foundation required approval and the supervision of an appropriate government ministry. In 1991, the Polish law on foundations was amended to remove the requirement of prior ministry approval. The same law is in force today with only few changes (Rymsza 2007).

From the imposition of martial law of December 1981 until 1989, Solidarity functioned mainly as an illegal political opposition movement but finally managed to reach a compromise with the communist authorities. This ability to cooperate facilitated the peaceful regime change. Solidarity pushed for the Roundtable Talks, and the historic agreement between the communists and the democratic opposition in 1989. The main resolutions of the Roundtable Talks included the following elements: the Solidarity trade union was made legal again (through the amendment of the Law on Association, which made the registration of Solidarity possible); a Senate (an upper-chamber of Parliament) was created; the office of the President of the Republic of Poland, chosen by both chambers of Parliament for six years was established; some opposition media outlets were legalized; and an agreement was reached to give the Catholic Church full legal status (Osiatynski 1992, 44-47). Most significantly, however, terms for the first quasi-free parliamentary elections in the post-communist space were negotiated. All seats to the newly-created Senate of Poland were to be elected democratically, as were 161 seats (35 percent of the

---

5 Poland’s transformation process resulted from combined actions (e.g. negotiations, agreements) of the government and opposition groups; hence, the change is called a “pacted transition” (Huntington 1991, 615; Ekiert 2003, 90; Osiatynski 1996). The negotiations were conducted in three groups: economy and social policy, political reforms, and trade unions’ pluralism.
The election of June 4, 1989 brought a victory to Solidarity as 99 percent of all the seats in the Senate and all of the 35 percent possible seats in Sejm. This event marked the end of communist rule in Poland and was an indication of the processes that eventually led to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the overthrow of the communist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe (Leś et al. 2004).

The Solidarity movement officially entered the political scene on June 4, 1989. After elections, a Solidarity-led coalition government was formed; and in December Tadeusz Mazowiecki was elected Prime Minister. A year later Lech Walesa was elected President of Poland. Since 1989, Solidarity has become a more traditional trade union. Solidarity also played an important pro-transformational role; the organization performed an important political function in serving as a base of social support for right-center political parties.

The remarkable renaissance of civil society in Poland during the 1980s and then of nonprofit organizations after 1989, would not have been possible without the actions of Solidarity activists and all who contributed to its success—the religious (as well as secular) formal and informal networks (Leś et al. 2004). Yet, another factor that has influenced the development of the third sector in Poland—foreign assistance. Probably the rise of Solidarity and

---

6 Although the elections were not entirely democratic, they paved the way for creation of Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s cabinet and a peaceful transition to democracy, which was confirmed after the Polish Parliamentary election of 1991. The 65-35 division was abolished in the first truly free Sejm election in 1991.

7 After the Round Table, and the June 1989 election, the Communist Party fell like a “house of cards;” and a new party, Social-Democracy of the Republic of Poland, was formed instead in January 1990. Most of the old leaders did not join the new party, and new leaders were mostly people politically shaped in the 1980s and directly engaged in the Round Table negotiations.

8 In the opinion of Juros et al. (2004) this political engagement turned out to be devastating for the fate of the Solidarity since it could not effectively perform its function as a labor union. The overall dissatisfaction caused the withdrawal of part of the membership of Solidarity. For more information about Solidarity’s current initiatives see its official website http://www.solidarnosc.org.pl/en/index.htm
democratic changes in Poland would not have been possible without considerable Western assistance (Ćwiek-Karpowicz and Kaczyński 2006).

Western assistance was delivered in different ways. Western donors played an important role in the process of strengthening the position of opposition in Poland through numerous contacts with Solidarity and frequent visits by representatives of Western NGOs and trade unions to the Polish opposition leaders. Also, the flow of information, and know-how (especially organizational know-how) facilitated the formation of the democratic opposition. Finally, the assistance included financial support, mainly from Western trade unions, that Solidarity received during martial law. The largest share came from the American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). In 1983 and 1984 the AFL-CIO channeled about $200,000 US dollars each year to Solidarity, and $300,000 in 1985 and in 1986 (Friszke 1987, 110). Another important source of assistance from the mid-1980s was the National Endowment for Democracy, established by the US Congress on the initiative of President Ronald Reagan. It was mainly monies from the NED (about half a million US dollars) that the AFL-CIO was channeling to the underground Solidarity movement in 1985-1986 (Friszke, 1987, 111). The Western assistance continued after the breakdown of the communist government, and played an important role in the emergence of many Polish NGOs.

**The Rise of the NGO Sector in Poland and Western Assistance**

After the 1989 Roundtable Table Agreements, there was a rapid increase in the number of civil society groups (Mansfeldová 2004; Sadowska 1996). Also, some organizations that had existed in Poland before World War II were revived. New political circumstances allowed for
changes in the functioning of associations from those based on compulsory membership during
the communist times, towards a civil society based on voluntary involvement. The loose,
informal structure that characterized civil society in 1982 gave way to formal, professional
NGOs in Poland. Registration of new organizations was especially rapid in the first three or four
years after 1989. According to the Klon/Jawor Association’s database, at the beginning of 1990s
there were approximately twenty thousand non-governmental organizations involving two
million people.\(^9\) In 1993 and 1994, the distinction between political parties and NGOs became
more clear-cut, and the main actors and forms of activities began to change. Freedom of
association was recognized in the new Constitution of the Republic of Poland, adopted in 1997.

Although growth of civil society was substantial in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s,
similar to processes in the other CEE countries, the third sector in Poland was facing challenges,
such as the need to create legal and fiscal structures to regulate and support the third sector.
Moreover, other challenges were organizational development, management, and networking.
Also, there was need for greater information-sharing among organizations in Poland, as well as
with the third sector in CEE and the West. Groups were often unaware of like-minded
organizations, as well as unable to identify needs, avoid overlapping efforts, and take advantage
of joint actions and collaboration. Finally, lack of money, blurred lines between nonprofit and for
profit work, and lack of modern technology were other challenges with which Polish third sector
had to cope (Siegel and Yancey 1992, 43-6).

Of all of the challenges that Polish NGOs were facing, Western assistance gave a good
deal of help to Polish organizations to grow financially. The third sector relied heavily on the aid

\(^9\) Klon/Jawor Association is a non-governmental organization that supports the Polish third sector by collecting and
disseminating information and offers communication platform for organizations. For more data see Klon/Jawor
Database http://klon.org.pl This website is a good source of information about the third sector in Poland. The
Klon/Jawor Association also is an operator of the data bank on nongovernmental organizations in Poland.
and experience of their Western partners. Polish NGOs received substantial funding from multilateral agencies, governments, and private foundations based in Western Europe and the United States. Most of the large multinational institutions in the West, such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development focused the majority of their resources on macroeconomic stabilization policies in the region (Siegel and Yancey 1992). This consisted of credits, loans, and technical support to facilitate macroeconomic changes, and only a very small percentage of this aid went for democracy assistance in CEE.

The major multilateral assistance project to support the emerging third sectors in CEE (especially Poland and Czechoslovakia) was provided by the PHARE (Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring their Economies) initiative of the European Union. PHARE was one of the three pre-accession instruments to assist the Central and Eastern European countries in their preparations for joining the European Union. The objective of the program was to facilitate economic restructuring and political change in these countries and the third sector was automatically embraced by the assistance in order to safeguard and develop the democratic process.10

The majority of West European assistance efforts were disbursed by national government offices, such as the Department for International Development (DFID) in the UK, which between 1993 and 1999 launched the British Know How Fund of bilateral technical assistance provided to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia. This British program aimed to support the process of transition to pluralist democracy and a market economy by promoting

10 For more information about PHARE Program see http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/enlargement/2004_and_2007_enlargement/e50004_en.htm
Also, private organizations such as the Fondation de France—established to help organizations to carry out philanthropic, cultural, environmental or scientific projects and social activities—gave significant grants to social service NGOs in the region. The German political foundations (Stiftungen) have also played an important role in extending public debate in Poland by opening offices in Warsaw, publishing books, sponsoring seminars on policy matters, and the like.

However, the most substantial help came from the United States Government and US private foundations which addressed such areas as human rights protection, freedom of the press, and citizens’ participation. Poland was one of the largest recipients of American assistance from the CEE region (Siegel and Yancey 1992). The US government granted support to NGOs in CEE through several different entities, such as the USAID (United States Agency for International Development) that supported initiatives of such non-profit organizations as the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) or Project Hope. USAID was tasked by Congress to disburse funding under the 1989 Support for East European Democracy (SEED) legislation. The 1989 SEED Act also provided funding to the Citizens Democracy Corps (CDC) and the National Endowment for Democracy. The CDC focused on assisting the economic development and aiding private enterprises. NED however, specialized in providing grants mostly to political parties, trade unions, and media organizations, as well as to NGOs in CEE (Siegel and Yancey 1992, 76).

11 For more information about the Department for International Development’s program see http://www.dfid.gov.uk/funding/khf.asp
12 The 1989 Support for East European Democracy (SEED) act reads: “The President should ensure that the assistance provided to Eastern European countries pursuant to this Act is designed: (1) to contribute to the development of democratic institutions and pluralism characterized by: (a) the establishment of fully democratic and representative political systems based on free and fair elections, (b) effective recognition of fundamental liberties and individual freedoms, including freedom of speech, religion, and association, (c) termination of all laws and regulations which impede the operation of a free press and the formation of political parties, (d) creation of an independent judiciary, and (e) establishment of non-partisan military, security, and polices forces” (SEED 1989).
Notable US private financial sources for Polish organizations included the Ford Foundation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the German Marshall Fund, the Open Society Fund-Soros Foundation, and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (ACAP 1995; Siegel and Yancey 1992, 76-7). These US foreign organizations and institutions contributed materially to building up the infrastructure of civil society. In the mid-1990s, foreign donors began to scale back their support to the civil society sector in Poland, arguing that Poland was a fully fledged democracy that no longer needed support from abroad (Juros et al. 2004, 566). US financial assistance ceased to flow in the mid-1990s; and the European Union sources became more visible when the EU shifted from focusing only on development assistance to assistance in the form of pre-accession programs such as above-mentioned PHARE.

With the Western assistance, many organizations began to operate in Poland. NGOs that had operated earlier underground—such as Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity, Karta, and the Helsinki Committee—began to legalize their status and developed initiatives directed toward the Eastern neighbors as well. There were eight main organizations that paved the way for other organizations in Poland and which initiated projects abroad. The Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights gained the status of the most important training center on human rights in Central and Eastern Europe. The Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE) Foundation greatly contributed to the promotion of contacts among the organizations of Eastern and Southern Europe, as well as of the Caucasus and Central Asia. The Education for Democracy Foundation (FED) focused on building civil society and civil education in Central Europe and Central Asia; and the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation worked on the establishment of closer links between Polish NGOs, publishers of independent newspapers, and journalists. The Stefan Batory
Foundation became the major Polish sponsor of the activities pursued abroad by Polish NGOs. Additionally, the Institute of Eastern Studies Foundation and the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) supported economic, social, and political transformations in the countries of the former Eastern bloc through expert services for business and political elites. Finally, a special role also played the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, whose aim was to prepare Poland and its citizens for the membership in the European Union.

The bulk of funding to NGOs in Poland was granted by the National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Institute (Quigley 1997). These organizations demonstrated the different nature of their support of Polish NGOs. NED played a key role in assisting democratic activists and civil society in Central Europe prior to and following the democratic revolutions of 1989 (Potocki 2008). Links that were established during the time of communism and transformation last until today, and NED remains as a significant Western donor of Polish NGOs’ cross-border projects. The Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe—an organization based first in Paris, then in Washington—was one of the main recipients of NED money that went into communist Poland and supported underground publishing (Potocki 2008). After the changes in 1989, IDEE registered the Polish office. IDEE was one of the first Polish NGOs that started activities in the East. The organization began to get bigger and bigger, and different people broke off to create their own organizations.

The people who today work for Eastern European Democratic Center (EEDC), like Pawel Kazanecki, came from IDEE (Dębkowska 2008). Pawel Kazanecki is an individual who has his roots in the Independent Students' Association (NZS) supporting Solidarity and from a socio-cultural association called the Bridge Club. Established at the University of Warsaw, this organization popularized the idea of anti-communism; and later, after the overthrow of
communism prepared a team of people familiar with Central Eastern European issues to work in this region. He is a well-know activist among the Polish NGOs and an expert on Ukraine and Belarus. His organization, EEDC, is the most determined of all those working in Belarus. There is no place in Ukraine and Belarus that he did not visit. However, since his activities threatened authoritarian leaders in the post-communist states, he has no entry right to Belarus and other members the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which remain authoritarian (Kazanecki 2008).

Moreover, NED financed projects of the American Federation of Teachers, which since the end of 1980s has trained people like Krzysztof Stanowski and other pro-democratic educators who belonged to Solidarity. As the result of a cooperative effort between Polish and American educators, the Education for Democracy Foundation was founded. It carried out programs aimed at teachers, students, and parents in Poland (Kujawska 2008). Krzysztof Stanowski was one of the first people traveling eastward and conducting civic education projects across the Polish eastern border.

Another organization established by joint Polish and American efforts is the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD). The foundation was established by oppositionists and former members of the Lech Walesa Civic Committee who were deeply engaged with foreign foundations from the first phase of their efforts to assist Poland. The organization was established in 1989 to support the development of local democracy and governance in Poland and abroad (Morawska 2008). Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s first non-communist government in 1989 set up a representative office for the reforms as a result of the provisions of the Round Table, but at that time there was no discussion about the territorial self-governance, since the Polish system was very much centralized (and self-governance was associated first with citizens building their
own neighborhood). Jerzy Regulski was nominated for the representative office; and then the FSLD was created, because there was the need for supporting actions outside the government, by an entity independent from the government (Morawska 2008). Morawska (2008) revealed that reform was prepared almost twenty years before any administrative changes in Poland took place; therefore, the text of the reform could be written and submitted to the Parliament very quickly, accelerating the whole process and making the reform implementation successful.

The founding chairman of FSLD, Jerzy Regulski and his daughter, Professor Joanna Regulska from Rutgers University, played an important role in bringing Western funds to this organization and the others (Kazanecki 2008; Morawska 2008). Also, Quigley (1997, 49-51) highlights the role of Regulski and Regulska in obtaining funding from diverse public and private sources. Quigley (1997, 50) reports that in 1994 the FSLD was funded by some six American foundations, two German foundations, and the Fondation de France. NED was one of the US grantors to FSLD. The FSLD is one of the oldest and largest organizations (220 employees) not only in Poland but in Central and Eastern Europe (Morawska 2008).

Today, FSLD's mission is to promote the idea of civil self-governance through supporting the activity of local authorities and non-governmental organizations, thus contributing to the development and reinforcement of the civil society in the region. Over the years FSLD has grown to incorporate a network of sixteen regional training centers and four Colleges of Public Administration. The Foundation began its international activities in 1994 after gaining experience in implementing administrative reform in Poland.

Along with NED, the Soros Foundation was one of the first to bring foreign aid to the Eastern civil society. The Foundation was a prominent supporter of democracy assistance in Central Europe already in the mid-1980s. Soros first distributed funds to the underground
Solidarity Movement in Poland and the informal civic initiative Charter 77 (named after the
document Charter 77) in Czechoslovakia. Support from the Soros Foundation represented
approximately 30 percent of the resources provided by all the other foundations in the region
(Quigley 1997, 87; Szabó 2004). It had helped the development of civic engagement with
material support and training of Eastern activists. The Soros Foundation pursued a model of
charitable giving based on the personal, high-profile philanthropy of George Soros.

Unlike many of the other foundations operating in Central Europe, the Soros Foundation
has local offices with local boards of directors and local staff (Quigley 1997). Soros hopes to
“transform closed societies into open ones and to expand the values of existing open societies”
(Soros 1994, 8). He began his efforts to support open society development in Hungary and has
applied similar strategies in opening regional offices in other post-communist countries (Quigley
1997). He established the Soros Foundation Hungary in 1984 and the Stefan Batory Foundation
in Poland in 1988 (Szabó 2004; Quigley 1997).

All the Soros country foundations became linked and informally coordinated by Open
Society Institute (OSI) offices in New York and in Budapest. Soros’ strategies differ from other
organizations active in CEE; and his foundation is financially independent, unlike the NED or
the German political party foundations that are financed by public funds and thus are accountable
to their governments or their boards.

With the Soros’ funding (approximately $4 million), the Stefan Batory Foundation in
Warsaw became the wealthiest grant-giving private foundation in Poland (Siegel and Yancey
1992, 76-7). As a part of the Soros network, the Stefan Batory received most of its funding from
this single foreign source, but later became very autonomous by diversifying its donors. Until the
end of 1990s, the Stefan Batory was financed mainly by Soros. Right now the Foundation is also
funded by the Ford Foundation, the Bosch Foundation, and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008). The Stefan Batory Foundation acted as an investor in building civil society in Poland. This organization was the first foundation in Poland to have a very large degree of autonomy of action, because of the prestige of the people who created it and because of the important role they played in building a democratic civil society in Poland: all NGOs in Poland were either partially or fully supported by this foundation from the beginning of the 1990s. For example, the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) originated from the Batory. Moreover, the foundation from the beginning had two main spheres of action—one focused on reforms in Poland and a second on the idea of sharing these experiences not only with Ukraine and Belarus, but also with Russia and Central Asia. Today, the Stefan Batory Foundation is not the only entity supporting various initiatives of Polish NGOs, because there is the growing Polish Governmental program (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008).

Another example of US involvement in the creation of Polish NGOs is the Poland-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative (PAUCI). This was a project of the governments of three countries, Poland, Ukraine, and the US, with funding from the USAID and a contribution from Freedom House. Within the PAUCI project were 500 million dollars to be disbursed during a five year period to Polish and Ukrainian organizations (Pieklo 2008). The condition for getting financial support was the joint cooperation of Ukrainian and Polish partners over the implementation period of projects. After five years, the PAUCI program was transformed into a non-governmental organization with legal status in Poland and Ukraine and changed its name to Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation. USAID provided money for the start-up of activities
of the new organization. Today, PAUCI is financially independent of USAID and, like other Polish NGOs, looks for money from different sources.

Another organization established with US funds was the Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFF). Funded by the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, PAFF first operated only in the US and in 2000 opened a representative office in Poland. From the beginning of its existence, the foundation’s goal was to support the development of civil society, democracy, and a market economy in Poland, as well as to support transformation processes in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). Today, the foundation finances many of the activities of Polish NGOs within a program called Region in Transition (RITA). RITA supports the initiatives of Polish non-profits aimed at sharing Polish experiences of the transformation with other CEE countries. Moreover, the foundation finances the Kirkland Scholarship Program, which is implemented by the Polish-US Fulbright Commission. The objective of this program is to help young leaders from the CEE countries learn from the Polish experience regarding systematic transformation.

Amidst the US direct financial involvement, there were some Polish individuals with links to the West who played an important role in the establishment of Polish organizations. For example, Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, a famous Polish journalist and politician, came back to Poland after living in the US and founded the College of Eastern Europe at the end of the 1990s.

---

13 The Polish-American Enterprise Fund was founded in 1991 to deal with economics and business spheres in Poland, such as entrepreneurship development, development of companies, placing them on the stock market, and so forth. Since the fund was successfully managed, it has earned the additional 100 million dollars, thus there was a decision to establish the foundation with this money. Since then, the fund has been on the financial market and PAFF receives interest income of ten to eleven million dollars annually, which is used for the operational and administrative activities (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008).

14 Lane Kirkland was a long-term head of the AFL-CIO who stepped down in the mid-1990s.

15 Jeziorański became a prominent figure both in Poland and the US. He was a famous "Kurier from Warsaw" who informed the Western governments of the situation in Poland under German and Soviet occupation. He was also the first who reported about the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. After the war he worked as the head of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe, and during his residence in the US, he was a member of the Polish American Congress; and he
institution’s mission is to build bridges between the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe and overcome mistrust between them. Priority recipients of efforts by the organization have always been Ukraine and Belarus. Recently Russia, Moldova as well as the Caucasus countries have also been foci of attention (Dąbrowski 2008).

Another important figure is the economist Leszek Balcerowicz, who together with his wife established the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) in 1991 in Warsaw. Balcerowicz was an economics expert in the Solidarity trade union and after 1989 held the positions of Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Poland leading the economic transition. He headed a commission of experts to plan and introduce an economic transition in Poland and was a father of "Shock Therapy" in Poland—a method for rapid transition from a planned economy to the market economy.\footnote{Among the members of the commission was Jeffrey Sachs, a former economics professor at Harvard University.} CASE scholars and researchers assisted him and other policy-makers during the early years of transformation, before turning their attention to other countries and other areas of activity.

The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation was established in 1991 by the individuals associated with the system-change years of 1989-90, including Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Piotr Nowina-Konopka.\footnote{Konopka was an assistant and spokesman for Lech Wałęsa and served as the Solidarity spokesman at the 1989 Round Table Agreement negotiations (http://ludzie.wprost.pl/sylwetka/Piotr-Nowina-Konopka/).} In the 1990s, like many Polish NGOs, the Robert Schuman Foundation implemented projects closely associated with the Polish political, social and the economic transition. The organization held meetings, conferences and workshops that provided fora for discussion of Polish transformation. Later, the Foundation shifted its activities toward European integration, in order to prepare Poland for membership in the European Union. Today, the foundation engages in pro-EU activities, also in other countries of the post-communist region.

headed this organization between 1979 and 1996. He also worked as an advisor to the American National Security Agency and the US presidents Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter (RFE/RL 2005).
As demonstrated, many Polish NGOs that played an important role during the transformation in Poland and that today are assisting other countries in their democratic endeavors were initially established with the Western financial sources. Moreover, in almost every one of these organizations, there can be found some traces of the Solidarity tradition; because many activists in the Polish third sector have roots in the Solidarity movement and the democratic opposition. As the Polish popular newspaper Rzeczpospolita (2005) reported “…underground activists from the 1980s are still active in public life but especially in the non-governmental organizations (42 percent).”

**Going Through Polish Transformation and Strengthening NGOs’ Positions**

The great majority of Polish third sector organizations were established on the basis of the Associations Law of 1989, passed under the Solidarity Government. This supportive regulatory framework for the operation of civil society, as well as Western support, contributed to the rapid increase of business associations, foundations and church organizations. By 1997, the estimated start date of the withdrawal of US funds from Polish civil society, there were more than twenty thousand registered NGOs (Quigley 1997, 44).

There was a qualitative shift in the character of involvement in organizations from mass-scale to a more elitist (Juros et al. 2004, 568). Many NGOs activists were ready to engage themselves in a new the public interest sphere, and they did this for many reasons: hobby, passion, or sense of social duty (Chimiak 2004). The Polish third sector entered a phase of strengthening its position vis-à-vis the government and society. This attempt, however, was undermined by the periods of stagnation in governments’ policies toward the third sector.
The complexion of the various governments and political instability in first years of Poland’s transformation made the focus on civil society even more difficult.

The impact of EU financial assistance and pre-accession conditionality started to play a steadily increasing role in the development of the Polish non-governmental sector in the mid 1990s. The EU’s standards regarding the treatment of the non-governmental sector facilitated institutional changes in Poland (Koźlicka 2002). The process of strengthening the role of Polish NGOs was also supported by the third sector activists themselves, who in 2001 established the office of Delegation of Polish NGOs in Brussels. This institution strongly lobbied, both in Brussels and in Warsaw, on behalf of interests of NGOs as a group (for example, inclusion of Polish NGOs in the use of European funds), and also initiated several campaigns directed both to the NGO sector, and the whole society.

The process of lobbying the government resulted in significant institutional changes in the role of the non-governmental sector in the state and society, marked by several fundamental phenomena. The reform of local self-government in 1999 was actively supported by Polish NGOs, such as the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy and its founding chairman, Jerzy Regulski. The foundation’s involvement in the development of local democracy in Poland had substantial implications for civil society. This advocacy gave a signal to the government that Polish NGOs can not only serve as a forum for discussion about political, social and economic issues, but can propose practical solutions. Moreover, FSLD engagement encouraged other NGOs to pressure political elites to force legislative and institutional changes.

---

18 Interviewee of this study from the Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFF), Renata Koźlicka-Glińska (2008) before taking a position in the foundation, used to work in this representative office in Brussels.
Polish NGOs began strongly to lobby the government. As a result of such efforts a program to monitor election promises was implemented during one of the Non-governmental Forums. Moreover, permanent positions for NGOs in a number of the lower chamber’s committees were created.\textsuperscript{19} Recently, for example the Parliamentary Group for Cooperation with NGOs within the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy was established (Skrzypiec 2008).

Furthermore, Polish NGOs not only engaged in activities helping Poland to consolidate its democracy, but Polish NGOs responded to the demands of the community they represented in the most flexible way. The non-governmental sector undertook a number of very important initiatives that filled a gap in state politics. For example, Polish NGOs were engaged in the organization of help delivered to the Poles affected by the flood in 1997. The fact that Polish NGOs became the first to pick up such important social issues, demonstrated the professionalism of civil society organizations and high level of involvement that could no longer be neglected by authorities.

Polish NGOs also lobbied for some changes favorable to the third sector. A result of third sector activity was the 2004 Public Benefit and Volunteer Work Act, regarding the functioning of the third sector in Poland. In 2004 government also established the Civic Initiatives Fund, the first long-term governmental support program. Finally, Polish NGOs played an important role in building a model of intersectoral cooperation in the finalization of Poland's accession to the EU, which resulted in the improved access of NGOs to the European funds and programs, especially the European Social Fund (Koźlicka 2002).

\textsuperscript{19} In accordance with Article 110 of the Polish Constitution parliamentary committees are appointed to examine and prepare the work of the Sejm (http://www.sejm.gov.pl/komisje/komisje.html). There can distinguished two types of Sejm committees: standing committees and special committees. Currently, there are more than twenty standing legislative committees in Sejm in which Polish NGOs can be engaged.
Nowadays Polish organizations are aware of the importance of building bridges not only to the state and public sector but also between themselves. Whereas in the mid 1990s, as Sadowska (1996) points out, Polish NGOs were not actively cooperating with one another, this situation changed at the beginning of 2000 with the initiative of the third sector activists, again. Polish organizations learnt that in order to change their situation for the better, they had to unite their efforts. Information and communication institutions were highly developed by the creation in 2000 of a non-governmental internet portal, **www.ngo.pl**, administered by the Association of Klon/Jawor. Also, National Federation of Polish NGOs (OFOP) was established to integrate and consolidate their relationships. This association promotes legislative changes to improve conditions for the functioning of the sector, and works on improving civil society advocacy through partnership and cooperation of federation members.\(^{20}\)

Polish NGOs also became an important factor shaping Polish foreign policy. Once foreign policy comprised diplomacy; and no actors outside the government played an important role in formulating this policy. Today, it also is shaped by other domestic actors; there is a “social diplomacy” in the opinion of Kozlicka-Glinska (2008) from the PAFF. Through its programs, her organization gives opportunities for Polish NGOs to shape policy in the East independently from the government (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). Events such as the Orange Revolution teach us that NGOs can play an important factor in the Polish policy towards the East (Stanowski 2005b).

At some point there was a need to create permanent cooperation within the group of Polish organizations operating outside the borders of the country, making them aware that even though they work separately, they are united by the common view on the role they can play in

\(^{20}\) For more information about this association’s current work see its official website [http://www.ofop.engo.pl/x/297532](http://www.ofop.engo.pl/x/297532)
the international cooperation as well as in complementing and shaping Polish foreign policy. Tightening the cooperation between the organizations began in 2001 during a meeting of all Polish NGOs engaged in cross-border work, during which the organizations agreed on exchanging information and developing relationships with the official institutions formulating foreign policy. As a consequence of this meeting, the Zagranica Group (ZG) was created, an association of Polish non-governmental organizations working abroad.

The Zagranica Group represents the interests of its members, strengthening the position of Polish NGOs vis-à-vis the Polish Government; but at the same time, this association is convenient for the government, because it has only one partner, not forty, as Piekło from PAUCI noted (Piekło 2008). Moreover, through the association, Polish NGOs can develop a common position and influence the shape of Polish foreign policy by preparing analyses for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about the relations of Poland and countries receiving Polish aid (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008).

In addition to the MFA, the ZG co-operates with other ministries that want to obtain the opinion of Polish NGOs regarding some policies that the various ministries are administering. There are frequent forums between Polish NGOs and the Development Co-operation Department regarding the Polish aid, and there are efforts to make the Polish third sector more politically active. On March 27, 2008, for example, there was a forum organized between Polish NGOs and the MFA’s departments responsible for relations with particular countries. It was the first initiative during which Polish NGOs could express their opinions regarding Polish foreign policies toward countries of associations’ concern. Therefore, the selection of countries and fields, which have priorities in the MFA annual call for proposals, is not random; rather, to some

---

21 Source for this information comes from the Zagranica Group’s materials obtained during the interview with Pejda (2008), also available at the organization’s website at http://www.zagranica.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=48&Itemid=132
extent this focus is an effect of non-governmental organizations’ pressure. On the other side, the organizations tend to focus on actions that are in line with the MFA focus in foreign policy (Bobiński 2008).

Cooperation with the MFA is good, and there are no significant changes in relations when government changes, in the opinion of Dąbrowski (2008) from the College of Eastern Europe. Examples of direct cooperation with some Polish NGOs are several. For instance, representatives of organizations, like the CSM, which largely operate as think tanks, are invited by the MFA for consultations. Likewise the MFA participates in conferences organized by The Center of International Relations (CIR) regarding such topics as Polish foreign policy toward the Eastern countries (Bobiński 2008). The CIR has also founded the Foreign Policy Club – an influential forum for foreign policy analysis and debate, involving hundreds of leading politicians, diplomats, civil servants, local government officials, academics, students, journalists and representatives of other NGOs. The College of Eastern Europe, however, in cooperation with governmental institutions, organizes an annual Poland East Policy Conference that brings together politicians, diplomats, academics and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Participants, to mention a few, include Bogumiła Berdychowska, Zdzisław Najder, Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska, Henryk Wujec and Paweł Kazanecki, and the others who deal with the Polish Eastern foreign policy and have played prominent role in shaping these relations (Dąbrowski 2008).22

---

22 Bogumiła Berdychowska is a Polish journalist who specializes in the history of Ukraine in the twentieth century, and relations between Poland and Ukraine. She is the author of many publications in these areas (see for example Stefan Batory Foundation 2005). Currently, she is a Director of the stipends department in the National Cultural Center in Warsaw which allocates grants to people of culture and science from the former Soviet Union, and coordinates the Polish-Ukrainian youth exchange (http://www.nck.pl/). Zdzisław Najder is a Polish historian of literature (internationally renowned for his work on Joseph Conrad), a former opponent of the communist government in Poland, and former director of the Polish section of Radio Free Europe (for more information see Hoover Institution Stanford University at http://hooverl.stanford.edu/bios/8.php). Agnieszka Magdziak-Miszewska is a teacher, journalist and diplomat. She was director of the Center for International Relations (CIR) in Warsaw.
Other NGOs, of a more think-tank profile, like the Casimir Pulaski Foundation, actively participate in the debate on Polish foreign policy by preparing analyses in their Policy Papers and by participating in roundtables with ambassadors, and other representatives of the MFA. In the opinion of Pisarski (2008) from the Casimir Pulaski Foundation: “we have an impression that the MFA takes into account what Polish NGOs do, say, and write, but nobody can say they are shaping Polish foreign policy if he is not in a government. It would be overstatement.” It happens that somebody who worked in public administration under the certain government later goes to think tanks and presents a view on foreign policy that sometimes opposes the current government’s foreign policies, but these views are always taken into consideration. Also, people who work in Polish think tanks later sometimes work for the government; but this practice is not as common as in the West (Pisarski 2008).

Polish NGOs Go East

While strengthening their position in Poland in the mid 1990s, many Polish NGOs, were developing the desire and the skills to share their experience beyond Poland’s borders (Juros 2004). A growing number of organizations, which previously worked mainly in Poland, became active in the East, such as the Foundation for the Development of Local Democracy, the Foundation of for the Development of Civil Society, the Institute of Public Affairs or the

(specializing in Eastern matters). She worked at the Polish Embassy in Moscow as a counselor-minister, and since 2006 she has been Ambassador to Israel (bio information available at the Polish Embassy in Israel at http://www.telavivpl.org/index.php?m=268&ln=en). Henryk Wujec was an opposition activist in the Communist times (a Solidarity activist), a participant in the Roundtable Talks, a member of Parliament, and a former Deputy Minister of Agriculture (See for more details, the Encyclopedia of Solidarity at http://www.encyklopedia-solidarnosci.pl/wiki/index.php?title=Henryk_Wujec).
Foundation of Socio-Economic Initiatives.\textsuperscript{23} Polish NGOs’ first target countries were Ukraine and Belarus, and later these organizations became also more involved in the Balkans. Those most experienced NGOs also initiated long-term programs in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Russia and Mongolia.

However, it should be mentioned that at the same time many Polish NGOs were specializing in aid provision toward many regions of the world, such as Africa or Middle East. But Polish NGOs have been more likely to provide humanitarian aid to such distant countries, whereas countries which emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union and in the Balkans became the main recipient of Polish NGOs democracy assistance activities.\textsuperscript{24} The first destinations of Polish NGOs activities were Poland’s closest neighbors—Belarus, Ukraine and the Kaliningrad Oblast of Russia. At the end of 1990s, Polish NGOs intensified their foreign activity; and their engagement in this assistance was possible thanks to the links established by the pioneer organizations with Eastern partners in the mid 1990s.

The question remains why NGOs decided to direct their democracy assistance activities to the post-communist region. The answers of representatives of Polish NGOs can be grouped in six categories, which will be described in this section below. First, Polish NGOs engage in

\textsuperscript{23} For example, the Institute of Public Affairs was an organization established to support social and political reforms and to provide a forum for debate on social, political and economic issues in Poland. Later however the IPA also began to prepare reform proposals, conduct research and societal analysis, as well as to present policy recommendations not only in Poland but also other countries in the post-communist region. The IPA publishes the results of its activities in the form of books and policy papers, which are distributed to members of parliament, government officials, the media and non-governmental organizations in Poland and in the post-communist countries.

\textsuperscript{24} Since the beginning of 1990s, Polish organizations have been involved in international humanitarian aid. Polish NGOs provide aid to victims of natural disasters and armed conflicts, followed by material development aid, monitoring and counseling. The Polish Red Cross, Caritas Poland, and, since 1994, the Polish Humanitarian Organization (PHO) provide aid for all conflict victims who are in need. PHO, for example, has provided support for the reconstruction of schools and water-sanitary systems as well as for a sewage treatment plants for hospitals in Iraq, Afghanistan, Chechnya, the Palestinian Authority, and especially many African countries. Caritas Poland also offers material aid to educational, social and health-promoting projects as well as to prisoners; and the organization conducts rehabilitation projects. There are also smaller organizations that provide training programs for doctors from abroad, and food and medical help, and that run projects of assistance for children with AIDS and the like.

(Zagranica Group 2003)
helping the post-communist countries for idealistic reasons—they have an obligation to help, because Polish NGOs were helped before. Second, Western donors encouraged Polish NGOs to engage in activities in other post-communist countries. Third, there has been a more practical purpose driving the need to help (e.g. geographical proximity, probability that aid would be well used; experience with transformation processes). Fourth, Polish NGOs engage in activities in Ukraine and Belarus, because there is a demand for their experience and skills on the recipient side. Fifth, Polish NGO activists have their own interest to help for material and family reasons. Finally, Polish NGOs perceive their engagement in democracy assistance in the post-communist region as their contribution to meeting Poland’s national interest.

The most popular reason given for helping Ukrainians and Belarusians is the need to pass on the legacy of Solidarity. The process of change began when along with the Solidarity, Poles started to become aware that the fate of their country depends upon them. As expressed by Jacek Michałowski, Program Director of PAFF: “we wanted to show our friends from Ukraine and Belarus how we took the matter into our hands … we wanted show our positive experience with transformation—if we managed they can do this, too!” (FED 2005). Grzegorz Gromadzki (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation remembers that such a declaration was even expressed during the First Convention of Solidarity in the fall of 1981 during which the message was sent to the workers in the socialist bloc to struggle for freedom of association and was adopted was an ideological declaration of those days.25

It has become clear during the fieldwork and interviews with those many prominent Polish civil society activists and former dissidents in Poland that the rise of Solidarity promoted a specific model of democracy assistance. This model is based on assisting democracy through the collaborative work of actors across the border in the region, named by democracy assistance

25 See also official Solidarity’s website at http://www.solidarnosc.gov.pl/?document=89
practitioners “cross-border work.” This idea of cooperation between civil societies is another notable contribution of Solidarity Movement.

Most people that founded Polish organizations and are working in them today are people who were affiliated with the underground movement and Solidarity. Some organizations, like the Foundation for Young Democracy, were founded by people like Jan Fedirko or Paweł Bobołowicz, who as students formed an opposition to the Polish communist regime. Later, in the 1990s, these individuals were activists in other associations, such as the Polish-Ukrainian Youth Forum; and when the Foundation of Young Democracy was established, it institutionalized relations with Ukrainian partners. The Center of International Relations is another example of an organization that has been led by the former democratic oppositionists by Janusz Reiter until 2005, and today by Eugeniusz Smolar. Both figures were affiliated either with the Workers’ Defence Committee (KOR), or later Solidarity, and other democratic opposition groups in Poland, as well as underground publications.26 The previous section has presented more examples of Polish organizations founded by Polish dissidents, people affiliated with the communist opposition not only in Poland but elsewhere in the region as well.

The driving force for the engagement in assistance in Ukraine and Belarus, according to Marta Pejda from the Zagranica Group, is Poland’s obligation to help these countries, because other countries helped Poland during the transformation process. For example, Western social scientists, and other experts came to Poland and provided training to political oppositionists during the 1980s and later in 1990s. Those people, like Urszula Doroszewska, significantly contributed to Poland’s democratization, and felt strongly about passing their knowledge and experience to the Eastern neighbors, in the opinion of Katarzyna Bielawska (2008) from the

26 Smolar was co-organizer of the 25th anniversary celebrations of “Solidarity” Trade-Union (August 2005) and program director of the international conference “From Solidarność to Freedom” (http://www.csm.org.pl)
DSE. Przemysław Fenrych (2008) from the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD) remembers these times himself and says that, having received a lot of support from the West during the period of the “Solidarity Carnival” and then during the martial law, founders of Polish NGOs feel an obligation and need to help others.

Moreover, in some cases, there was encouragement from foreign donors—such as the World Bank, USAID, CIDA, SIDA, and the Soros Foundation—to Polish organizations to engage in the East, in the opinion of Radziwiłł from the Center for International Relations. For donor organizations, Polish organizations, like CASE, were the channel through which the final beneficiaries could be reached.

Behind the inspiration for the Eastern orientation of Polish NGOs activities, were many prominent individuals. According to Renata Koźlicka-Glińska from PAFF, figures like Zbigniew Brzeziński and Nicholas Ray, who were on the foundation’s Board of Directors, were not only interested in the development of civil society in Poland but also in developing good relations with its neighbors and thus gave impetus for the establishment of programs aimed at sharing the Polish experience in transition, such as RITA or the Lane Kirkland Scholarships.

The views and attitudes of individuals like Jerzy Giedroyc and Pope John Paul II also inspired Polish NGOs’ activities, in the opinion of Fenrych (2008). Karol Wojtyła, before becoming the pope, was a public spokesman not only for rights of the church in Poland, but also for the human rights of all believers and non-believers. His speeches during his visits in Poland as well as meetings with him gave people a sense of community, solidarity and responsibility for others. In the 1970s he became a reference point for a new generation of intellectuals and dissidents, who later under the banner of the Solidarity movement began the struggle for democracy, and many of them continued the movement’s work in Polish non-organizations.
Giedroyc, however, inspired civil society activists with his conviction that Poland can be an independent democracy, only if Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania are also independent democracies; and also persuasive was his position that Poland should do everything possible to promote these countries’ independence and democracy as a buffer against Russia, in order to prevent disastrous moments that occurred earlier in history. Solidarity people believed in Giedroyc’s concept, according to Rodger Potocki (2008) from the NED.  

Another individual having important impact on the engagement of Polish NGOs beyond Polish Eastern border was George Soros. In the opinion of Grzegorz Gromadzki (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation, one of the oldest organizations in Poland, it was the idée fixe of the Soros Foundation to treat the post-communist region as the separate territory with its distinctive features and to encourage contacts within this region. Programs of the Stefan Batory Foundation, founded by Soros, have been based on the idea of exchanging experience within countries in the post-communist region. The requirement of an East-East project suggested by Soros, for example, has been to finance initiatives of the Stefan Batory Foundation that incorporate at least two partners from the region that work on joint activities. There were also activities directed toward the Baltic States. However, later it turned out that this region, with regard to decision-makers’ expectations regarding assistance—culturally, mentally and geographically—leans closer to the Scandinavian states, according to Gromadzki and Komorowska. The governments of the Baltic States looked toward many political and economic reforms in the North; therefore, after a certain period of time the Stefan Batory ceased its support to organizations there. At the beginning, Polish NGOs were also active in other countries belonging to the Visegrad group; but

---

27 Such a statement was also expressed by Carl Gershman, the president of NED during the conference “Solidarity and the Future of Democratization” commemorating the twentieth anniversary of Poland’s Roundtable Talks, organized in May 2009 at Georgetown University.
the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovakia had their own domestic and Western sources of support.

When asked why, out of the whole post-communist region, Ukraine and Belarus are of special focus to Polish NGOs, Gromadzki stated that working, for example, in Russia and spreading democratic practices there turned out to be an incredible challenge for Polish organizations. There are some projects in Kaliningrad that Polish NGOs implement, but Kaliningrad Oblast is distinctive to some extent, because the region was once Prussian. Therefore, in a natural way, Ukraine and Belarus have become the main recipients of Polish NGOs’ activities. Komorowska adds that Ukraine and Belarus have very close cultural ties with Poland, share a common past, and started at the same position as Poland; but Poland was “lucky” so there was a sense of duty on the governmental and non-governmental side. Thus, it is Poland’s obligation to help others in the region.

In addition to such idealistic reasons, there are also more pragmatic purposes for directing assistance to Ukraine and Belarus. According to Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy, located in Lublin in Southeastern Poland, undoubtedly Poland’s geographic proximity, only 100 kilometers (about 62 miles) from the border with Ukraine, in the natural way determined the organization’s choice of recipient country for its activities. Because of this proximity, activities in Belarus and Ukraine are less costly, whereas Polish activities in remote regions like Central Asia are costly because of expensive transport. Thus, Central Asian countries are in Poland’s plans, but are not priorities, according to Fenrych from the FSLD (Fenrych 2008). Moreover, Polish NGOs also find cultural and historical proximity important in their decision to direct their assistance to Ukraine and Belarus. According to Morawska from the FSLD, it proved to be much easier to communicate the experience of Poland, because it is more
compatible with the social and political circumstances of Belarus and Ukraine. Moreover, the language similarities between Ukraine, Belarus, and Poland also facilitate the conduct of activities, because there are not communication barriers.

Being between two major regions, Western Europe and Eastern Europe, Poland has experiences from both sides, in the opinion of Katarzyna Bielawska from the DSE. Current Polish elites and Polish society have learnt from Poland’s regime changes, the democratic transition, and activities undertaken for the democratization of Poland, and later for democratic consolidation. Gaining experience as recipients of aid and gaining the knowledge that was coming to Poland from the West and being able to adjust it to Polish domestic realities, Polish NGOs can pass this expertise on to Poland’s neighbors. Taking into account similarities of past socio-economic and political systems between countries, it is easier to pass experience on to the former Soviet Union countries, especially to Belarus and Ukraine, than to other countries, as every donor wants its aid to be used in a most effective way. Thus, Polish NGOs have chosen a target that may bring the best results, as stated by Bielawska: “we want our experience to get to the most fertile ground” (Bielawska 2008).

Some Polish NGOs have devoted much of their attention to think tank activities, such as public research, advocacy and analysis. These organizations, like the Institute for Public Affairs were established to support reform during Poland’s transformation. These organizations felt strongly that they must to pass knowledge on to other countries, according to Pawel Kucharczyk. Simply put, they are doing what they are doing because they like it and know how to do this (Kujawska 2008). Similarly, the Robert Schuman Foundation, since 1991 has implemented projects in Poland closely associated with its political, social and the economic transition, as well as Polish integration with the EU. Thus, “with such rich experience …. it is worth sharing it with
countries which aspire to a similar process of transformation and integration,” said Rafal Dymek (2008) from the foundation. Similarly, the FSLD was founded to implement the local government reforms in Poland that had been prepared by a group of scholars affiliated with the University of Warsaw, like Regulski himself. The foundation found it appropriate to share its experience with other post-communist countries by answering, at the same time, calls for assistance (Morawska 2008).

In addition to the impetus or desire to share Polish experience, there has been also a demand for assistance from Ukrainian and Belarusian societies. In the opinion of Katarzyna Morawska (2008), Poland seems to be, for Ukrainians, the first reasonable choice to emulate; and they can be lucky to have such opportunity. Poland did not have a similar country to emulate and had to rely on Western examples and adapt them to its circumstances. Morawska gives an example of a study visit of mayors to France and the US in the early 1990s. During this trip Polish participants were skeptical about whether what they saw could be achieved in Poland, because the situation in Western countries seemed to be so different from Poland’s domestic political, social and financial conditions.

Moreover, for countries like Belarus where the government does not have good official relations with any democratic governments, Polish NGOs play an important role by spreading democratic ideas and practices in these societies. Knowing that no one other than foreign organizations can create better opportunities for Belarusian people to see a little bit of a different style of living, Belarusian students, interns, and representatives of many professional groups make use of Polish NGOs’ projects and come to Poland to study, work and take part in many other educational programs (Morawska 2008).
Staff members of Polish NGOs also have their own self-interested purposes in directing their activities abroad. There are organizations, especially those located in the southeastern part of Poland in cities like Lublin, that when their representatives were asked about their reason for their involvement in Ukraine, in addition to political reasons, mentioned also personal reasons—family and friends and a passion for Ukrainian culture (Bobołowicz 2008).

Also, and especially in the case of more distant countries, such as Georgia, Moldova, Kazakhstan or Armenia, Polish NGOs take actions in these states, because the direction of this aid is in line with the recent foreign policy outlined by the MFA. For example, Polish NGOs direct their activities to Georgia, which requires the stabilization of democracy and building of the civil society sector. Since Polish NGOs have experience in these areas, they get involved (Fenrych 2008). Thus, the high likelihood of receiving funding as a driving force behind Polish NGOs assistance cannot be neglected.

Polish NGOs perceive their engagement in democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine as their contribution to meeting Poland’s national interest. Belarus and Ukraine are neighbors of Poland and are very important for cultural and historical reasons. Poland has had ties with these countries since the Middle Ages—a large part of Ukraine and Belarus belonged to Poland and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth; and there are very many Poles who live there. As Fenrych said, Polish civil society activists have their selfish motives to have safe and friendly neighbors, just as “everyone wants to have a nice neighbor with whom one can meet for a barbecue or a drink, but one should take care of him and help him when he is in need” (Fenrych 2008). Similarly, Jacek Michalowski from the PAFF said, “if they [Belarusians and Ukrainians] are better off, better-organized, believing in similar values and standards, it will be easier to build a common European space of democracy and prosperity” (FED 2005).
Poland also has a history of many inglorious events with its direct eastern neighbors that persist in people’s minds, such as the Chmielnicki Rebellion, massacres of Poles in Volhynia, and Operation Wisła, and in order not to allow these memories to dominate relations, a mutual cooperation and partnership should prevail, in the opinion of Fenrych from the FSLD (Fenrych 2008). Otherwise, these countries could grow to fear Poland’s former hegemony, in Michalowski’s opinion (FED 2005). Therefore, engaging in assistance in these countries may help to heal the wounds of the past. Polish NGOs programs are sensitive to cultural differences; the Poles share their experiences with Ukrainians and Belarusians with full respect for cultural and historical differences and to history, in the opinion of Krzysztof Stanowski, former Director of the Education for Democracy Foundation (FED) (FED 2005). Today, the term Kresy, meaning outskirts or borderlands, is rarely used toward the Eastern neighbors.

Activities of Polish NGOs that are directed primarily at Poland’s direct neighbors also help to achieve other national interests. Poland is able to interest Western Europe in Belarus and Ukraine, thus raising Poland’s profile on international arena (Dymek 2008). Moreover, the changes occurring in Eastern Europe, especially after the EU enlargement, when Belarus and Ukraine became direct neighbors of the EU, facilitate the Polish NGOs’ assistance to these countries. Polish NGOs help improve the EU foreign policy toward these countries and mitigate obstacles by serving with their experience and skills.
Funding Polish NGOs’ Foreign Projects

Polish Financial Resources

For a long time, Polish NGOs did not have many opportunities to receive financial support for their activities abroad from Polish sources. Today, there is financial support for Polish NGOs’ projects from the Polish Government, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as discussed in the former chapter. However, these sources have become available only recently. Possibilities of financing projects from Polish sources in the 1990s have appeared mainly due to the fact that many Polish organizations running their own projects were simultaneously institutions giving grants for projects of other organizations. The Stefan Batory Foundation is an example of such funding source.

Because of funding by the Open Society Institute (OSI), one of the Stefan Batory Foundation’s major objectives is to enhance the role of the activity of civil society in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe and thus propagate civil liberties, rule of law, and democratic changes. The Foundation actively also supports the development of Polish NGOs’ international co-operation. Thus, besides its own projects abroad and funding organizations from Kaliningrad Oblast, Belarus, and Ukraine, the Stefan Batory Foundation provides grants for Polish cross-border projects in Eastern Europe. The Foundation offers these financial opportunities to Polish NGOs projects through “The East-East Program: Partnership beyond Borders” which is financed by OSI. Polish civil society actors and organizations receive support, if they demonstrate that they seek to engage in cooperation abroad in order to strengthen expertise, share best practices learned in social transformation, create international advocacy coalitions, and work together on
solutions to common challenges.\textsuperscript{28} Projects of Polish NGOs, in the East-East Program can be implemented in Poland or carried out in other countries of the region.

Another Polish source of funding is the Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFF), whose mission is to strengthen civil society, democracy and the market economy in Poland.\textsuperscript{29} The Foundation does not itself directly implement operating activities, but only transfers funds to organizations to carry out programs. However, these programs are often written by the Foundation or together with the cooperating partner organizations (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). An example of such a program is the large grant, Region in Transition (RITA). It is administered by the Education Foundations for Democracy (FED) and aims to support free and democratic transition in other post-communist countries, notably through the sharing of the Polish experience.\textsuperscript{30}

RITA has existed from the beginning of the presence of PAFF in Poland and will run as long as the funds of the foundation will last. FED, as the operator of RITA, was selected through an open competition. The agreement with FED is renewed every year or every two years. Every year PAFF also must report to its Board of Directors and ask for funding. RITA provides funding from the 5 to 30,000 PLN (about $1,500 to $10,000) for a recipient organization which can implement its own projects or do regranting (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). The aim of the program is being achieved through the projects implemented by many Polish organizations and educational institutions which provide expertise and education to people of the recipient countries about matters in which Polish partners were involved during the transformation process. An important task of the program is the development of new leaders and intellectual, economic, and political

\textsuperscript{28} Source for this information comes from http://www.batory.org.pl/english/east/index.htm
\textsuperscript{29} For more information about the PAFF visit www.pafw.pl
\textsuperscript{30} For more information about RITA visit http://rita.edudemo.org.pl/
elites who will be open to the values of Western world, ready and able to take action in the name of democracy, the market economy and civil society.

The members of ZG also played an important role in lobbying the government to establish a governmental aid program. In the opinion of Paweł Kazanecki from the EEDC, representatives of Polish NGOs believed that aid from Polish sources, rather than relying on Western monies, would make Poland a more credible democracy promoter. This claim was one of the main arguments used by Polish NGOs in order to convince the Polish government to create Polish Aid. There were many meetings and conferences with Polish ambassadors and representatives of the Polish MFA that served this purpose. In fact, Polish NGOs made Poland, which in the past was the recipient of various kinds of foreign aid, become a donor, as Boratyński from the Stefan Batory Foundation noted. Later, the EU only accelerated pressure on the Polish Government to create Polish Aid and establish the expected sum of funds spent on aid.

The Polish MFA uses Polish budget money for foreign aid; however, there are also many Polish ministries that receive additional funds from the EU budget. These funds might be disbursed for NGO activities, but it is not common for Polish NGOs to apply for them yet (Koźlicka-Glińska 2008). Only recently, some Polish NGOs also tried to apply to the Ministry of National Education (MNE). For example, the MNE financed the internet radio project in Belarus by the St. Maximilian Kolbe House for Meetings and Reconciliation (DMK) that earlier was rejected by the MFA (Goliński 2008). The MNE also plays an important role in financing projects that deal with so-called development education in Poland. Development education is work with Polish children, teenagers, and teachers in form of workshops, concerts, games and

31 Jakub Boratyński’s opinion was expressed during the meeting organized by the Zagranica Group within the Fourth Polish Forum for Non-Governmental Initiatives in 2005.
32 Also, during interviews many representatives of Polish NGOs frequently referred to the role of EU.
meetings with foreign country specialists. The contact with the MNE allows Polish NGOs to reach these groups and work with them under joint initiatives regarding development education.

33 The co-operation with the MNE has also been facilitated by the fact that a former NGO activist, Krzysztof Stanowski, became Vice-Minister in the Polish MNE.

**Cooperation with the Polish Governmental Program**

The fact that the Polish Government included Polish NGOs as partners in aid provision was an apparent breakthrough in relations between governmental and non-governmental sectors. This change, however, also was the result of long efforts of Polish organizations as expressed by Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy. The first call, set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), for proposals for Polish NGOs’ assistance projects in priority countries was initiated in 2005. Since then, once a year the MFA awards funds for Polish NGOs’ projects abroad. The process of evaluation and implementation of projects is monitored and evaluated by the Development Co-operation Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and particular steps of project submission process are set forth in the chart below.

33 In the opinion of Pejda (2008) from the Zagranica Group, development education is very important, because it makes people more sensitive to the problems of other countries as well as to global changes. Growing immigration is one of these changes in the world, and therefore the aim of development education also is to make Polish society more tolerant to immigrants coming to Poland. In comparison to Western donor countries, development education is still a novel initiative in Poland but rapidly growing. There also are plans to incorporate development aid into the program of Polish colleges.
Figure 4.1. Application Process for the MFA Funds
Source: Based on the “Polish Aid Program Administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland” issued by the Polish MFA in 2008.

Each submitted project is evaluated by two persons, one from the Development Cooperation Department and the other from the MFA department responsible for the Polish foreign policy toward the specific country. They meet and discuss merits of the given project and whether or not the project should be financed by the MFA (Pejda 2008). The Zagranica Group, an association of Polish non-governmental organizations involved in cross-border projects, has observer status. Therefore, its representative takes part in the meeting between two persons responsible for the project evaluation, and he or she assesses whether the evaluators are being objective and whether they are following the rules. The Zagranica Group, with its observer status, also has a right to look into the evaluation forms and check whether the same procedures are being applied to each project. Violations rarely take place, but if there are minor issues of which the ZG observer disapproves, he or she usually calls for MFA attention without specifying a meeting on the project evaluation during which the misjudgment occurred.

First, each project is evaluated at the formal level—whether the proposal has all required attachments, whether the budget contains qualified costs, and so forth. Then, a project is
checked, to determine whether it meets Polish foreign aid principles and whether project goals are achievable. Each project receives a certain number of points (Pejda 2008). Projects that are directed to the so-called priority countries defined annually by the MFA have more chance to receive funds than other projects. A project aimed at non-priority countries gets an allocation, only if there are left-over monies after projects aimed at priority countries are funded (Pejda 2008).  

Based on the application guidelines for the MFA financial aid in 2008, a number of formal requirements should be highlighted here, because they show the nature of the MFA cooperation with Polish NGOs. Funds are distributed only for non-profit organizations registered in Poland. Applicants can submit one or more projects, and these projects may apply to different priority countries. Activities that do not qualify for funding include military aid, training of police for military purposes, cultural and sport programs, scientific research, and peace-building missions. A certain portion of the funds is assigned to humanitarian and development aid, but most is for the support of democracy and civil society. Recently, the MFA also assigned funds for the realization of educational projects aimed at increasing knowledge in Polish society about development cooperation, Millennium Development Goals and problems of developing countries.

Furthermore, all applicants have to enclose a detailed budget and timetable of activities to be implemented within the project. More importantly, the MFA partners have to demonstrate that they will incorporate partners from the aid recipient country by attaching letters, agreements and other documents. The MFA does not provide funds for projects that do not incorporate the recipient country’s local partners (Sycz 2008). Moreover, the MFA requires the project

---

34 Other sources of information about these procedures are available on the Polish Aid website http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl
proposals to be as specific as possible, so that one could assess the results of the projects. Applicants have to specify how the project goals will be achieved, by what means, and how the results can be measured. Finally, the results of the projects also should benefit recipients in foreign countries after the end of the project.

Once decisions are made, the MFA announces the list of Polish NGOs whose projects were granted assistance. In 2008, there were 300 applications sent to the Development Cooperation Department; and one-third were accepted (Pejda 2008). Each Polish NGO that does not receive funding can ask the MFA for clarification and will obtain information about weaknesses in the proposal and have a chance to correct them and apply with the next year’s call for proposals.

During the implementation of a project, the MFA assigns a so-called “desk officer” who co-operates with the Polish NGO and who also serves as a consultant. Additionally, the desk officer monitors the realization of the project and asks for the reports. MFA officials sometimes visit the local recipients in the foreign countries to learn how the project is being implemented and how it potentially benefits the local groups. There have been situations when the MFA had to intervene, because there were some difficulties arising from the cooperation with local partners. Polish NGOs are responsible for the submission of the report after the project is finished, by the end of January of the year after the one in which the grant was being carried out.

Since the Polish Governmental Aid program was launched, Polish NGOs engaged in the cross-border work have become very active in shaping the governmental aid. In the strategy adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2003 “participation of non-governmental circles in consultation about essential directions of Polish development assistance” is one of the principal
features of the Polish mechanism of providing foreign aid. This activity is possible mainly through the Zagranica Group.

ZG serves as a consultant to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with respect to the foreign aid provision in general. Before the MFA prepares the aid budget for the next fiscal plan, the Ministry consults Polish NGOs through the ZG, to find out their ideas regarding projects in foreign countries (Sycz 2008). Such consultations allow the MFA better to design its aid offer to a particular recipient country. Then, the MFA officials travel to the recipient country in order to learn whether the Polish offer matches the need of the country. Thus, the annual document setting the aid priority countries and areas prepared by the MFA takes into account the domestic circumstances in the foreign countries and Polish capacities. This is an interactive process. The NGOs shape the governmental aid offers, and the MFA shapes the NGOs’ scope of activities in the recipient countries.

Moreover, since aid disbursement procedures affect NGOs, they work actively to improve Polish Aid, especially since the process of grant-giving by the MFA leaves a lot to be desired (Sycz 2008). Members of the Zagranica Group were consulted by the MFA as to how the rules and procedures could be improved as well as adjusted to projects in different recipient countries. Many bureaucratic requirements associated with project submission were reduced to a minimum since the first call for proposals in 2005. The ZG took active role in the creation of the on-line form for project submission—this improvement accelerated the application process. Moreover, the rules regarding budgeting were set, so that they do not slow down the implementation of the project. According to Marta Pejda (2008) from the Zagranica Group, cooperation with the MFA regarding the improvement of the call for proposals was good; and the MFA eagerly accepted the Zagranica Group’s suggestions (Pejda 2008).
The biggest complaint; however, is that funds obtained from the MFA are only for the short-term and that there is a brief period of implementation. The short-term financing of projects stems from the fact that the funds allocated by the MFA are the government’s financial resources, allotted for the fiscal year (Sycz 2008). Since these resources are allocated from the Polish budget, there are certain procedures that apply to the funds distribution. Assistance funds have to be distributed in a given fiscal year, and the projects financed with these funds have to finished by the end December of a given year. The funds allocated but not used have to be returned to the Polish budget. Even though some projects, once granted by the MFA, can be renewable yearly, the Ministry’s measures prevent strategic, long-term thinking in the opinion of majority of Polish NGOs interviewed for this study. Moreover, it must be mentioned that since these monies come from the budget reserve, there is always some risk that they will not be assigned for the next year. In order to bring more stability to Polish NGOs’ funding, the ZG recognizes the need for the long-term financing. Therefore, the Group has lobbied for the bill that would establish an agency with its own budget through which Polish NGOs projects could be funded.

Another aspect of problem is also related to the short time for the implementation for Polish NGOs’ projects. After the budget is approved in January every year, monies are transmitted to the Ministry of Finance, responsible for redistribution of funds to specific ministries; and this process takes another one and a half months. As soon as the MFA receives funds, the call for proposals is announced. Before NGOs start project implementation, there are formal actions taking place, such as the conclusion of agreements, negotiations of cuts needed, deposits of funds to the banking accounts, and the like. These actions put the cross-border project implementation off until the end of May or the beginning of June. Since these monies are
government's expenditures, all projects should be completed by December 31 of the year in which they are funded. Rafał Dymek (2008) from the Robert Schumann Foundation, for example, said that in fact the organization can start a project in August or September, after the holidays, and then the agency has only three months and has to end the activities because Christmas time is coming.

In 2008, there were six months for the implementation of a project. Therefore, with such funding, it is difficult to preserve continuity in actions, which is very important in democracy assistance in the opinion of Morawska from the FSLD (Morawska 2008). A short time does not allow for the effective use of MFA monies. According to Pejda from the ZG, the short time span for project realization also shapes the character of Polish Aid in general. Short time influences the NGOs’ character but also their work—they cannot make long-term plans if relying only on the MFA sources. Also, six-month timing defines types of projects to be implemented as well as reducing their scope. During this period, NGOs can organize conferences and training or can publish books but cannot realize long-term projects composed of several activities with partners from recipient countries. Because there is no chance for the long-term projects to be funded by the MFA fund, the NGOs do not acquire specialization in these kinds of projects, as well. Such assistance policy does not guarantee the continuity and development of programs which provide the opportunity to work with various partners in the long time span.

In addition to efforts aimed at improving the application process for Polish Governmental Aid, Polish NGOs have worked to make the funding process more efficient or transparent. In fact, the Development Co-operation Department in the MFA that is responsible for managing Polish Aid can be regarded as the effect of dialogue between public administration and the non-governmental sector (Kujawska 2008). There is right now ongoing debate whether the fact that
Polish NGOs take money from the Polish budget does not infringe their non-governmental character (Bobołowicz 2008). If so, which model should the Polish aid system should emulate—the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, or maybe the Matra Program created by the Dutch MFA (Pejda 2008).

There are also other ways to make Polish aid more efficient or transparent. The Zagranica Group questions the fact that debt reduction and preferential loans are included in the OECD report on Polish aid because it is not clear whether they contribute to the development of the recipient country. Sometimes preferential loans benefit Poland as a donor, because these loans are meant to be spent on the purchase of Polish products. According to the Zagranica Group such mutual transactions undermine the benevolent character of aid provision. The Zagranica Group takes initiatives to clarify how much of what Poland spends can be regarded as an aid.

A new initiative, especially among Polish think tanks, is to evaluate the Polish governmental efforts to provide democracy assistance. This undertaking has been stimulated by the Policy Association for an Open Society (PASOS), an association of international think tanks in Prague. Within this new stream of activity were organized, for example, meetings gathering non-governmental organizations, representatives of the MFA and Belarusian opposition groups. These gatherings aimed to make recommendations for Polish democracy assistance (Kucharczyk 2008). Since Polish Aid does not distinguish aid for democracy assistance from other types of aid, such as developmental or humanitarian, the think tanks have been lobbying for this distinction for clarity purposes. Moreover, recommendations were made for Poland to get involved in many international projects on democracy promotion, especially with other countries from Visegrad Group and the European Union (Kucharczyk 2008).
In 2008 the MFA co-financed ninety-eight projects carried out by Polish NGOs. As Figure 2.8 shows, more than half of that outlay was spent on projects in the post-communist countries—Belarus, Ukraine, Afghanistan, Georgia and Moldova.

![Bar Chart](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**Figure 4.2. Number of Polish NGOs’ Projects Financed by the MFA in 2008**  
Source: Based on the List of Polish NGOs’ Projects co-financed by the MFA within 2008 Call for Proposals, obtained during the interview meeting with the MFA officials in July 2008.

Similarly, in term of monies spent, Polish NGOs’ projects in the post-communist region are the best funded, as compared to Polish NGOs projects in other areas.
Figure 4.3. Amount of MFA Monies Spent on Grants for Polish NGOs Projects Abroad in 2008 (% of Total Amount of Grants for NGOs)
Source: Based on the List of Polish NGOs’ Projects co-financed by the MFA within 2008 Call for Proposals, obtained during the interview with Sycz (2008).

With respect to specific post-communist countries, since the beginning of Polish Governmental Aid, projects of Polish NGOs directed toward Ukraine and Belarus have received the major focus (more than 60 percent), as the table below shows.

Table 4.1. Breakdown of Polish MFA-Funded NGOs’ Projects, 2005-2008 (% of Number of Projects in a Given Year)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country/Region</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasus</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balkans</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s calculations based on the announcements of annual MFA grant competitions for NGOs
Western Donors to Polish NGOs’ Projects in the Post-Communist Countries

For many years foreign projects of Polish NGOs used to be financed almost exclusively from foreign funds (Zagranica Group 2003). Many of these funds have come from some of US governmental, semi-governmental and private organizations and foundations that used to support Polish NGOs before and during the transformation process in Poland. Today some of these entities, such as the NED, the Ford Foundation and the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation provide funds for Polish cross-border work. Also, several US foundations have pooled their funds to provide assistance, and an example of such initiative is the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe. The CEE Trust was established by a group of private US foundations, such as the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Ford Foundation, German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Open Society Institute, and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. The Trust is an independent public charity with the aim to promote the development of civil societies in the Central and Eastern Europe by supporting organizations and their initiatives. Polish NGOs receive financial support from this fund for their cross-border projects.

Some Polish NGOs’ activities in the post-communist countries are financed from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), formed by the Canadian government, since CIDA’s aims include promoting democratic governance and human rights as well as supporting sustainable development. The possibility of obtaining money from this agency also stems from the fact that in order to deliver aid, CIDA works closely not only with Canadian organizations, but with many kinds of international organizations, other donor countries, and of course, recipient countries themselves. A similar mechanism of aid provision is promoted by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) that answers to the Swedish
Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Sida is responsible for the bulk of Sweden's aid to developing
countries and channels its resources, mainly through NGOs, popular movements, organizations,
universities, and government agencies. Another reason why Polish NGOs receive funds for their
projects in the post-communist region is that one of the Sida’s geographic foci is Central and
Eastern Europe.

In addition to governmental agencies, there are also many Western Europe-based
organizations and initiatives which today are actively supporting Polish NGOs working abroad.
Worth mentioning is the Trialog initiative, that since 2000 has been financed mainly by the
European Commission and the Austrian Development Cooperation. The objective is to
strengthen development of activities and cooperation through the integration of NGOs from new
EU member states and accession countries into Concord and other European networks.35 Some
Polish NGOs receive funds from European Solidarity towards Equal Participation of People
(EUROSTEP) which is EU Presidency Fund, established with financial support from the Irish
and Dutch Governments, whose countries that held the office in 2004.36 EUROSTEP became of
a network of autonomous European non-governmental development organizations that has been
working to engage and increase capacity of civil society organizations from the EU’s ten new
Member States in the shaping, debating and advocating of the EU development policy.

With regard to foreign organizations, very active in the sphere of supporting Polish
NGOs’ projects abroad are German foundations, such as Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Robert
Bosch Stiftung, and Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. Each of these foundations has its preferences
regarding the thematic scope of activities funded. Unlike other German foundations, the

35 Concord is confederation representing NGOs from EU Member States. It is a tool for political and institutional
coordination, and a forum of exchange for its members. CONCORD members have been deepening their relations
with the NGOs from New Member States through the Trialog project. For more see
http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=4
Friedrich Ebert Foundation has its own office in Poland, opened in 1990. This agency is the largest office in terms of staff and funding in Central and Eastern Europe. This organization focuses mainly on EU integration and international relations, social and political dialogue, economics and society, labor relations and social dialogue. Polish NGOs’ activities that are in line with these priorities have a chance to be funded. However, the Robert Bosch Stiftung, a foundation associated with a private company, finances a wider range of projects and programs in the fields of science and research, health and humanitarian aid, international relations, education and society, as well as in society and culture. 37

The possibility of the use of funds allocated for NGOs is linked to the entry of Poland into the European Union and the accession to the European Economic Area (EEA). Three countries which are not members of the EU, but which belong to the European Economic Area—Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein—established a form of non-repayable financial aid for the less affluent countries of the EU to reduce social and economic disparities. These aid recipient countries are the ten new members as well as Greece, Portugal and Spain. Under the "Agreement on the European Economic Areas (EEA) Enlargement" of October 14, 2003, two support instruments—the EEA Financial Mechanism and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism were established. The Financial Mechanism of the EEA and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism are managed by the Office of Financial Mechanisms in Brussels. In the opinion of Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy in Lublin, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism is right now an important non-governmental project from which a lot of money can be obtained for the activities in Ukraine.

For a long time there was no opportunity for Polish organizations to apply for funds available from the EU, because the EU grants were only for activities in Poland for Polish

37Source for this information comes from http://www.bosch-stiftung.de/content/language2/html/index.asp
matters (Morawska 2008). However, during the last few years, the role of grants given directly by the European Commission and other funds coming from the EU (from its general budget and from the European Development Fund) has grown toward financing activities run by the Polish NGOs abroad (Bobołowicz 2008). Currently, there are a few transborder co-operation funds which create an opportunity for Polish NGOs to finance their activities. Among the biggest programs are “Interreg Poland-Slovakia,” “Neighborhood Program Latvia-Poland-Russian Federation,” and “Interreg Neighborhood Program Poland-Belarus-Ukraine” that are EU-funded programs that help Europe’s regions form partnerships to work together on common projects (Zagranica Group 2003). Units that play an important role in administering the programs are Euroregion bureaus.38

Within “Interreg Poland-Slovakia Program,” for example, there is a very popular program called Microprojects. It provides support for initiatives in the sphere of organization of common cultural, recreation, sport and educational events, and common local actions aimed at environment protection and tourism, as well as supporting traditions of local communities, organizing trade fairs, exhibitions, conferences, educational co-operation and youth exchange. By means of the Interreg Poland-Belarus-Ukraine, however, organizations can receive financial support for creating new and supporting already-existing Polish-Belarusian and Polish-Ukrainian nets of transborder co-operation of local and regional associations for social, cultural, educational, economical and touristic work. The Fund supports direct contacts between the residents of regions situated near the border and creates the basis for preparing projects on a larger scale.

38 Euroregion represents a specific type of cross-border cooperation between two (or more) territories located in different European countries.
Moreover, there are new EU financial perspectives, such as “Transborder Cooperation Program Poland-Belarus-Ukraine” or “Transborder Cooperation Program Poland-Slovakia” for the years 2007-2013, that create new chances for Polish non-governmental organizations that work abroad. Within these frameworks some possibilities of submitting applications in fields different than transborder cooperation—such as human rights—also exist. Finally, there are Polish NGO initiatives funded by specific Directorates-General (DG) in the European Commission. For example, the DG Education and Culture provides funds for YOUTH Program supporting activities addressed to the people in the age between 15 and 25. This program finances projects that promote the idea of integrated Europe and projects involving youth in difficult economic, social, and situations.

After presenting those different domestic and foreign financial supports for Polish NGOs, the question remains which sources constitute major sources of income of Polish NGOs projects abroad. The next section deals with this issue.

*Foreign Versus Domestic Financial Resources in Polish NGOs’ Budgets*

There are two main forms for operating non-governmental activities in Poland—as an association or a foundation. If the creators have capital, they normally decide to register an organization as a foundation, but there are few Polish organizations with the status of foundation that are self-sustaining (Bobołowicz 2008). PAFF is an example of an NGO that had significant founding capital that still allows the entity to finance itself. However, other foundations, like FSLD, the College of Eastern Europe, the Stefan Batory Foundation or the Foundation for Young Democracy have had to look for other financial sources (Dąbrowski 2008).
Taking a sample of three Polish organizations, this study presents their annual funding sources below. Since some of Polish NGOs engage in many other activities in Poland besides democracy assistance, there are also other financial resources that appear in the financial reports. For example, the Stefan Batory capital in 2007 comprised grants and donations made by Polish and foreign private and public institutions, as well as individual donors, including those who donated 1 percent of their personal income tax. The majority of foundation programs were financed by the Open Society Institute (OSI) and from a grant from the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, as the Table 4.2. shows. Activities in the sphere of international cooperation were co-financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2. The Stefan Batory Grants and Donations Received in 2007(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Bosch Foundation, Stuttgart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembrance, Responsibility and Future Foundation, Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford Foundation, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1% Personal Income Tax Donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends of Batory Foundation, Washington (from donations by Helen and Peter Maxwell and Taube Foundation for Jewish Life and Culture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora S.A., Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Mechanism and Norwegian Financial Mechanism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Union Poland, Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agora Foundation, Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for European Policy Studies, Brussels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nestlé Poland S.A., Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Donors from Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Netherlands Embassy, Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Society Institute, Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damage fines adjudged by the courts in favor of the Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPPID Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Bank BH, Warsaw</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants returned</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stefan Batory Foundation (2007).
EEDC and PAUCI, since they are not grant-giving organizations, have a different structure of income sources and are less diversified. Both organizations’ budgets rely on the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs funding. In case of the EEDC, funds coming from the Polish MFA underwrite almost 45 percent of its activities. Another large donor of EEDC is NED, providing more than one-third of all monies for EEDC projects today. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) and EU sources contribute equally to the EEDC project supporting civil society and the development of local self-government in Belarus. The EU monies come from the Decentralized Cooperation in Belarus and from the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).\footnote{Within the framework of decentralized cooperation, the EU supports operations and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and sustainable development, and that contribute to the diversification and reinforcement of civil society and democracy in the countries concerned. For more information about the Decentralized Cooperation Program in Belarus see \url{http://eurobelarus.info/content/view/2479/85/}} Other financial sources of the EEDC come from, \textit{inter alia}, the East-East program by Stefan Batory Foundation and the Konrad Andenauer Stiftung. Along with Polish MFA, PAUCI has funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, NED, and Polish-German Cooperation Foundation (PGCF) as well as the United Parcel Service (UPS). There are small amounts coming from the RITA program, Polish Embassy sources in Kiev, Freedom House, the OSI, NATO and the Delegation of the European Commission in Kiev.
The Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) has more than twenty sources of funding for projects. OSI in Budapest financed the majority of Eastern programs of the IPA. The Institute also is a grantee of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions, and three European funds. These are the European Social Fund (ESF) which is an instrument for supporting employment as well as promoting economic and social cohesion in the EU; the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals, and the European Refugee Fund.

Financial sustainability has always been an issue for Polish NGOs (Gliński 2006). Despite all the various available funding sources, the financial situation of many non-governmental organizations in Poland, especially the smaller ones, is weaker than in developed
countries, in the opinion of Juros et al. (2004). Many representatives of Polish NGOs interviewed said that they operate from the project to the project.

Some of the Polish NGOs, in addition to grants for projects, look for other sources of income. In some cases, these organizations have sources from sponsoring—as mentioned, the Stefan Batory Foundation or the Foundation for Young Democracy. The Casimir Pulaski Foundation, however, bases the majority of its budget on so-called social entrepreneurship, i.e. income from selling publications, organization of training, and so forth (Pisarski 2008). This form of financing is still rarely used in Poland.

Some of the Polish NGOs, like the Foundation for Young Democracy and the College of Eastern Europe, receive support from the city authorities of the municipality in which organizations are located (Bobołowicz 2008). Wrocław city is the major source of funding for the College of Eastern Europe. This is the largest financial contribution that any local government in Poland has made to support a non-governmental organization. Such funding gives huge stability and allows making long-term plans, in the opinion of Dąbrowski from the College of Eastern Europe (Dąbrowski 2008). Another method of financing activities is to earn monies from real estate, buildings, and hotels, as does the St. Maximilian Kolbe House for Meetings and Reconciliation (DMK) in Gdansk. The DMK receives a stable source of income from the operation of the organization’s hostel (a house offers overnight stays and catering, including a place for the conferences). These proceeds cover personnel and administrative costs, and the organization needs just resources for implementing projects (Goliński 2008).

---

40 When asked for the comparison of financial standing between Polish and Western NGOs, Pisarski (2008) of the Casimir Pulaski Foundation said that the fact that Polish NGOs have to look for the financial sources makes them more creative and effective as compared to organizations that have stable income and very often stagnate or behave like public administration.
In the opinion of Kazanecki from the EEDC, the fact that the financial standing of Polish NGOs is a real problem as compared to well-funded Western NGOs, can be demonstrated by Polish organizations’ inability to match a certain proportion of the grant, required when applying for European funds (Kazanecki 2008). It is quite common that Polish NGOs are expected to share the financial burden of the project. Kazanecki gives as an example that the EEDC was able to obtain a grant from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism, because the Center received its matching funds from the MFA. Kazanecki complains that there is no mechanism in Poland that would enable all Polish NGOs to apply for foreign funds. There was a mechanism offered within the Visegrad group; but it only worked on reimbursement basis, which posed a problem, because many Polish NGOs cannot provide money \textit{a priori}. Thus, the EEDC wants to open a major mechanism for grants that will allow Polish NGOs which work in the East to apply for financial support, like that available within the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (Dębkowska 2008).

Since NED places itself as important Western donor financing Polish NGOs projects, the next section presents in greater detail NED’s cooperation with Polish entities in Belarus and Ukraine.

\textit{NED’s Financial Assistance to Polish Projects in Belarus and Ukraine}

The National Endowment for Democracy operates in eighty-six countries around the world with a budget of 110 million dollars. Historically the budget for the post-communist region has been the largest or the second biggest of all the regions in which NED has worked, in the opinion of Rodger Potocki (2008), Director of Europe and Eurasia at NED. In terms of Eastern Europe and former Soviet countries, Belarus and Ukraine are priorities for NED. The
probable reason, according to Potocki, is that NED was successful at supporting the underground and dissident movements in the Central Europe, and Ukraine and Belarus are linked to these places. Thus, these countries seem to be natural places for the NED to work after the successful democratic consolidation in Central Europe.

NED direct grants aimed at assisting democratizing initiatives of recipient groups in Belarus and Ukraine do not tell the whole story about the NED grant-making activity in these countries. The organization also provides grants to NGOs based in Central and Eastern European countries which have their own Ukrainian and Belarusian cross-border projects. If one adds to all the so-called direct grants between 1993 and 2006 the cross-border grants offered to Polish, Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian partners for the projects in Belarus and Ukraine, the overall amount of NED’s monies for Ukrainian and Belarusian projects is raised by ten percent and the number of projects by 16 percent.\textsuperscript{41} To give an example, in 2000 there were eleven cross-border projects in Ukraine and Belarus compared to fourteen direct projects.

It should be mentioned that in addition to Belarusian and Ukrainian projects \textit{sensu stricto}, there are broad projects that include activities aimed toward these countries, as well. The figure below summarizes the amounts of all NED-funded projects implemented by Central and Eastern European partners in the post-communist region and compares them to the NED direct grants in Ukraine and Belarus. As can be observed, there is more money spent on direct grants than on cross-border projects; and there is a negative relationship between these two types of assistance. When the amount of a direct grants increases as it did in 1994, 1998, 2001 or 2004, the amount of cross-border project funds decreases in these years.

\textsuperscript{41} Data was received upon the author’s request from the NED. The data for cross-border work summarized in Table A5.1 (Appendix 5).
An interesting question arises concerning which country is the dominant partner in cross-border work. Figure 4.6 below demonstrates the NED funds spent on projects implemented by its four partners in the post-communist region. As can be seen, NGOs in Poland were not only the first partners to start NED projects in the post-communist region; but also Polish activities almost always received larger amounts of grants than other cross-border projects.
To be more precise, more than 75 percent of all NED sums spent on the cross-border projects in the former Soviet Union that were implemented by the CEE partners between 1993 and 2007 went to Poland, as Figure 4.7 shows. Taking into account only Belarusian and Ukrainian projects, the Polish contribution rises to 85 percent of all grants spent on NED’s cross-border projects.

NED started its cross-border work with other Central and Eastern European partners almost a decade later than with Polish NGOs. The Czech Republic seems to be NED’s second major partner with 11 percent; the Slovak Republic received 9 percent, and Lithuania, 5 percent, of total amount spent by NED on cross-border projects with Central and Eastern European countries.
A similar pattern emerges, if one counts the number of projects. For example, in 2007 there were five cross-border projects funded by NED, out of which four were implemented by Poland. Overall, there have been 73 cross-border projects in the post-communist region between 1993 and 2007; and 53 went through Polish partners. The next interesting question arises as to who are those partners in Central and Eastern Europe? The tables below show that NED partners involved in the cross-border work are non-governmental organizations from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania and Poland.
Table 4.3. The Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian Partners in the NED-Funded Cross-Border Projects in the Former Soviet Union, 1998-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Czech Republic</strong></td>
<td>369,752</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People in Need Foundation</td>
<td>348,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Initiative “Free Belarus”</td>
<td>21,559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lithuania</strong></td>
<td>157,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania Foundation for the Protection of Citizens</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Baltic Waves</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaunas Municipal Training Center</td>
<td>39,329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuanian and US Initiatives</td>
<td>47,977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Slovak Republic</strong></td>
<td>315,101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pontis Foundation</td>
<td>154,437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEMO 98 (The Slovak Republic</td>
<td>61,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Obcianske Oko (Civic Eye)</td>
<td>50,080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Initiatives Foundation</td>
<td>49,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the data received from NED.

Table 4.4. NED Partnership with Polish NGOs in the Former Soviet Union ($), 1993-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Polish NGOs</th>
<th>1993-2007</th>
<th>% of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assoc of Municipalities</td>
<td>24,900</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association of Educators</td>
<td>31,203</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarusian Students Association in Poland</td>
<td>16,090</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for Civic Education</td>
<td>104,160</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East European Democratic Center (IDEE+EEDC)</td>
<td>1,445,025</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Society for Malopolska</td>
<td>32,200</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Education for Democracy</td>
<td>95,014</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Center for Democratic Development</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAUCI</td>
<td>112,175</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Euro-Atlantic Association</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation</td>
<td>315,840</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio Racyja</td>
<td>225,000</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solidarity Press Foundation</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Research Institute</td>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stefan Batory Foundation</td>
<td>13,921</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Amount Spent on the Cross-border Projects with Polish NGOs</strong></td>
<td>2,635,528</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the data received from NED.

NED cooperates with Polish NGOs, which can apply for the funds four times a year.

Grants are disbursed for a year-long program and grantees have to submit financial and narrative reports every three months. At the end of the project, however, there is a final report and an evaluation report made by the grantees (Potocki 2008).
As one can see, the East European Democratic Center (EEDC) is the major Polish partner in terms of the sum of grants it has received during its fifteen years of cooperation with NED. Also, the EEDC has had the most projects; thirteen projects implemented out of all 53. The second major cross-border partner is the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation. This foundation was the first organization that started NED cross-border projects in Belarus and Ukraine. NED supported the establishment of the foundation, which resulted from the cooperation between dissidents from the Solidarity and Charter 77 underground movements. In 1990, the foundation received one of the first grants directed toward Central and Eastern Europe; and in 1992—the Foundation became the first NED grantee to share experiences, skills, and program models developed from its work in Central Europe with prodemocracy organizations in the former Soviet Union (NED 2006).

The cross-border projects allow the Central and Eastern European countries to share their experience in democratic transformation with other post-communist countries through training, study visits, internships and other forms of assistance to pro-democratic groups in recipient countries. The cross-border projects directed toward Ukraine dominate NED assistance to Polish NGOs in terms of monies spent—55 percent of total grants for Polish NGOs between 1993 and 2007. In terms of number of projects funded, 45 percent of total number of grants was implemented by Polish partners.

Whereas it is very important to involve neighboring countries in the work in Belarus and Ukraine, the majority of democracy building work should be done by the groups native to these countries, in Potocki’s opinion. Thus, the cross-work is considered as an additional aspect of NED’s work in Belarus and Ukraine, in addition to direct grants.
On the question of why NED chooses to work with partners in CEE, Joanna Rohozinska (2008) responded that “working from Poland, Czech, Slovakia is culturally and spiritually closer, and they understand the situation better …it is not just empathy and sympathy but they also understand how things work a little bit better, so the NED finds them more effective than other groups.” Potocki (2008) adds that “there are lot of reasons why it [cooperation between CEE and Belarusian and Ukrainian partners] works—similar language, and a common experience of living under communist dictatorship.” However, questions still remain as to why Polish NGOs are cross-border pioneers and how NED evaluates the work of Polish NGOs in Belarus and Ukraine.

The Polish NGOs dominate the cross-border cooperation, because since 1992 they have been the most interested in going into these places. As Potocki (2008) stated:

The Poles were the first who came to us and want to do this cross-border work, and we always have been organization that responded to what our partners think is the best thing to do. So we started with the Poles; then we added the Czechs, the Slovaks, and the Lithuanians.

In other words, organizations like the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation asked for NED assistance; and NED helped to spur the activities of this organization. Thanks in large part to the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation’s ground-breaking programs, NED became a pioneer and has steadily increased its budget for cross-border democracy-building work (NED 2006). However, at the same time, cooperation with NED “has helped Polish and other Central European NGOs to survive and develop new capabilities” (NED 2006). Today, after twenty years of cooperation, NED has a network of partners that is continuously enlarging. Polish organizations spread information to other organizations, other donors and embassies, as well as the Polish government.

The NED’s cooperation with Polish NGOs also stems from links established during the time of communism. Many activists from Polish NGOs used to be NED’s grantees during the
underground period. Potocki gives an example of the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe, a group that was based first in Paris, then in Washington, and which was the main recipient of NED money that went into communist Poland and supported underground publishing. After the regime change in 1989, the IDEE registered the Polish office; and Pawel Kazanecki, in communism times a student activist and later on also a political activist, worked in this office. As the IDEE began to get bigger and bigger, different people broke off to create their own organizations. The people who are in the Eastern European Democratic Center today came from this IDEE organization (Potocki 2008). So links between Polish organizations stem from these times.

Almost all the older people among leaders of Polish NGOs who have been involved in this cross-border work were originally in the Solidarity underground. One person first active in this cross-border work was Jarosław Szostakowski from the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation. Zbigniew Janas and Zbigniew Bujak, for example, who were the first people that encouraged this cross-border work, started non-governmental organizations in Poland and facilitated the activity of the civil society in Poland. All the people with whom NED worked had ties to this original Solidarity movement; there is also a whole generation of young people, even the children of some of these people that were active in Solidarity times, who are in the Wolna Bialorus (Free Belarus) organization in Warsaw (Potocki 2008).

During the interview, Potocki (2008) gave many other examples demonstrating that current partners of NED in cross-border projects were recipients of NED assistance during the communist times and transformation. There is a straight line from the core group of people like Krzysztof Stanowski, who was one of the first to travel eastward and carry out education projects within The Education for Democracy Foundation (FED), before he became active in politics.
Today Krzysztof Stanowski is Under-Secretary of State in the Polish Ministry of National Education. Stanowski was originally trained by the American Federation of Teachers. The first training programs were done by Americans in Poland. As Potocki (2008) said “Kazanecki was one of the original people who believed in working in Belarus and he took both of us [Potocki and Rohozinska] there from the beginning.” Another direct line is Senator Jerzy Regulski, who together with his daughter, Professor Joanna Regulska, were grantees of NED. The NED gave the first grants for the development of local government in Poland to the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), the Polish organization of which Regulski was a founding chairman. Today the FSLD is an active promoter of the development of local governance in Belarus and Ukraine as well as elsewhere in the post-communist region.

Potocki and Rohozinska noted additional connections between groups that used to be recipients of NED assistance in the 1980s and Polish NGOs that today are active in Belarus and Ukraine. The current chair of the board of the Stefan Batory Foundation, Aleksander Smolar, used to be a grantee of NED when he was working in the democratic underground before OSI decided to establish the foundation as one of its regional organizations. As Rohozinska (2008) pointed out, “it is not difficult to trace these links, you just have to know who was who back then … you might want to look at groups that are in the Zagranica Group, if you focus on them then you have got a direct line to almost all of them.”
Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the Solidarity movement paved the way for democratic changes in Poland and the development of the civil society sector in Poland. Many founders of non-governmental organizations that emerged after 1989 comprised a leading segment of the democratic opposition during the communism. As links traced during this study show, those civil society activists who had their roots in the Solidarity Movement initiated cross-border projects to assist other post-communist countries in their struggle for democracy. Thus, Polish NGOs’ engagement into activity in the post-communist region can be considered a legacy of the Solidarity Movement.

There are a few reasons for Polish NGOs to engage in democracy assistance to the post-communist countries. First, there is the moral obligation to help other civil societies just as Polish civil society activists were helped to break communism down and then to establish non-governmental organizations. Second, Western donors encouraged Polish NGOs to engage in activities in other post-communist countries. Third, Polish NGOs’ activists had a need to share their experience from Polish transformation with other countries. Polish NGOs actively were involved in the political and economic transition, and they also helped society survive the difficult years of this transformation. They taught participation and civic responsibility and assisted still weak structure of young democratic state. Fourth, Polish NGOs have engaged in activities in Ukraine and Belarus, because there was a demand for their experience and skills on the recipient side. Fifth, Polish NGO activists have their own interest to help for material and family reasons. Finally, Polish NGOs perceive their engagement in democracy assistance in the post-communist region as their contribution to meeting Poland’s national interest.
The chapter has demonstrated that Polish non-governmental organizations play a double role in Polish foreign assistance—they participate in the debate over directions of aid and are the major partners in the implementation of Polish democracy assistance. Because of the experience of Polish NGOs as recipients of aid and their involvement in the Polish transformation, Polish NGOs became a natural partner for the Polish Government in the provision of democracy assistance to post-communist countries. By engaging in cross-border projects, Polish NGOs also began to play an important role in Polish foreign policy. However, it has been clear that Polish NGOs do not act in a way to contradict the Polish foreign policy, but rather support and complement it. Through contacts with non-governmental entities, Polish NGOs can achieve goals that might be difficult for the Polish Government through targeting the authorities of recipient countries. Moreover, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeks opinions from Polish NGOs through its collective forum, the Zagranica Group, regarding the political, social and economic situation of recipient countries when Polish foreign policies are being formulated. Polish NGOs activists associated within the ZG also lobbied for the creation of the Polish Aid Program by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which finances some of Polish NGOs’ cross-border work.

Finally, the chapter demonstrates that Western donors, such as the National Endowment for Democracy, acknowledge the Polish NGOs’ experience and knowledge in democracy assistance and financially support their endeavors to assist democracy in post-communist countries. The links established during the Solidarity times make Polish NGOs trustworthy and reliable partners. Whereas there are associations from other countries from the region with which the NED cooperates, Polish NGOs take leading position as NED’s Central Eastern European grantees engaged in the cross-border work in the post-communist countries.
Taking into account the fact that Polish NGOs are important partners for Western donors and that Polish democracy assistance rests on the activity of Polish NGOs, their activities require closer attention in following chapters.
CHAPTER 5
POLISH NGOs’ CROSS-BORDER PROJECTS IN BELARUS AND UKRAINE

Since the Polish Government relies in its efforts to provide democracy assistance on the Polish NGOs’ cross-border work in the post-communist region, this chapter takes a closer look at organizations’ projects in Belarus and Ukraine. The activities of Polish NGOs in Ukraine and Belarus were initiated before the Polish MFA started its own aid program and expand beyond those supported by the Polish Government. For some Polish organizations, cooperation with post-communist countries, especially Ukraine and Belarus, began in the 1990s and is intensifying today.¹ According to research conducted by the Klon/Jawor Association, in 2002, of the nearly one hundred Polish NGOs which declared that international activity was one of their domains, almost all worked in Ukraine.²

There are a few questions that this chapter addresses. First, how do Polish NGOs conceptualize democratization and consolidation of democracy in the post-communist countries and how do they assist Belarus and Ukraine in their democratizing efforts? Second, does the civil society assistance dominate Polish NGOs’ aid to these countries? If yes, how do Polish NGOs identify civil society groups and whether these groups with which the NGOs work are different in the authoritarian Belarus and democratizing Ukraine? Another question is whether Polish NGOs design their assistance in order to meet the needs of Belarusian and Ukrainian civil

¹ This point was also made by Wrobel (2003, 16).
² More on data regarding Polish third sector see http://www.bazy.ngo.pl
society and the overall political situation in these countries. Finally, have these projects undergone the evolution since 1990s?

This chapter also examines more closely Polish NGOs’ programs in terms of techniques for reaching civil society in authoritarian Belarus and democratizing Ukraine, and analyzes the extent to which these strategies are different. As no distinction has been made in the literature between methods of assisting civil society in authoritarian countries versus in states that are somewhat, or newly democratic, this chapter fills a gap. This analysis also may be important to answer the question whether Polish NGOs have a potential to be a good stimulator for civil society growth in Belarus and Ukraine. Findings may be important not only for scholars but also for practitioners.

Acting in the Authoritarian Environment

Polish NGOs have significantly changed their activities in Belarus, since Lukashenko took power. As presented earlier, Belarusian authorities view non-governmental organizations as a source of opposition and have replaced them with NGOs loyal to the regime. There are many institutional and administrative obstacles that make the operation of Belarusian independent organizations difficult. Lukashenko uses direct methods of punishing pro-democratic social activists for their cooperation with external donors, since such contacts are no longer welcome by the Belarusian authorities.

Transferring aid is heavily regulated, and participation in projects funded from non-registered external funds is considered an illegal act regulated by the criminal law (EEDC 2007). It is a complicated task for donors to support those Belarusian non-governmental organizations.
that are not registered, because they cannot receive foreign aid through the formal registration
procedure required by the Belarusian authorities. Lukashenko tightened control over projects
implemented by Belarusian organizations in cooperation with Polish organizations, especially
after actions against the Union of Poles in Belarus. However, Polish NGOs never work in
Belarus through contacts with Polish minority groups. Also, there is some difficulty for making a
distinction between civil and un-civil society in Belarus, as well as between true and autonomous
NGOs and those fake NGOs that are established by and dependent on the government (Raik
2006, 172).

As a result of the situation in Belarus, some Polish organizations that used to work in
Belarus, like Democratic Society East Foundation (DSE) or the Polish Robert Schuman
Foundation ceased their activities in the country. The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation
resigned from operations in Belarus in 2006 because with all the financial and human resources
put into the activities, effects of this cooperation in Belarus were weakened by Belarusian
authorities. Rafal Dymek (2008) from the Foundation argues that change in the organizations’
efforts was dictated by practical reasons, as in Ukraine and in the Caucasus more can be done
with the same financial and human resources. Katarzyna Bielawska (2008) from the DSE is of
the opinion that it is difficult to work with Belarusian people, because the majority of the older
generation remains silent and passive, whereas the part of young generation that is pro-Western
is heavily restricted by the Belarusian regime.

However, despite the complicated political situation in which Belarusian organizations
operate, many Polish organizations, the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), the
St. Maximilian Kolbe House for Meetings and Reconciliation (DMK), the College of Eastern
Europe, or the East European Democratic Center have not ceased their cooperation.
One member of a democracy assistance organization claims that the situation in Belarus makes cooperation difficult but not impossible, that a lot can be done in Belarus, and that there is a huge potential in people there. This individual believes that some Polish NGOs, especially those founded after Lukashenko took a power choose not to work in Belarus because of technical obstacles, such as problems with obtaining visas. However, more importantly, for organizations that want to start their activities in Belarus today, it is difficult to find, in the conspiracy conditions, a reliable partner, and to distinguish good from bad intentions. For organizations that directed their activities to the East since the beginning of their existence, it is not a problem to work in Belarus, because they have been there since the collapse of the communism, and today have established cooperation, know how to identify good partners, and how to operate there.³

Polish NGOs’ links established in the past with Belarusian partners were still able to be preserved even in the difficult times. Despite obstacles, organizations do not give up their activities in Belarus. Despite animosity toward them from Belarusian authorities, the NGOs plan to continue operations in Belarus with their Belarusian partners in the future, as well. Moreover, harassment under the Lukashenko regime does not discourage some Polish activists from working in Belarus; for some of these individuals, as communist oppositionists, were imprisoned, persecuted, and released from work. However, the biggest obstacle, for example, for FED is the disclosure of the names of Belarusian partners required by the donors and the difficulty associated with the financial requirements of this assistance. These include a need to provide a donor with the invoices, or a need to create a bank account for operating the project. However, Aleksandra Kujawska (2008) from the Foundation states that still these formal obstacles can be overcome in certain circumstances.

³ For reasons of safety, the author omits identifying a source for this information and chooses not to give the name of the organization and its representative. This procedure will be followed, where necessary, throughout this chapter.
Intensification of repression against Belarusian NGOs (de-legalization of many organizations, prison penalties for social activity) created the need to reach other groups—young people, teachers, parents, and so-called leaders in their local communities. These groups were also among first recipients in Ukraine. As Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy pointed out, Polish outreach directed toward them very quickly “fell on fertile ground” in Ukraine. However, the choice of Belarusian teachers, parents, young people or journalists as target groups is determined not only by the situation, but also by the preference of some Polish NGOs. Some Polish activists strive to make democratic changes in Belarus in a more direct way—by working with delegalized Belarusian groups associated with the opposition. For example, one of the organizations working in Belarus cooperates in projects with informal groups and so-called “young leaders.”

The informal groups in Belarus with which one of the Polish organizations works comprise the same people with whom the Polish organization used to cooperate fifteen years ago when Belarusian non-governmental organizations were not de-legalized. The only difference today it that these Belarusian entities now work underground. Since it is illegal to receive assistance from outside groups and recipients can go to jail for doing so, the organization does not publish recipients’ names in order to protect them. However, it must be mentioned that these activities belong to the “soft methods” category—they focus on a rising awareness, sense of identity and knowledge among the young generation through the joint projects, publications in the Belarusian language, and the like. In an interview, a representative of the NGO expressed his belief that through such methods, a future democratic change can happen in Belarus. He is skeptical about financing militias.
One democracy assistance provider focuses on the creation of local elites and leaders who will trigger local society to act for their common good. Organizations identify individuals leading some changes in their local area and who demonstrate skills of activating groups of people around specific problems.\(^4\) A Polish NGO organized quarterly meetings with the group of thirty-five leaders from different regions and cities; on the agenda of these meetings was the coordination of activities and long-term planning. For safety reasons, the organization does not provide a list of partners involved in activities in Belarus.

It might be expected that working with so many civil society groups is good, because these activities complement each other and might bring desirable results in the future. However, there are organizations, like the College of Eastern Europe, whose representatives argue that it is important to maintain some contact with Belarusian authorities and with the opposition, in order to avoid being associated only with supporters of the opposition or being part of the Belarusian government propaganda. Jan Dąbrowski (2008) from the College argues that it is important to have contact with Belarusian authorities as isolation is bad. Moreover, such attitude allows the College undisrupted activity with the opposition; “we know that they know what we are doing, but we pretend that we do not know that they know, and thanks to this we can achieve our goals” (Dąbrowski 2008).

\(^4\) The concept “activization” corresponds with Putnam’s (1994) argument that the civic community is marked not only by trust and cooperation but also by an active and public-spirited citizenry. He finds that active engagement in community affairs is one of the factors contributing to stable democracy in studied by him regions.
The Art of Camouflage

Whereas the choice of Belarusian partners has not changed significantly since the beginning of the 1990s, the nature of cross-border projects underwent a significant transformation—from those explicitly fostering democracy in Belarus through mobilizing non-governmental organizations, to projects working for democratic change in Belarus in an indirect way (Goliński 2008). Some Polish NGOs try to avoid engaging in projects that might interfere with Lukashenko’s regime in a direct way. The Polish NGOs declare that their aim is to build civil society, not the organization of opposition forces against the current regime; but at the same time the NGOs are aware of this civil society’s role in the future regime change (Fenrych 2008).

The activity of the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, which has continuously been working in Belarus since 1992, can serve as an example. FSLD cooperated with its long-term Belarusian partner, which in the 1990s was titled the Lev Sapieha Belarusian Foundation in Support of Democratic Reforms in Belarus. In 1996/97 they organized “School of Democracy and Self-Government” in Belarus; and in 1998/99, the two organizations carried out a project entitled “Creating the Structures for the Civil Society in Belarus”. The aim of these initiatives was to strengthen the role of Belarusian NGOs in the society by training their representatives and volunteers about the role they should perform in democratic societies.

However, as the Belarusian non-governmental sector later was curtailed by the authorities, both Belarusian and Polish organizations had to resort to different tactics, hiding pro-democratic aspirations. The Lev Sapieha Belarusian Foundation in Support of Democratic Reforms in Belarus, for example shortened its name to the Lev Sapieha Foundation as the result of the re-registration process of NGOs, to omit those words that had indicated pro-democratic
intentions. Polish NGOs, however, altered the nature of the projects with Belarusian partners. The initiatives skipped to more indirect aims, such as improving the instructional skills of young teachers, or making school a place for the joint cooperation of teachers, students and parents.  

While implementing Belarusian projects, Polish NGOs are careful with the use of such words as "democracy", "freedom", "human rights", because they may cause more damage than benefits. In the past it was possible to organize a conference entitled “From an Authoritarian to a Democratic State – the Character of Political and Economic Reforms in the Republic of Belarus” that was conducted in 2000 by the Poland-Belarus Center for Civic Education, with the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Warsaw. Today such projects practically do not exist (Czubek 2002). For example, very rare if not nonexistent is training for social activists and representatives of Belarusian non-governmental organizations working on civic engagement and democratic changes, such as those organized in the past within the “Belarusian School of Leaders” by the School for Leaders Association.

Instead, Polish NGOs sometimes use other words, such as civic participation, local activity or a personal approach to people that do not provoke the authorities. Some organizations also prefer to bring a group to Poland than to organize activities in Belarus. Those Polish NGOs that decide to implement projects in Belarus consult Belarusian partners to ensure that these actions to be implemented within the project will produce more good than harm. Taking into account possible threats for the Belarusian people engaged in the activity with Polish partners that might stem from Lukashenko’s regime demonstrates that Polish NGOs tailor activities to local circumstances.

---

5 Based on the FSLD database of projects received during the interview with Morawska (2008).
6 Information available at the School of Leaders Association’s website [http://www.szkola-liderow.pl](http://www.szkola-liderow.pl)
In order to protect people, the Polish organizations have transferred the efforts to other types of engagement with Belarusian partners that is not overtly political. For example, a representative of one of Polish NGO working in Belarus argues that projects like “Tourism and Education,” which work on improving values of the region for tourist purposes, divert Belarusian authorities’ attention and allow Belarusian partners to avoid repression. However, at the same time, as a representative of one of Polish NGO points out, such projects give an opportunity for the discussion of other topics and interaction with Belarusian partners who represent pro-democratic forces and are actively engaged in the opposition.

Another way of developing civil society in Belarus is to invite Belarusian partners to come to Poland to engage in activities that might have little to do with democratization or civil society building topics in a direct way but still give the chance for the interactions and might bring desired results in future. Such interaction stems from Polish NGOs’ supposition that, similarly to Poland in 1990s, the development of local and participatory community life in Belarus is one of the greatest needs facing Belarus. Dissidents, dissatisfied students and other citizens’ groups organize themselves, often quite informally and seldom with the benefit of financial resources, to address particular societal needs perceived as calling for urgent attention. Civil society was built similarly in Poland. ⁷

Some Polish organizations organize workshops and training sessions and invite Belarusian groups to come across the border. Others choose to initiate projects that, in cooperation with Belarusian partners give a specific final outcome in the form of a book, newspaper, or a policy recommendation. Even the actions in the spheres of education, geography and tourism, like the project implemented by the FSLD Center in Szczecin, are believed to integrate small communities. Working together on publications that, for example, consist of the

⁷ See for example Siegel and Yancey (1992).
theoretical and practical sections about local governance and actions aimed at facilitating local activities of the authorities and citizens, even though they cannot be used today, in the future may serve as useful material for experts implementing administration reform and local authorities (Fenrych 2008).

Polish NGOs find it important to contribute to the development of social and human capital at the local level in Belarus. The importance of backing up the development of local communities and promoting civil activity at the local level has been emphasized almost by all representatives of NGOs interviewed. Cooperation with local communities is intended to help people change things through their own efforts (Goliński 2008). Organizations activate Belarusian local communities to improve self-government, to encourage local people’s involvement in social issues—even if these relate to such activities as cleaning up neighborhoods, establishing a small local housing council, or improving residential facilities. The idea behind such “activization” is to gather people around some problem associated with their daily life, in order to encourage them to take up more advanced issues.

Usually, Polish NGOs work locally by establishing the partnership with local communities in the recipient country within the parameters of a certain project. However, also sometimes, Polish volunteers who are not permanent employees go to live in local community in the recipient country for some time, in order to organize and stimulate the local community as well as to facilitate cooperation there.
**Helping Belarusian Identity to Flourish**

Many Polish NGOs have an impression that one of the main goals of Lukashenko's regime is the destruction of Belarusian national identity. Polish NGO activists observe that whenever Belarusians come to Poland they want to speak Belarusian, since in their own country this language is practically dead and they do not have a chance to practice, because the Lukashenko regime emphasizes Russification. It has also been stressed during interviews and in projects directed toward Belarus, that Belarusian cultural identity should be strengthened and that it may play an important role in Belarus’s struggle for democracy—providing some sense of the social solidarity.

Recognizing the fact that the Belarusian identity, especially Belarusian language, is neglected by the Belarusian authorities, but at the same time this language has frequently been used by the opposition forces, Polish NGOs have responded to this need by creating conditions for the free functioning of communities wishing to develop Belarusian culture.

Polish NGOs focus on publications and cultural activities popularizing Belarusian culture in the Belarusian language. For some writers, such an undertaking is the only chance for Belarusian literature to become present in the Belarusian society (Pejda 2008). In Belarus there are no conditions for the free functioning of communities wishing to develop Belarusian language and culture. Independent Belarusian writers and publishing houses have a limited ability to publish and present their achievements within the country. Publishing is one of the new activities of the Jan Jeziorański College for Eastern Europe in Wroclaw, for example. This Polish organization popularizes Belarusian culture and language by publishing historical essays, historical monographs, letters of Belarusian emigrants, and a Belarusian language dictionary.
Books and magazines are published in the Belarusian language in Grodno, or in the Polish language in Wroclaw (Dąbrowski 2008). The College undertakes publishing initiatives together with the Center for Civic Education Poland-Belarus in Białystok, the Freedom and Democracy Foundation in Warsaw, PEN CLUB Belarus in Minsk, and Nasha Niva Foundation in Minsk.

In addition to publications, there are other activities aimed at building Belarusian cultural identity. The “Belarusian Culture Festival,” held in Wroclaw every year and organized by the College, is a broad presentation of the independent Belarusian culture by artists, musicians, painters, and photographers (Dąbrowski 2008). Polish NGOs aim to popularize the Belarusian culture through offering internet services. One of such initiative is the Belarusian Historical Association is entitled “The Belarusian Internet Library Kamunikat.org.” The internet library is a noncommercial service provided since 2000, which gathers substantial information about Belarusian culture and has been able to attract a wide group of users. There is unlimited access to accurate information about Belarusian history, literature and the social and political situation in Belarus. All publications are provided in the Belarusian language. In the second half of 2007, the website was viewed an average of 17,000 times a month—a fact which speaks for its popularity (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007a).

Another internet service is “Belarus-Live,” implemented by the Center for International Relations Foundation. The project offers missing information about Belarus and its people and serves users outside and inside Belarus. Daily information is prepared in seven languages. The initiative also is dedicated to promoting Belarusian culture; therefore, in addition to daily news, there is a weekly summary of the most important cultural events. The information is put into an electronic format and sent to interested parties (1500 different addresses), including European Parliament deputies, officials from ministries of foreign affairs of the EU member states,
international organizations, and others who have some influence on the policy toward Belarus (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). In 2008, the project was entitled “Belarus - Live 2008 - From Virtual to Real Communities.”

Supporting Independent Media in Belarus and Ukraine

Media assistance to strengthen independent TV, radio, and press media has become an important area of Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine. This form of support is based on the fundamental assumption of Polish NGO activists that the development of free media is among the most important elements of democracy. Also, the emphasis on the cooperation with journalists suggests that Polish NGOs see independent media as essential for an effective civil society, as was true in Poland. From the experience that Polish social activists gained during the transformation, they understand not only that free media is an important element of civil society, but also the idea of supporting journalists. Thus, Polish NGOs activists want to pass this experience on to the former Soviet Union countries (Bielawska 2008).

Polish NGOs’ media assistance varies, depending on the situation of the media in the recipient country. In Belarus, these activities also aim at expanding freedom of information in Belarus, since there have been no free, independent media in Belarus since 1996, when the last independent radio station in Belarus, “101.2,” was closed down. Information spread by independent groups is not likely to reach society on a large scale. Recognizing that the access to independent information about national and international events is of crucial importance to Belarusian society, the Center of Civic Education Poland-Belarus, which is a Polish NGO, created the “Radio Racyja” project funded from Polish Government sources as well as from
NED funds. This radio station disseminates objective political, economic, cultural, and educational information and analysis from Belarus and abroad to the citizens of Belarus and eastern Poland, since the station is based there. The radio serves also other purposes—it supports Belarusian language and culture, popularizes democratic values—such as the rights for free elections, rule of law, and human rights; and informs about the possibility of personal development (studying and getting a job).

“The Radio is being created for the Belarusians living in the free world (...) by the Belarusians and for the Belarusians” – these words were first broadcast at the beginning of 2006 and became adopted as a trademark of the radio (Belarusian Information Center 2008). At the end of 2007, Radio Racyja started to offer its service twenty-four hours a day and extended its trans-border broadcasting. Moreover, work began on the construction of an antenna, strengthening the radio signal, so that the citizens of Belarus will have a wider access to independent information. The radio also has its own internet news service www.racyja.com, where one can find current news from Belarus.

Recognizing that internet has become a powerful medium for mass mobilization, as was visible during protest around the 2006 presidential elections, Polish NGOs respond to this trend by offering their support for the development of different websites, blogs, and chat rooms. One such initiative that fostered activism among Belarusians in Poland and supported the democratic forces in Belarus was the creation of the websites, www.forbelarus.eu or www.wolnabialorus.pl (Free Belarus)

---

8 Working for Radio Racyja presents the possibility to be part of a Belarusian-speaking team and to fight for an independent and democratic Belarus. As the brochure of the radio says, it seems to perform the function that Radio Free Europe had in Poland under communism, but the President of the Radio Racyja claims that the founders have never had an ambition to copy Radio Free Europe (Belarusian Information Center 2008).
Polish NGOs take an initiative to counter the Belarusian authorities’ limitations on internet development in Belarus. Within the project “Internet – an Opportunity for Young Civil Society” coordinated by the ZNAK Christian Culture Foundation project, Belarusian journalists and local community leaders took part in lectures conducted by experts from the internet industry and the electronic media, and in study visits to offices of well-known Polish internet portals. The aim was to familiarize young Belarusians with the methods of preparing and managing an Internet service. As a result, a group of young Belarusians returned to their country enriched with specific skills that they could use in their daily work. The Internet service working at www.susvet.info was created as a result of the project. The project was financed in 2007 and 2008 by the MFA. There also are projects attempting to activate Belarusian students through creation of internet radio (on-line radio), which serves as a tool for students’ communication and at the same time facilitates constant access to the internet for schools and helps make the internet widely used in schools (Goliński 2008).

Within activities aimed at fostering the development of independent journalists, Polish NGOs have organized study tours to visit independent media in Poland, so that media representatives can come to Poland and learn, for example, about the way Polish newspapers operate, or how journalists try to obtain information and improve their writing skills. In this vein, the Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity Foundation organized internships funded by NED in Poland for representatives of the emerging independent media in Belarus and Ukraine. Similarly, the Stefan Batory Foundation funded in 2007 two Belarusian projects on independent media implemented by the Opus Center for Promotion and Development of Civic Initiatives from Łódź and the European Meeting Center Nowy Staw Foundation from Lublin (Stefan Batory Foundation 2007). The first organization conducted workshops in Poland for young journalists.
and students from Belarus on civic journalism. The second, the European Meeting Center Nowy Staw Foundation, organized workshops in Poland for representatives of Belarusian non-governmental organizations and independent media. These programs shared know-how and experiences with promoting civil society goals and activities in the media and fostered the exchange of independent information and collaboration among civil society activists.

Interestingly, in the case of Belarus, Polish NGOs are more likely to cooperate with journalists, especially young practitioners who are at beginning of their careers and who work for small local newspapers. The aim is to make Belarusian journalists interested in the local issues and write about them, even if the topic of the article deals with tourism, as the journalists may play important role in the creation of independent media in Belarus in the future (Goliński 2008).

Belarusian journalists are a popular target group of Polish NGOs, despite the difficult situation of free media and even though some Polish NGOs’ representatives chose not to engage in this type of support. Przemysław Fenrych (2008) from the FSLD points out that the efforts of working with journalists seem wasted in the longer term, because some journalists begin to cooperate with the authorities or change the focus of their activity in order to survive, whereas those who try to remain independent in their political views go to prison. However, Polish NGOs also take into account circumstances in which journalists operate, and what their freedoms are. Where sometimes it is impossible to offer training seminars for NGO activists and independent journalists, the EEDC, for example, gives small grants to publishing centers in Belarus.

In Ukraine, there are two forms of cooperation with journalists. Convinced that by investing in newspapers, the organization invests in social development, the EEDC gives large grants of up to $10,000 to $15,000 to newspapers (Dębrowska 2008). Another form of activity, more common, and also popular in Moldova or Georgia, focuses on offering specialized training
sessions; journalists in these countries attend a variety of workshops about how to write and how they can contribute to the civil society building. More specialized workshops are organized, for example, by the DSE for investigative journalists in Ukraine.

One of the examples illustrating Polish NGOs’ work with Ukrainian journalists on more specific topics is the project implemented by the Democratic Society East Foundation in cooperation with Program 1 of Telewizja Polska S.A. (TVP 1), and financed by the US Embassy in Poland. Within the project, Ukrainian television journalists came to Poland for seminars during the second round of the Polish Presidential election in 2005 and learnt how to report and present elections on television. The visit involved twelve Ukrainian television journalists, from public and private, national and regional channels. The program included seminar meetings; direct participation of Ukrainian journalists in the most important current political events; visits to Poland’s major television stations; preparation of stories to be broadcast. 9 Moreover, Ukrainian journalists prepared their own reports on the election in Poland for their own media outlets. With this project there were hopes that the knowledge and experience gained in Poland could be used during parliamentary and local elections to held in Ukraine in March 2006. The seminars also raised the issue of Polish experience in the field of transformation of state television into private.

Democracy Learning

Civil society assistance provided by the Polish NGOs also takes a form of civic education, i.e. activities aimed to teach citizens of recipient countries basic values, knowledge,  

---

and skills relating to democracy. A common target group is young people, especially. However, in order to reach young people, many Polish NGOs projects are targeted to groups that have an intermediate impact on young people, such as teachers and parents, so that they can transfer their knowledge about democratic ideas to their students and children.

Many programs targeted to young people aim to educate them and at the same time to activate them to be more socially responsible for their local community, region, and country. The most popular forms of diffusion of democratic ideas and practices are study tours, internships, scholarships, and exchange programs organized by many Polish NGOs for young people from Ukraine; Belarus; Russia (Kaliningrad Oblast); Moldova; and Georgia.

The large-scale Study Tour Program (STP) in Poland is coordinated by three organizations—the Jan Nowak-Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe, and the Angelus Silesius Meeting House in Wroclaw, and the Borusia Foundation in Olsztyn—with FED money. STP gives students and young professionals—e.g., local government administrators, journalists, NGOs, economic experts or school headmasters from the post-Soviet area to get accustomed to the functioning of democracy and organizations of civil life in Poland. This program is important for sharing the Polish experience not only with democratic but also with systemic/economic transformation and the experiences of the “Polish road” to membership in the European Union. Main components of the study visits include meetings with Polish leaders and many prominent Polish figures, like Lech Walesa; visits to public institutions and agencies, newspaper editorial offices, radio and TV stations; meetings with university authorities, professors, students, journalists and with NGO representatives.

During internships, participants have a chance to work on some specific projects of their interest that relate to the situation in their country, e.g. cooperation of non-governmental

10 Source for this information is http://www.studytours.pl/
organizations with administration, and they can look for some solutions in Poland; but they are not told which ones are good or bad: “we show them also Polish mistakes, we simply give them a chance to evaluate and think about these issues” (Dąbrowski 2008). It should be noticed that there are differences with regard to the numbers and types of visitors coming to Poland. For example, in STP in 2007, there were 218 participants from Ukraine and only forty from Belarus. There are significant differences in profiles by country. Whereas Ukrainian participants have been employees of local government administrations, economic experts, journalists, and members of NGOs, from the Belarus the only representatives of professional groups are school headmasters. 11

Another example of internship projects is the “Wroclaw Solidarity Bridge” project organized by the College of Eastern Europe for young trainees from Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, and Georgia, who come to Poland for internships in many institutions. During their stay in Poland they have a chance to meet with prominent social activists and politicians.

A major group of democracy learning programs for young people are scholarship projects. Worth mentioning are different kinds of summer or winter schools, like those organized in a joint initiative by the College of Eastern Europe and the Center for East European Studies of Warsaw University since 2004. Such schools are aimed at graduate students mainly from countries of the former Soviet Union, but also from other post-communist countries, who are working on their master’s theses in history or political science on topics related to the region of Central and Eastern Europe. Schools consist of lectures given by international experts, seminars, visits to research institutions and libraries of Wroclaw and participation in cultural life. There are scholarships directed only toward Belarusian young scholars, like that organized the Stefan

11 Ibid.
Batory Foundation in 2000. With the project, more than twenty young Belarusian scholars spent one month at Polish institutions of higher education working with a Polish mentor, on a doctoral-level project focused on Belarus' democratic and free market transition.

However, the most popular educational grant aimed at young people is the Lane Kirkland Scholarship Program that is implemented by the Polish-US Fulbright Commission and funded by the Polish American Foundation Freedom.\(^{12}\) At the beginning, the operator of the Kirkland Program was the Center for East European Studies at the Warsaw University, which ran the program for one year. Since the Center planned to be in charge of the Kalinowski Scholarship Program from the Polish government, the Fulbright Commission took over administration of the Kirkland program, especially because that initiative was similar to the Fulbright’s program. The objective of this initiative is to help young leaders from the post-communist countries learn from Polish experiences in economic, social, and political transformation. From the beginning, the program included candidates from Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, Slovakia and Kaliningrad Oblast in Russia. Later the program was extended to include participants from Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In the years 2000-2007, a total of 275 scholars completed the program (Sobiecka 2008).

Kirkland scholars are young leaders from public administration, academia, business, media or politics. The program is implemented in Polish universities and tailored to the individual needs of each researcher. Such a scholarship offers a monthly stipend, and also covers university fees, accommodation, and insurance, travel, public transportation tickets, and purchases of research material.\(^{13}\) Participants in the program take courses and do research in

---

\(^{12}\) This program is named after Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO, the organization that strongly supported the Solidarity movement in the 1980s.

\(^{13}\) Source for this information is the fact sheet about the program received during the interview with Urszula Sobiecka from the Polish-American Fulbright Commission in Warsaw.
areas such as economics, management, public administration, business administration, law, social sciences and political science. The program offers a two-semester supplementary study program for MA degree holders in Polish schools of higher education and two to four professional internships in governmental and private institutions. Each fellow has the opportunity to learn and work with specialists in the field, meet with politicians, participate in conferences, and so forth.

An educational program like the Kirkland seems important especially for students from Belarus, who during thirteen years under the Lukashenko’s regime have been subject to unusually strong indoctrination in schools and universities. Moreover, this scholarship program not only allows participants to continue education at universities in Poland, but also aims to support the leaders who come to Poland, establish relationships with these people, and later to maintain this contact, simply “the same of what the United States has done for the whole world,” as Kozlicka-Glinska (2008) from PAFF said.

In addition to scholarships and internships, many Polish NGOs organize exchange programs between young people from Poland and those from other post-communist countries. On a larger scale than others is the “RAZOM” project by PAUCI, which is an exchange program with Ukrainian young people financed by the MFA from the beginning of the Polish governmental aid program. Every year within the RAZOM framework young people from both countries get together and work on common projects (Piekło 2008). Within this initiative, young people from Ukrainian and Polish partner schools are engaged in joint activities of different kinds, from soccer games to protecting the common cultural heritage. As Jan Piekło (2008) from PAUCI says, these are maybe not ambitious projects; but they mobilize young people to do
something together and learn about each other and get teachers interested in some initiatives, as well.

In addition to exchange of young people, there is cooperation among school-affiliated social organizations and institutions. Within RAZOM initiatives, as the result of teachers and parents’ cooperation, are organized the parents’ councils, students’ clubs, educational councils, European school clubs, school newspapers, school sports clubs, circles of interest, non-governmental organizations and other institutions collaborating with the schools (PAUCI 2007). Through collaboration between schools and other educational entities in Ukraine and Poland, Ukrainian parties can learn about the importance of school in shaping the democratic values.

Recognizing the importance of schools and teachers as a medium of democratic ideas and behaviors, Polish NGOs very early decided to direct their activities at teachers. Organizations, like FED for example, aim to facilitate democratization in schools, through activating teachers. As the result of its projects young people and their educators formed associations, organized activities in schools, and founded school newspapers (Kujawska 2008).

One of the first Polish NGO projects in Ukraine directed at teachers was initiated by the Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe, which later changed its name for EEDC, and targeted at Crimean Tatars (Bielawska 2008). Urszula Doroszewska, Krzysztof Stanowski and Paweł Kazanecki, Polish activists and leaders of three Polish NGOs—The Democratic Society East Foundation, the Education for Democracy Foundation, and EEDC respectively were on the team that went there. These Polish activists began to help set up their schools and began to work

---

14 The Crimea Tatars, in one night were exiled by Stalin to Uzbekistan—suddenly without a chance to take their belongings. At the end of 90s, after fifty years, they returned to the Crimea and started to settle down again.

15 It should be mentioned that the Tatars activism goes back to late Soviet times, and General Petro Grigorenko (a high-ranking Soviet Army commander of Ukrainian descent, later a prominent Soviet human rights activist) used to work on their behalf. Thus, in discussing the activism of the Crimean Tatars it important to take into account a long history of activism that goes back to the Brezhnev era. See Vardys (1971) research in this area. See, for example
with teachers and parents there creating schools as local centers for the Crimea Tatars (Kujawska
2008). The NED funded projects of these organizations for the promotion of civil society in
Crimea and reforms of schools in this region.

Polish NGOs have also conducted training seminars on independent media, civic
education, youth activism and NGO development for thousands of representatives from
independent groups in Crimea, as well as provided advice and infrastructure for democracy-
building NGOs. Polish NGO activists organized internships and networking visits for Crimean
activists to Kyiv, L’viv and Warsaw. Another Polish organization, the Association of Educators,
has trained teachers, school inspectors and student activists in order to improve the quality of
Crimean schools, promote self-government and democracy within these schools, foster civic
education and address local problems by designing and implementing projects that involve local
communities (Potocki 2008).

Sometimes in authoritarian regimes, like in Belarus, official cooperation with schools is
not possible. Therefore, Polish partners establish links with individual teachers, and school
administrators. The reason of targeting this group is the possibility for reaching young people
with whom teachers interact every day and have a possibility of influence. Young people have
been subject to unusually strong indoctrination in schools and universities. Grants for democratic
educational purposes were spent on training programs by the Stefan Batory Foundation; and for
example in 2003, the Foundation for Education for Democracy received money to train
approximately 420 teachers from Eastern Europe, including Belarus, but such “visible”
participation of Belarusian teachers are not common. Very often Belarusian teachers have to hide
their out-of-school activities and take off from work in order to participate in events organized

_________________________
Speech of Petro Grigorenko to Crimean Tatars, 1968, available at the website of the International Committee for
Crimea at http://www.iccrimea.org/surgun/grigorenko.html
by Polish NGOs, such as training and workshops. Meetings in Belarus take in atmosphere of conspiracy in restaurants and other places that do not draw Belarusian authorities’ attention.

As an example of projects directed toward Belarusian teachers and implemented in Poland may serve the project organized by Angelus Silesius Meeting House in Wrocław with its Belarusian partner, the Mogilev Social Organization “Circle of Friends” funded by PAFF in 2005. The main objective of this project was to share educational and organizational experience with the Belarusian educators from the Mogilev region. Belarusian teachers came to Poland and learnt how the educational programs in Wroclaw schools are implemented. During their stay in Poland, teachers from Belarus participated in workshops in which they took the role of students and from such perspective were assessing the way the knowledge was delivered to them by Polish teachers. The teachers also worked on to the preparation of similar workshops to be organized in Belarus based on what they learned in Poland (Angelus Silesius Meeting House 2005).

The project realized by the FSLD, for example, created educational clubs providing cultural, tourist and historical information about the given region in three Belarusian schools (Fenrych 2008). The strategy of targeting young people, teachers, and parents with regard to activities avoiding politics allows Polish NGOs to provide assistance in the long-term without endangering Belarusian people involved in projects.

However, taking into account a complicated situation of teachers in Belarus, Polish NGOs are more likely to cooperate with young people. Cooperation with Belarusians is targeted toward young people, because they can be influenced more easily than people with already shaped opinions (Pisarski 2008). The EEDC, for example, has carried out a project activating youth organizations to participate in solving local issues, such as the housing problems. The
Drumla Association also organized “Dialogue with Neighbors” – a cycle of training sessions conducted by Polish and German instructors for Belarusian students and local culture activists on multiculturalism and customs among various nations inhabiting border regions and on different methods of work with young people (Stefan Batory Foundation 2007).

Guaranteeing Democracy's Survival in Ukraine

*No Democracy without Local Democracy*

On the question about the plans for the future, many Polish NGO activists admitted that there is still a lot to be accomplished in Ukraine in the next ten years, as new challenges and opportunities for cooperation emerged after the Orange Revolution. Polish NGOs have shifted their focus to local governance. Polish NGOs’ programs serve to inform and try to convince political elites and Ukrainian NGOs that the decentralization of political power is a desirable change for Ukraine. However, initiatives incorporating Ukrainian local authorities and NGOs focus on a wider spectrum of issues pertaining to local governance.

Many Polish Government-financed NGO programs focus on transparency and governmental accountability. The Polish Government believes that strengthening the role of local governments will greatly contribute to improving state capacity important for democracy in Ukraine. Recognizing that the quality of administrative management is of crucial importance in countries undergoing transformation and an obstacle to achieving this goal is endemic corruption in Ukraine, there are additionally some projects that focus on the improvement of transparency by the introduction of anti-corruption programs (Fenrych 2008). “Transparent Ukraine: Building Effective and Ethical Self-Government in Ukraine” by the Foundation in Support of Local
Democracy was based on exchanging Polish local governments’ experiences, related to modern management systems in public administration, with Ukrainian counterparts (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2006). Within this program, mayors of the Ukrainian cities and experts, who later conducted similar workshops in their country, were trained during their study visits to Poland about efficient methods of preventing corruption as well as about the introduction of new procedures and norms in administration entities.

Another example of projects aimed at improving the quality of local governance in Ukraine was the project entitled “Public Office Friendly for Clients—the Quality in the Administrative Work” financed by PAFF. This project was implemented by the Foundation for Young Democracy in Lublin with its expert partner, the Training Center for Local Administration (CSSA) which has experience in implementing standards for quality management systems (ISO) in the Lublin region. Their partners are the South-Central Ukrainian organization “European Road” in Berdyansk and City Office in Berdyansk in the Zaporizhia Oblast. The aim of this project was to improve quality in the city office in areas of client service, qualifications and competence of the city office employees, organizational structure, and the flow of information. As the result of these changes, the Berdyansk city office was able to meet requirements of the Quality Management systems ISO 9001. The successful implementation of this project in Berdyansk in the Zaporizhia Oblast encouraged city authorities from other Ukrainian regions to introduce changes in city offices as well (FED 2005).

Polish efforts to facilitate devolution of political and administrative power are motivated by Poland’s successful experience with local government reform, which also is considered as one of the well-implemented reforms in CEE and one of the most successful Polish administrative reforms. Since the reform was prepared and discussed with many Polish NGOs, they feel
strongly enough to share their experiences with Ukrainian counterparts and local authorities. Particularly active in this field is the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy. The Foundation was involved in the preparation and implementation of Polish administrative reform of 1999. The first reform took place in 1990 and resulted in the creation of *gminy* (known as communes or municipalities). The final stage of reform came into force on 1 January 1999 and introduced a three-step structure of the territorial divisions. The reform was designed to build local government, to improve authorities’ activities in the region, and bring them closer to the citizens. Having had this involvement, FSLD undertook efforts to transfer its experience to countries where local government reform is under discussion or on the public agenda (Kazanecki 2008). FSLD support for the development of local governance has ranged from training organized for recipient countries’ public employees and political parties to translating and publishing the act of the Polish administrative reform law into several languages of the post-Soviet region, including even Belarusian and Azeri (Kucharczyk 2008).

With regard to Belarus, cooperation with local political elites is very difficult and dangerous for them. The FSLD considered targeting local authorities in Belarus, in order to work with them on the preparation of local government reform that would decentralize power in Belarus in the future, as this change successfully did in Poland from the end of 1990s. Unfortunately, these actions have to be postponed, because even though some municipal commissioners are in the opposition to Lukashenko, their possibility of working on such topic, not mentioning influencing any changes, is small if not non-existent (Fenrych 2008). Also, there were some efforts of the St. Maximilian Kolbe House for Meetings and Reconciliation to implement a project in cooperation with the regional authorities on “policy community”—which deals with improvement of economic policy and urban planning in order to meet the specific
needs of the local population. Unfortunately, the project had to be closed because of Lukashenko’s official attack on it and his threat to regional authorities (Goliński 2008).

Polish NGOs place particular importance on local governance, also recognizing it as one of major conditions for democratic consolidation. The rationale behind these projects is that contemporary decisions must be taken as close as possible to the problem they resolve and as close as possible to citizens affected by these problems. Therefore, along with the expanded third sector, local governance creates conditions for strengthening democratic tendencies or to reverse the so-called democratic deficit.\textsuperscript{16} Representatives of Polish NGOs believe that the state wishing to be fully democratic should delegate power to the territorial levels (state, region, district and commune) as, in terms of democratic theory, such dispersion of power stresses checks or accountability of the central government.\textsuperscript{17}

The list of NGO projects financed by the MFA in 2007 shows that the Polish Government places decentralization of the political system high on the list of priority activities in Ukraine. The interest of Polish NGOs in local government reform in Ukraine has been facilitated by the changes in the Ukrainian political situation that make implementation of the administrative reform more visible. As expressed in interviews, representatives of Polish NGOs perceive administrative decentralization as a key to further Ukraine’s democratization. In the

\textsuperscript{16} The expression “democratic deficit” is used in the EU literature to refer to the legitimacy problems of international institutions, like the EU, which by design are not directly accountable to the voters or their elective representatives (Majone 1998; Moravcsik 2004). Here the usage \textit{democratic deficit} enlarges to include Carothers (2002) conceptualization of democratic deficit and other weaknesses of Ukraine’s political system discussed in Chapter 2, such as incapacity of Ukraine’s democratic government to work with degree of effectiveness, frequent abuse of the law by government officials, rent-seeking, low levels of public confidence in state institutions, and so forth.

\textsuperscript{17} There are many arguments in the literature demonstrating the merits of local government. John Stuart Mill denotes the limits of the central government and suggests that accountability can be improved by increasing the autonomy of local elected governments. Beetham (1996) demonstrates that local governments score more highly than central government on accountability, responsiveness and representativeness. Andrew and Goldsmith (1998, 110) point out that questions of freedom of speech, democratic governance, and non-discrimination, are all areas of political rights where local governments have important opportunities for action. Other scholars provide connections between local government and effectiveness of governing and exercise of local choices (Sharpe 1988; Stewart 1983). Some scholars perceive decentralization as a way of checking the centralized state which had discredited itself in eyes of citizens through rent seeking, corruption and other abuses of power (Ostrom et al. 1993).
opinion of Jan Piekło (2008) from PAUCI, decision-making cannot be located just in Kiev because it is not effective. However, representatives of Polish NGOs observe problems with the implementation of local government reform in Ukraine. Even though particular politicians speak of devolution as a positive and indispensable reform, there is no one in the political scene that wants to deal with this reform. Pawel Kazanecki (2008) from EEDC points out that the ability of Ukraine to enter a path of faster administrative reforms following the Orange Revolution was overestimated. It has been shown that Ukrainian elites are afraid that giving more powers to local-level units will divide the country. Moreover, authorities might be less willing to take on the responsibility for this reform, because bringing changes always cost social and popular loss. There also might be a concern about the distribution of administrative resources in Ukraine.

Polish NGOs take a bottom-up strategy in strengthening state capacity and facilitating any political reforms by targeting local authorities in a direct way. The reason for cooperation with local authorities (e.g., mayors of cities) is that Polish NGOs seem to see the potential in local leaders in bringing about changes in the country. Jan Fedirko (2008) points out that he was impressed by the behavior of local leaders during the Orange Revolution, who, being uncertain about the consequences of Revolution, were risking their own careers and the futures of their families by supporting Viktor Yushchenko. In small towns—for example, in Horokhiv—where practically everyone knows each other, in the case of repression there would be no alternative for those local authorities to change a jobs or to leave.

Organizations, like FSLD directly cooperates with institutions from Donetsk and Luhansk—regions where hints of secession were visible during the Orange Revolution (Karatnycky 2005, 48; Sushko et al. 2004). The FSLD has cooperated with Agency for the Development of Local Self-Government in Donetsk since 2005 and with the Regional
Development Agency in Luhansk Oblast in a project aimed at supporting these units in their functioning in a democratic state and cooperation with civil society, through training meetings with the representatives of NGOs and visits to Poland. Also, many Polish NGOs’ projects organized by the Stefan Batory Foundation, the College of Eastern Europe, FSLD, and others focus on study visits and internships in Poland for Ukrainian representatives of local administration from Donetsk and Luhansk.

However, many Polish NGOs also work on these projects regarding local governance in partnership with civil society organizations, which constitute an important element of social control on processes that are taking place at the administration level. For example, organizations organize training seminars for local representatives of NGOs at the district levels in Ukraine (especially from the central and eastern regions) and workshops for local youth organizations’ leaders to introduce participants to the issues important for the development and sustainability of local NGOs and their ability to work with local media and local governments. One of the factors facilitating this refocus is the fact that many young people who took part in these training projects previously now work in administration. They are presidents of the city councils, governors, Victor Yushchenko’s advisors and the like (Bobołowicz 2008; Dąbrowski 2008).

Since the Orange Revolution particularly popular became projects that involve the idea of local governance and follow the patterns presented below. This scheme demonstrates that the cooperation with local authorities within projects is facilitated by the partner organization, usually NGOs, in Ukraine.

---

18 Based on the FSLD database of projects received during the interview with Katarzyna Morawska from the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), Warsaw
One project that brings together Ukrainian NGOs and local authorities was “European Standards in Public Sector Initiatives: Local Governments and NGOs” implemented by European Center for Sustainable Development in Wroclaw with a Stefan Batory Foundation grant and focused on exchanges for representatives of local government and non-governmental organizations in Poland and Ukraine (Stefan Batory Foundation 2007). Less common, but still practiced by some organizations are small grants to Polish and Ukrainian NGOs for local government reform programs targeting local government, NGOs, and media. PAUCI offered such small grant programs that allowed local NGOs to monitor local governments for transparency, accountability, and to educate journalists about the standards of good governance.

Another example of joint Polish-Ukrainian projects bringing together NGOs and local authorities is the “Polish-Ukrainian School of Social Activists” financed by PAFF, which distributes funds within its program “Region in Transition.” The School is conducted by the Polish NGO called Local Activity Support Center with its Ukrainian partner, the Center for Development Support Initiatives from Kirovohrad city. This nine-month project, involved the transfer of modern methods of training of professionals in the field of local community activism, which the Local Activity Support Center has developed on the basis of values and solutions in the non-profit sector in Poland. One of the main objectives of the project was training a group of activists in the local communities. Within the initiative also were organized study visits in Poland for the Ukrainian employees of cultural centers of three regions in Central Ukraine. The
Local Activity Support Center reports that the project opens new prospects for the cooperation with existing public institutions (cultural centers) in the local environments of Ukraine.\(^{19}\)

Projects bringing together NGOs and local authorities are more common, and they serve another purpose: they facilitate cooperation, and thus make the Ukrainian non-governmental sector an important player in local public life so that Ukrainian authorities can better meet the specific needs of the local population, and presumably also wishes or—what Easton (1975, 438) would call—demands.\(^{20}\) Creation of partnerships in Ukraine between public and civil society sectors, in the opinion of Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) stems from belief that such projects allow non-governmental organizations to become advocates of the local community’s interests and to strengthen their position vis-à-vis local authorities.\(^{21}\)

Working with local authorities has also the additional purpose of redirecting their thinking about the building of local governance from emphasis on infrastructure to investment in human capital (Fenrych 2008). “Institutions were established and reforms are being implemented, but Ukrainian citizens do not know how to operate in new circumstances, therefore, the aim is to invest in social capital” (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008). Strong and organized civil societies represent an important element of democratic consolidation (Bermeo 2003; Biekart 1999; Diamond 1999; Putnam 1983 and 1994; Rose-Ackerman 2007; Tilly 2007).

Finally, such close cooperation of Ukrainian NGOs with governments at the local level not only can accelerate democratic consolidation by means of civil society empowerment, but also can improve the image of local institutions and make them more accessible to citizens.


\(^{20}\) Easton (1975) says that demands of society may be articulated by members themselves directly or by others on their behalf, like organizations or other organized constituencies.

\(^{21}\) As Sundstrom (2006) finds, the better cooperation between local authorities and civil society groups, the more local political factors are favorable to the development of civil society, and the better the position of civil society vis-à-vis a government (thus, the greater chances for the development of the civil society sector, as well).
According to Linz and Stepan (1996, 7) the development of free and lively civil society is one of the main conditions for a democracy to be consolidated. Moreover, the authors mention that democratic consolidation must involve political society, and the cooperation and complementariness of civil society and political society (Linz and Stepan 1996, 8-10). However, in Ukraine, especially in Eastern territories, there are still a lot of prejudices between citizens and political leadership that stem from Soviet times. Incorporation of local authorities into projects helps them to be accessible and more “human” in local community’s eyes, in Bobołowicz’s (2008) opinion.

**Ukraine’s Integration with Europe**

Polish NGOs responded to the President Yuschenko’s interest in integration with the Western community. Especially, the interest in closer ties with Brussels, which at some stage would lead to Ukraine’s membership in the EU, facilitated Polish NGOs’ activities regarding the European integration.

Because Ukraine is the largest Polish neighbor and, contrary to Belarus, has demonstrated democratic progress, Polish NGOs activists are interested in having Ukraine in the European Union, as stated by Jan Piekło (2008): “Ukraine gives the chance for widening the Euro-democratic civilization up to Kiev, Luhansk, Donetsk and it would be beautiful” Also, it should be stressed that Polish NGOs’ activities in this area are compatible with the Polish Government’s long-term goal to achieve the membership of Ukraine in the structures of the European Union (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007a).
Moreover, based on the Polish example, it seems that Polish NGOs consider a close integration with the European community as important for post-communist countries’ democratization—a way to safeguard democracy and to lock it in the country. Also, Polish NGOs find it appealing to share their knowledge and experience regarding European and Trans-Atlantic integration, since they helped prepare Polish society for the membership in these Western communities (Fedirko 2008). Some organizations even made sharing Polish experience in Euro-Atlantic Integration the core purpose of their activity. As an example may serve the PAUCI organization. In 1999 it was originally created to share the best practices of Poland’s successful transition from a centrally planned economy to a liberal, market-oriented democracy. However, facing new challenges and recognizing changing needs of Ukrainian society, the PAUCI program not only transformed its name to Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation, but changed its mission to build the capacity of Ukraine to integrate more closely with European and Euro-Atlantic structures through the application of Polish and European experiences (Piekło 2008).

Polish NGOs are becoming actively involved in facilitating Ukraine’s membership in the EU in two ways—through raising awareness and facilitating knowledge about European integration, and through helping Ukraine to meet the requirements in order to be considered as a candidate for the membership in the EU.

---

22 International organizations have been noted for their ability to constrain the actions of member states. Specifically, it is argued that joining intergovernmental organizations is a credible way to lock in policies or reforms to guard against future policy reversals (Goldstein 1998, 143-144). Membership can be perceived as “a tactic used by governments to ‘lock-in’ and consolidate democratic institutions, thereby enhancing their credibility and stability vis-a-vis nondemocratic political threats” (Moravcsik 2000, 220). Membership in some organizations is sometimes conditional upon domestic liberalization. For example, the European Union requires all members to be liberal, free market democracies, as does the Council of Europe (European Commission: The Treaty of Nice). Pevehouse (2002) finds regional organizations to be “an external sustainer of democracy” for at least two main reasons. First, the high costs imposed by these organizations (e.g., sanctions or expulsion) create a clear incentive to work within the rules of the system (Pevehouse 2002, 614). Second, he argues that the higher the average level of democracy of each member state in regional organizations, like the EU, the more likely the organization will be to serve this role of external guarantor (Pevehouse 2002, 616).
Since the aspiration of the Yushchenko Administration was to join the EU and NATO but many Ukrainian elites and citizens, especially from the East, are not very interested, Polish NGOs find it important to disseminate information about Euro-Atlantic integration. Recognizing the need that Ukrainians have, as a European nation with the membership perspectives, many Polish NGOs have prepared projects in relation to the European Union oriented toward Ukrainian elites, or representatives of different professional groups, or young people on topics associated with issues of interest to them. PAUCI, for example, organizes the “Transatlantic Forum,” an annual conference in Kyiv. As stated by Pieklo from the PAUCI, “the aim of this forum is to create a platform for public debate on what NATO is and explaining that NATO is not a war machine but an important political organization dealing not only with military matters, but also with international cooperation, peace and security in the world” (Piekło 2008).

Moreover, in cooperation with Center for US-Ukrainian Relations in New York and the German Konrad-Adenauer Foundation, PAUCI holds annually a conference on the Euro-Atlantic integration of Ukraine that attracts the best experts from the United States, Poland, Ukraine, and Germany (Piekło 2008). 23

The Stefan Batory has implemented a nationwide campaign to inform and engage the Ukrainian public about the democratic values involved in Euro-Atlantic integration. Together with Central European experts, the Foundation plans to hold a series of public hearings and roundtables in Kyiv, Donetsk, Kharkiv, and Odesa—four cities that have a plurality of residents who tend to oppose western-oriented reform (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008). As regards projects that reach Ukrainian citizens, in 2008 the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation, for example, implemented a project entitled "Europe in the Ukrainian Media.” This initiative

23 More information about the Center see its website at http://usukrainianrelations.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=14&Itemid=78
received MFA financial support. The aim was to share, with representatives of Ukrainian media, the Polish experience in the field of information campaigns on the EU and the integration process. The project involved local television and press journalists from Ukraine, and consisted of three elements. The first focused on internships for Ukrainian journalists at Gazeta Wyborcza—during which reporters and editors in Ukraine with good command of the spoken Polish language were invited to learn about the functioning and activities of one of the biggest newspapers in Poland and one with important democratic credentials. The second component of the program offers study visits to Poland. During meetings with representatives of television, newspaper and radio, participants could get to know the specificity of the Polish media market and learn how the media have presented this issue of European integration (both before the referendum on accession, and after Poland’s entry to the EU). Finally, there were workshops for journalists organized in Kiev.

Raising knowledge about the EU, Polish NGOs share their experience about European School Clubs—which are informal organizations established in Polish schools, gathering students and teachers interested in European integration. As an example of a project inspiring the development of European School Clubs in Ukraine may serve a project implemented by the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation in 2008, entitled “Together in Europe.” As part of this enterprise, Polish teenagers who are active in European School Clubs and their teachers visited Ukraine; and later Ukrainian groups visited their Polish partners. Furthermore, the program was intended to increase the Ukrainian students’ and teachers’ interest in European issues (Dymek

---

24 Gazeta Wyborcza has anti-Communist roots and was as an outcome of the Polish Round Table Agreement. Its founders were political opponents affiliated with the Solidarity movement. It began publication on May 8, 1989 under the motto, "Nie ma wolności bez Solidarności" ("There’s no freedom without Solidarity"). The paper was to serve as the voice of Solidarity during the run-up to semi-free elections to be held June 4, 1989 (hence its title). The paper's editor-in-chief, since its founding, has been Adam Michnik—a leading organizer of the illegal, democratic opposition in Poland (http://wyborcza.pl/0.80370.html).

Rafał Dymek (2008) from the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation has described these organizations as “sometimes the only centers of pro-European activity in local communities and an important place to learn the mechanics of democracy and civic society” (Dymek 2008).

Some Polish NGOs, like Foundation for Young Democracy, also share their experience with European Centers established in public places (Bobołowicz 2008). As a result, in Ukraine there were established European Centers in Lutsk. Right now the Soros Foundation in Ukraine, called the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), is actively working on the creation of these European Centers (Fedirko 2008).

Many programs on EU integration are directed toward the young people; and another interesting project aimed at bringing European democratic values closer to young people in Ukraine was a project initiated by the Casimir Pulaski Foundation, but organized by young people for young people in form of the “Eurobus.” For three weeks, young people from different European countries traveled in a bus in Ukraine, from L’viv to Donetsk; and activists organized happenings demonstrating multi-cultural Europe and Ukraine as an integral part of the Union. These events were organized especially in small towns in Ukraine and were accompanied by the meetings organized in Ukrainian schools and universities (Pisarski 2009).

Polish NGOs also invited Ukrainians to come to Poland to observe an accession referendum on the EU. Five sociologists and politicians from Ukraine watched the referendum campaign and the voting, and they worked closely with Polish experts on future recommendations for Ukraine (Fedirko 2008). Ukrainians who came to observe the referendum also participated in roundtable debates on the possible accession of Ukraine, as well as other prospective countries, to the EU. These events were organized by Polish NGOs in close cooperation with Latvian and Slovakian partners (Kucharczyk 2008).
Recognizing that interest in EU issues is evinced primarily among Western Ukrainians and that much has already been done in raising their knowledge about the European integration, Polish NGOs find it is important now to transfer knowledge and experience to Eastern Ukraine (Piekło 2008). Polish non-governmental organizations have shifted their efforts to Eastern Ukrainian regions that lie at the Russian-Ukrainian border also for another reason—there is the need to create a counterbalance to Russian quasi-NGOs which are present there and which spread negative opinions about NATO and the EU (Bobołowicz 2008).

With respect to helping Ukraine meet the EU requirements regarding the political and economic situation, PAUCI, for instance, works on the preparation of civil service employees for the changes associated with the EU membership. PAUCI organizes training for the Ukrainian trainers who learn how to instruct civil servants at the central and local administration level in their country. Jan Piekło (2008) says that the project is very popular in Ukraine, and the Delegation of the European Commission to Ukraine in Kiev strongly supports this initiative.

Polish NGOs acknowledge the fact that European Neighborhood Policy Instrument seems to be an important EU initiative aimed at promoting democratic and economic changes in Ukraine. However, Polish NGO activists see many problems associated with this mechanism. First is Ukrainians’ negative attitude toward ENPI, because Ukrainians do not like the idea of being considered as “neighbors,” because—contrary to other nations embraced by this project—Ukrainians think about themselves as Europeans. A second problem lies in the fact that many Ukrainian entities do not know what the conditions for granting these organizations money within the ENPI are and how to use these funds. Therefore, many Polish organizations that conduct research and engage in advocacy help Ukrainians to understand the advantages of ENPI for them as well as advise the European Commission with any shortcomings associated with the
The Center of International Relations has prepared studies on the economic aspects of the European Neighborhood Policy—analyses of the flow of people, capital, services and goods. The results of the Center activity, which are sometimes prepared in cooperation with similar institutions in other countries, are presented in publications (periodicals, reports, books), as well as at roundtables, meetings and conferences in the country and abroad (Bobiński 2008). Some analyses related to the European integration have also been presented by Polish think tanks in the European Commission DG Enlargement, and DG External Relations (Radziwiłł 2008).

Polish NGOs like CIR or the Stefan Batory Foundation engage into think tank activities, organize debates, meetings and discussions on topics of European integration, consequences of the EU eastward enlargement, EU and NATO policy towards countries of post-Soviet region, the Polish role in shaping the EU policy toward Ukraine, European security and justice, and relations between Poland and former Soviet states. Since Polish accession to the Schengen Zone, the organizations have been focusing on consequences of this development for Ukraine. Some NGOs activists find it important to talk about to the Schengen, because Poland’s accession to this zone caused huge dissatisfaction and resentment among Ukrainians and made Ukrainians’ attitudes toward the EU assistance more negative (Bobołowicz 2008). From his own observations and comments heard from a Ukrainian partner, Fedirko (2008) says that more than one million people were left without money for living because they can no longer freely trade with Polish border regions; and visas are not only expensive but also short-term.

Organizations, like the Institute of the Public Affairs or the Stefan Batory Foundation, have implemented projects in co-operation with partners from other new EU member states, as well as with partners from countries affected by new circumstances, like Ukraine (Gromadzki and Agnieszka Komorowska 2008). For example, a project “Friendly EU Border” by the Stefan
Batory Foundation was conducted with the aim to reform Polish and EU visa regimes, improve the quality of services at EU border crossings, and raise public awareness of the need to implement friendly border control mechanisms for EU Eastern neighbors. In addition to meetings and training of border guards, there were projects by the Foundation about the consequences of the Polish entrance to the Schengen zone in terms of passenger traffic and introduction of visas toward Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. Within this project also was conducted an analysis of Polish visa policy.

Although all EU countries have to introduce visas for non-member states’ citizens within these EU visa policies that are imposed on all members, many countries interpret the common regulations in different ways and thus apply them differently. Therefore, the IPA organized projects in cooperation with partners from the Czech Republic, Latvia, Slovakia, and the Baltic States that aimed at exchanging opinions and developing recommendations on how the visa system can be improved. Poland had a different rule for issuing visas to Ukrainians than the Czech Republic; and later, the Czech Republic adopted some of the more liberal Polish solutions (Kucharczyk 2008). Recommendations were developed and presented at conferences and in publications.

*Facilitating Socio-Economic Development in Ukraine*

Surely economic and political transitions involve more than European integration, therefore many Polish NGOs projects regarding the political and economic changes are separated from the idea of Ukraine’s integration with the European Union.
Whereas political and economic reforms are not a main domain of Polish NGOs, the focus on those areas in the post-communist region, particularly Ukraine, is encouraged by the Polish governmental program led by the MFA, which finds these areas important in the overall aid to Ukraine.

The MFA, for example, financed projects submitted by the Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE) that focused on economic reforms in Ukraine. These projects instructed authorities how to deal with economic problems that are typical especially for the countries in transition, such as macroeconomic turmoil like currency, financial, and balance-of-payment crises. For example, in order to prevent macroeconomic problems that might affect the well-being of a population and as a result might trigger public unrest, CASE offered a project entitled “Development of the Early Warning Indicators of Economic Crises for Ukraine.” Although no one can predict whether a crisis will materialize and when it might happen, analysts can quite successfully analyze and explain circumstances around strong pre-crisis signs.26

Another CASE project that aimed at economic reforms in Ukraine was entitled “Preparation of the Strategy for Social Benefits Monetization Reform in Ukraine.” It consists of the following steps: 1) an analysis of available reform strategies; 2) the construction of a comprehensive picture of the functioning of the social benefit system in Ukraine; 3) an analysis of the direct social benefits schemes applicable to the current institutional background; and 4) recommendations about a strategy of Ukraine's social benefits system reform.27

In addition to the support for economic and political reforms, particularly a major problem in Ukraine, which has been neglected so far, involves social issues (Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007a). Thus, some Polish NGOs also have taken actions towards social reforms

27 Ibid.
with special focus on changes in educational systems, reforms of pension and health services, and combating HIV/AIDS and drug abuse. The IPA organizes fellowships for young policy researchers from Ukraine, Russia, Moldova, Georgia, or Azerbaijan who come to Poland to work in Polish think tanks. During their stays, fellows gather materials, do interviews and then write their observations on certain social policy solutions adopted in Poland and make policy recommendations for their own countries.

While implementing projects, Polish NGOs cooperate with NGOs from recipient countries, recognizing that civil society is important for buffering societal shocks and disorder that always is associated with processes of political, economic and social transition.

Conclusion

The investigation of Polish NGOs’ projects in Ukraine and Belarus has revealed that Polish organizations have focused resources on a variety of issues important to democratization in Belarus and Ukraine. In case of Belarus, cooperation has focused on the creation and development of sphere independent from the government’s control, thus in indirect way preparing grounds for the breakdown of authoritarianism. In case of Ukraine, Polish NGOs help Ukraine build state capacity, develop local governance, spread information about European integration, and assist Ukrainian authorities with political and economic reforms. Thus, as the chapter demonstrates, Polish NGOs’ projects respond to current opportunities and challenges existent in recipient countries.

Polish NGOs conceptualize differently democracy assistance in authoritarian and democratizing countries. However, amid the differences in Belarusian and Ukrainian projects,
there is certain principle that is present in all Polish NGO cross-border projects. This principle is the partnership with civil society groups, thus contributing to the development of the third sector in both countries. Polish NGOs’ projects in Ukraine and Belarus show that no matter whether a country is authoritarian or going through the democratic transition, it is considered important to support civil society,

Polish NGOs recognize the importance of civil society in both democratic breakthrough and democratic consolidation. However, because civil societies display special needs in different regimes and have different functions to perform, there is differential emphasis put on various aspects of assistance associated with civil society development in Belarus and Ukraine. Using Belarus and Ukraine as cases, it has been presented that cross-border projects are tailored to the needs and development of recipient countries’ third sector, which is conditioned by the political situation there. In the case of Belarus, the civil society needs to be built. Thus, Polish NGOs mainly focus on the development of social and human capital through activization of people. Such a strategy will help to create seeds for the development of civil society and preparing it to be ready for democratic changes in Belarus. Polish NGOs’ strategies include creating programs that directly affect people’s welfare, reaching into small rural communities with training and technology, and improving people’s ability to solve problems in their community.

The chapter shows that Polish NGOs acknowledge the fact that different regimes offer different space for the civil society groups; therefore what is called civil society may vary from country to country. Under the conditions imposed by an authoritarian regime, like Belarus, where democracy and civic freedoms do not exist or are severely restricted, there is limited space, if any, for independent civil society. Therefore, the choice is whether to comply with the requirements of a legal (undemocratic) system and to cooperate with organizations that are
approved by the state (but not supporting it), or to cooperate with local organizations that have been banned by the system and work in the underground. Polish organizations have found both ways to be good strategies of building democratic civil society in Belarus. Both methods complement each other and serve common goals: activating Belarusian society and exposing its members to values, norms, and behaviors related to democracy even if in indirect way.

Whereas in Belarus an emphasis is on building civil society, in Ukraine today, Polish NGOs also aim to direct their activities toward strengthening civil society’s role vis-à-vis state. Polish NGOs try to support a relationship with the state through cooperation with the local government, in which citizens take an active part in the local affairs. Engaging local governments in projects can help citizens communicate their needs and demands much more directly and reinforce civil society’s position vis-à-vis local authorities. Finally, the Polish NGOs help Ukrainian NGOs find their new role by introducing them to topics of European integration and political reforms—administrative reform and other reforms regarding local governance.

By identifying the approaches used in two different national contexts, the study sheds light on the differences between democracy-building in authoritarian countries, such as Belarus, and democracy-strengthening efforts in countries undergoing democratic transformation, as Ukraine. However, Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance described in this chapter does not automatically speak for the effectiveness of Polish efforts in assisting democratic tendencies in Belarus and Ukraine. The question still remains whether Polish NGOs cross-border work, which dominates Polish democracy assistance, has a potential for successful diffusion of democratic ideas and practices to Belarus and Ukraine; and the next section presents an attempt to evaluate cross-border work.
CHAPTER 6
EXAMINING POLISH NGOs’ DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE
THROUGH MULTIPLE VIEWPOINTS

This analysis evaluates Polish democracy assistance through three different prisms: literature on democracy assistance, Polish NGOs’ opinions and evaluation of results, and finally through opinions of Western donors about Polish practices.

Since Polish democracy assistance relies extensively on Polish NGOs efforts, the chapter evaluates Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance strategies to facilitate democratic changes in Belarus and Ukraine in light of other strategies known and described in literature on democracy assistance. Despite the enormous interest and good will of foreign assistance donors, as well as the overall role in fostering democratization in recipient countries, scholars criticized the strategies used by donors which contributed to failure, limited results; or—in some cases—even paradoxical effects of foreign aid. The majority of research regarding the impact of democracy assistance and on civil society development and democratization in recipient countries refers to the Western assistance—governmental and non-governmental aid from the United States, Britain, Germany, and elsewhere in Western Europe—provided in the 1990s to Central and Eastern European countries (Ballentine 2002; Burnell 1996; Siegel and Yancey 1992; Quigley 2000; Wedel 1999) and more recently to Russia (Richter 2002; Henderson 2000 and 2003; McMahon 2002 and 2004; Mendelson 2001).
Based on the criticism in the democracy assistance literature regarding some practices of Western donors, Wilde (2002, 433) gives some recommendations as to how to improve the method of delivering aid, such as 1) donors should continue funding programs that promote democracy, but consider adding social projects to their assistance strategy; 2) maintain continuity by supporting organizations that have achieved a measure of success; 3) create micro-grant programs that support grassroots initiative and develop local organizations; 4) reach a wider audience; 5) improve the technical capacity of all forms of communication; 6) encourage networking and partnering both internally and externally.

Thus, using these recommendations as a benchmark as well as voices of criticism in the democracy assistance literature, this chapter evaluates Polish NGOs democracy assistance efforts. Are Polish NGOs ways of delivering assistance really so different from those employed by Western donors? If so, how are such strategies different from practices that have been criticized? How do Polish NGO activists view their work in Belarus and Ukraine? Do they present a common view regarding their activities in foreign countries? In addition to addressing those questions, the chapter also demonstrates how Polish NGOs view their work and how they try to assess the outcomes of their projects in Belarus and Ukraine.

Finally, this chapter also deals with the question whether Polish activities aimed at democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine are successful in delivering aid and achieving goals. The diffusion literature suggests that the greater the similarity between the transmitters and the prospective adopters on one or more socio-cultural dimensions, the greater the prospect of diffusion (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Lahusen 1999; Snow and Benford 1999). Thus, taking into account a special relationship, as well as strong historical, cultural and societal connections between Poland, Ukraine and Belarus, one should expect democratic diffusion through
democracy assistance offered by Polish donors to work better and produce more substantial results, compared with programs from countries that are less familiar and less understood. Do Polish NGOs believe that they can have a potential to be more effective in delivering democracy assistance to neighboring states than other (more distant) actors? If so why? Do close cultural and historical relations automatically translate into the success of the diffusion of democracy? Why do Western donors, such as NED, decide to cooperate with Polish NGOs and finance their projects in Belarus and Ukraine?

**Polish NGOs’ Efforts and Common Critical Evaluations**

*Responding to Domestic Circumstances and Needs*

One of the most frequent critiques that appear in research on democracy assistance is that donors have done little to adapt the projects to local circumstances (Carothers 1999 and 2004; Ottaway and Chung 1999; Quigley 2000, 192; Siegel and Yancey 1992, 57-58). Scholars argue that Western practitioners acted with little knowledge of regions, neglecting the historical, cultural and institutional legacies (Mendelson and Glenn 2000, 66; 2002; Aksartova 2005; Grugel 1999; Narozhna 2004; Quigley 2000). Western donors tried to impose Western practices without including domestic needs and the input from the local conditions (Henderson 2002, 155; Siegel and Yancey 1992, 58).

Critics have argued that donor-driven building of NGOs was undertaken without considering knowledge, political environment, norms, beliefs and practices that exist in the local society and also did not encourage local ideas and strategies while promoting of civil society (Henderson 2000 and 2003; McMahon 2002 and 2004; Mendelson and Glenn 2002; Sundstrom
2006). In other words, Western organizational and cultural models are assumed to be superior to local models; and many Western donors have overlooked the fact that civil society is about citizens’ interests, domestic politics and local culture (McMahon 2004, 251).

With respect to African or Asian countries, the United States civil society assistance has also received criticism for ignoring the specificity of the society in recipient countries – the many layers of clans, castes, villages associations, ethnic organizations, and the like (Carothers 1999, 249). Therefore, scholars argue that in order for the promotion of civil society to be successful, the internal conditions that influence civic groups always should be taken into consideration (Hadenius and Uggla 1998).

Moreover, scholars point out how little Western aid providers know about democratic transformations and how they try to apply the same democracy assistance patterns in each country in which donors intervene (Mendelson and Glenn 2002, 4; Hadenius and Uggla 1998; Ottaway 2003; Ottaway and Chung 1999). They push assistance recipient countries to adopt the same political institutions and the same path of transformation regardless of prevailing conditions. Programs developed in Western capitals failed to acknowledge the distinctiveness of each country’s domestic political situation, which determines what is both desirable and possible. Thus, scholars have come to the conclusion that just as democratization is a different experience in different states and regions, democracy assistance should show different patterns and to be more relevant to the recipient country.

The interviews undertaken for this dissertation, documents collected, and the nature of the projects implemented by the Polish NGOs demonstrate that Polish organizations tailor their work in Ukraine and Belarus according to political situation in these countries, and thus the complaint regarding the Western efforts does not apply to Polish NGOs’ assistance. Also, the
nature of projects demonstrates the acceptance by Belarusian and Ukrainian partners of values of Polish NGOs and, vice versa, the understanding of recipients’ values (Kazanecki 2008).

While doing cross-border work, all Polish NGOs try to combine Polish experience with the political situation and needs of society in the recipient states. Before starting any assistance activities, many organizations find it important to assess the needs of the recipients by asking them “How can we help you? What can we do for you?,” because their own experience as assistance recipients in the past taught them to do this.¹ Then these needs are transformed into a project, and then the project into the proposal to be submitted to a funding institution. Polish NGOs also get a sense of these needs and ideas for the present and future projects also through their officials’ travels.

The fact that Polish NGOs tailor their activities to the political situation in the recipient countries can be shown by changes in the organizations’ approach toward their work in Belarus and Ukraine, as presented in the previous chapter. In Ukraine, today funds are allocated to support activities that focus on political and economic reforms, efforts to show local governments how to be more responsive, and on strengthening civil society’s position vis-à-vis local government. In Belarus, focus is especially on politically-minded civil society groups, supporting Belarusians’ contacts with foreign groups, civic education assistance, and the development of Belarusian cultural identity.

Moreover, Polish NGOs’ approach to selection of civil society groups in Belarus and Ukraine for the assistance, demonstrates that Polish NGOs recognize that civil societies in authoritarian and new democratic countries may comprise different actors. In Belarus, for

¹ This is the author’s general observation, but the citation is from the interview with Aleksandra Kujawska (2008) from the Education for Democracy Foundation in Warsaw. The FED was one of the first organizations in Poland that received international aid for their activities during the transformation process in Poland.
example many NGOs are avoided, because they are tied to the government. Such a strategy responds to the criticism about equating civil society with NGOs.

In the mid-1990s, donors began to sponsor programs labeled as “strengthening civil society” across the developing and post-communist world, with the assumption that civil society is crucial in the transition to and consolidation of democracy (Carothers 1999, 209; Bernhard 1993; Bernard, Helmich and Lehning 1998; Blair 1998; Cohen and Arato 1997; Dahl 1989; Deutsch 1961; Diamond 1994 and 1996; Linz and Stepan 1996; Ottaway and Carothers 2000; Putnam 1994). However, when Western donors were providing “civil society assistance,” they usually referred specifically to their support for non-governmental organizations (Carothers 1999, 210; Raik 2006, 175; Hadenius and Uggla 1996; Mitlin 1998; USAID Mission to Poland Europe and Eurasia). NGOs are a vital part of civil society, because the NGOs help citizens solve community and social problems, lobby government on behalf of citizens’ rights and concerns, promote awareness, and press for transparency in government and business. Nevertheless equating civil society with NGOs is not always relevant in each recipient country (Carothers 2004; Henderson 2000 and 2003; Rose-Ackerman 2007). In authoritarian countries that repress the emergence of NGOs, equating civil society with NGOs may be especially an inadequate strategy (Carothers 2004).

Defining the profile of Polish NGOs’ partners—with whom organizations cooperate or to whom they address their actions—also offers further evidence of how Polish organizations tailor their projects to the political circumstances in the recipient country.

In the case of Belarus—where, as a result of the conditions imposed by the authoritarian regime, civic freedoms do not exist or are severely restricted—Polish NGOs’ cross-border

---

2 Carothers (1999, 209) points out that the inclination toward civil society assistance also was facilitated by pragmatic factors—many people in the Clinton administration came from the NGO community, and the overall US foreign aid budget created pressure on aid officials “to do more with less.”
projects recognize that the civil society entails different combinations of politically-oriented individuals and groups. These include autonomous individuals, dissident groups, teachers, women or youth, and organizations working in the underground, as presented in the previous chapter. The programs of Polish NGOs are flexible to allow some funds to be disbursed to informal groups secretly.

Since the political situation is different in Ukraine, there is no need to look for and to support the opposition groups. Civil society recipients consist of interest groups, non-governmental organizations, volunteers, trade union associations, professional organizations, free media, and the like. Some projects might concern supporting cooperation between civil society groups with local authorities, and with specific social groups—political scientists; sociologists; journalists and other experts or intellectuals.

**Merits of Partnering with Civil Society Groups**

The Polish NGOs’ projects are not only designed and implemented to fit the needs, habits, and demands of local communities/realities, but also “local ownership” of projects is a common practice. Scholars evaluating Western assistance observed that “local ownership” of the aid projects, meaning that ideas and funds are shared by aid providers and recipients or that they remain fully in hands of recipients, translates to the greater success of aid provision (Carothers 1999; Quigley’s 2000). For Western donors the local grants method requires the establishment of local foundations just as Soros has done, or direct grants, which NED uses. Polish NGOs in addition to giving grants and helping recipients to establish local foundations offer a third method of pursuing localism. They work through close partnership; and this method is not the
exception, but rather the rule. Before analyzing cross border work, it is instructive to also
describe Polish NGOs’ grant giving practices and later the method of partnering with civil
society groups in recipient countries.

Similarly to the Soros Foundation, a few Polish NGOs established organizations in the
recipient countries. For example, the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy played an
important role in the creation of the Lev Sapieha Foundation, which later became an important
partner of this Polish organization (Fenrych 2008). The establishment of this organization was to
serve the purpose of long term cooperation between Belarusian and Polish partners. Likewise,
from the beginning of its existence, FSLD found it important to establish long-term links with
Ukrainian partners with whom long-term interaction on projects would be possible. For this
reason, FSLD created independent centers/organizations in different places in Ukraine, e.g. in
Cherkassy, L’viv, Kherson, Donetsk and Kharkiv. These entities later became permanent
partners of FSLD. The FSLD together with Ukrainian centers implemented projects that aimed to
share Polish experience regarding the functioning of Polish local government (Stefan Batory
Foundation. 2003). The centers have been also concerned with the development of local
democracy through activities directed to different groups, such as teachers, youth, journalists,
non-governmental organizations (Morawska 2008).

However, as discussed in the previous chapter, some of the ideas of establishing new
organizations in the post-Soviet republics also resulted from the Polish associations’ long-term
activity and frequent work with civil society groups. For example, as a result of links established
with teachers, young people, and their parents from the northeastern part of Belarus, in the city
of Pastava, the DMK established an organization there that is similar to DMK and hosts visitors
from abroad, and plays an important role in facilitating contacts of Belarusian people with the Westerners, as noted by Goliński (2008).

Despite those examples, the idea of establishing counterpart organizations in foreign countries is not a common activity of Polish NGOs. Similarly, the grant method is not a frequent way of dealing with civil society groups in the recipient countries, and is rather reserved for larger Polish organizations that have a status of “foundation” and have access to greater funds.

The Stefan Batory Foundation, for example, provides assistance through two main streams: 1) grant-giving, in which monies are given directly to organizations (10-15 percent for administrative activities), and then the Foundation just approves activities and monitors the implementation of the project; and 2) operations, in which the foundation is involved in the organization of conferences, meetings and various types of activities through partnerships (Gromadzki and Komorowska 2008).

When there is re-granting, the funds that Polish NGOs obtain from their donors are distributed to a selected partner usually by means of a call for proposals. There can be observed two different re-granting schemes in the cooperation with Ukraine and Belarus. The first pattern is seen when Polish NGOs directly receive money from their donor and then make a re-grant to a smaller group in Belarus and Ukraine. Some of sub-grants are made to individual NGOs, some to newspapers, some to what are called “civic initiatives.” The procedure appears below:
For example, the East European Democratic Center carried out projects in which small grants were distributed to independent organizations and civil society groups, as well as organizing meetings to improve cross-border democracy-building programs. Within the 2007 “Program Supporting the Development of Civil Society,” the EEDC offered Micro-Grants to Belarusian civil society groups. For the purpose of the program, an anonymous Belarusian-language website was created, on which an individual or a group of people could upload a proposal for the small project with a budget not higher than $500. In 2007, the organization distributed in this way thirty-six micro grants. For the security reasons, the organization does not provide names of these grant recipients. The impetus for such micro-grants emerged after the 2006 presidential elections in Belarus, when was observed a rapid growth of small activities taken by pro-democratic young leaders. The micro-grant project was created in order to support these activities and facilitate their development in the future.

The second scheme, as shown below, includes further re-granting, and such projects are more popular in Ukraine. In other words, the Ukrainian recipient of Polish grant distributes this money to other grassroots initiatives and local organizations within Ukraine.

The Stefan Batory Foundation’s grant-making program “Citizens in Action: Civic Initiatives in Belarus and Ukraine” is an example of such double re-granting. The program is financed by the Ford Foundation and aims to support democratic changes and the development
of civil society in Belarus and Ukraine. This program offers grants for non-governmental organizations from Belarus and Ukraine which support grass-root initiatives and engage in building partnerships between non-governmental organizations and public administration sectors and undertake civic education activities. As Gromadzki and Komorowska (2008) argue: “Ukrainian organizations receive funds so that they can finance others – it is very important because they know the best what is needed to be done.”

The grants are distributed on the basis of open competitions creating an equal opportunity for all organizations throughout Ukraine and Belarus, which meet the grant scope i.e., legal education and legal counseling for citizens, protection of civic rights, civic education for young people, establishing local civic activity centers, securing transparency of governance and access to information, and development of philanthropy. As expressed by Grzegorz Gromadzki (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation: “an open competition, which is the foundation’s rule, opposes the strategy that the German Marshall Fund uses by funding only partners with which it has long-established relations. Since the Foundation also aims at supporting civil society, the rule is that all organizations should have an equal chance to receive assistance.” The Belarusian or Ukrainian grant recipients may make further re-granting to other local organizations.

Carothers (1999, 271-2) points out that the grant method has many advantages—for example, money goes directly into the recipient society—but such a mechanism involves difficulties and limitations as well, because it calls for an in-depth understanding of the recipient societies. Polish NGOs give grants to organizations that have knowledge about local conditions and have a vested interest in local issues in Belarus and Ukraine. By financing those organizations, Polish NGOs thus hope to support democratic changes and the development of

---

3 The source of this information is the Stefan Batory Foundation’s website: http://www.batotry.org.pl/english/prog.htm
civil society in small communities. For such small communities such small grants from Polish NGOs maybe the only chance to receive foreign funding, as Belarusian and Ukrainian local organizations do not have an access to funds of Western donors, who usually require big, institutionalized organizations, and lack managerial capacity to redistribute small grants. As Jarábik (2006, 91) notes, such funding, even though modest as compared to that provided by Western donors, has been more effective in addressing local civil society groups’ needs for funding.

Distribution of micro-grants is difficult especially in Belarus. Due to the political situation in Belarus, some organizations, like the FSLD, do not give grants today and rather prefer to engage in the cooperation with Belarusian partners (Morawska 2008). Before 1999, there were no restrictions on foreign assistance; and Polish NGOs together with their donors could freely cooperate with Belarusian organizations on the projects (Kazanecki 2008). Today, any transfer of money from abroad has to be approved by Belarusian authorities; therefore Polish NGOs cannot transfer monies to bank accounts of Belarusian partners. Many Polish organizations find it impossible to track their support money.

In Ukraine, those Polish NGO activists who favor re-granting as a method of cooperation with Ukrainian entities also seem to clash with the others. The majority of Polish NGOs still believe that the transfer of money for the projects to be implemented only by Ukrainians is less effective. Despite the fact that Ukraine is further along the democratic trajectory, some partners still need guidance, knowledge, and experience that Polish partners have about certain issues regarding democracy (Kazanecki 2008). Thus, the EEDC, for example, offers re-granting only for the development of newspapers, and stopped redistributing money to organizations in Ukraine.
The situation when Polish NGOs engage themselves into a partnership initiative, so-called cross-border projects, is the core form of cooperation with civil society groups in Belarus and Ukraine and is the legacy of Solidarity Movement.

All Polish NGOs’ representatives interviewed mentioned that the most common form of assisting groups in Ukraine and Belarus is through common projects. Then, it is a rule of organizations to have a partner in each project on the other side—one or two, depending on the specificity of the project or the geographical extent. Even though in Belarus creating relations with civil society groups has been difficult as compared to Ukraine, there has always been a Belarusian partner in a project. Before starting any assistance activities, many organizations find it important to assess the needs of their partners, because their own experience as assistance recipients in the past taught them to do this. Then these needs are transformed into the “project,” and then project into the proposal to be submitted to a funding institution.

As expressed by one Polish long-term activist, Pawel Bobolowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy, Polish NGOs always try to analyze the needs of their partners, and discuss with them the project outline before applying for the grant. This form of cooperation contrasts the model used by Western donors at the beginning of the 1990s in Eastern Europe, known as “The Marriott Brigade.” “Contrary to Western specialists, who were coming to Poland at the beginning of the 1990s to conduct training at the Hotel Marriot and talk about changes that should be carried out while never going out to the streets of Warsaw and seeing real life, Polish NGOs acknowledge the importance of getting the domestic context in which recipients operate known, and engage partners into projects” (Bobolowicz 2008). However, not
only experience with assistance dictates such a strategy, but also partnering is required by it the Polish Governmental program, as discussed earlier (Sycz 2008). 4

Also other donors of Polish NGOs projects stress the importance of partnership (Morawska 2008). The National Endowment for Democracy, which is one of the major donors funding Polish project in the Eastern Europe, gives priority to projects that demonstrate partnership between Polish and recipient partners; simply, such projects are more likely to receive NED’s grant. As expressed by Joanna Rohozińska from the National Endowment for Democracy: “the bonus is if there is interaction with other groups, if there is a kind of networking together in the project submitted for grant” (Rohozińska 2008).

Polish NGOs’ partnership with Ukrainians or Belarusians means that Polish NGOs assist rather than act, and that they share responsibility and the decision-making process about the project implementation. This scheme of work is based on 100 percent collaboration, where Polish NGOs and recipient partners complement each other, cooperate, and develop a project together. In the case of Ukraine today, Polish NGOs are not sole initiators of action; and many Ukrainian organizations develop the idea of the project and contact Polish NGOs. Usually Polish NGOs share responsibilities of the project implementation with their partners according to their capacities. For example, the Polish partner provides the so-called “know-how,” and a partner in Belarus or Ukraine is responsible for the organization of events (Kujawska 2008). Below is the mode of project found in cooperation in both countries.

4 The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not provide funds for projects that do not incorporate the recipient country’s local partners. In order to receive funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while applying for financial support, Polish NGOs have to demonstrate that they will incorporate partners from the aid recipient country by attaching letters, agreements and other documents. Sources of information about these procedures are available on the Polish Aid website http://www.polskapomoc.gov.pl
An example of this scheme is the program entitled “Through Education to Civil Society,” financed by the Polish American Foundation Freedom. Under this rubric, the FSDL in Szczecin, implements projects addressed to teachers and parents in cooperation with its long-term Belarusian partner, the Lev Sapieha Foundation in Grodno. The projects are aimed to instruct teachers and parents about the methods that will make young people active and engage them in social problems (FED 2005). Many other examples of projects that are conducted according to this scheme were mentioned in the earlier chapter.

In other words, Polish NGOs recognize that assessment of needs and dealing with matters in which assistance providers have knowledge and experience is important, but even more essential is doing something together with partner organizations and offering long-term partnership (Dymek 2008). Whereas some Western donors may have a problem in indentifying appropriate local partners for creating partnership, Polish NGOs have established relations with Ukrainian non-governmental organizations or civil society groups in Belarus that have uninterruptedly lasted for years. Some Polish activists frequently travel to Ukraine and build personal ties with the Ukrainians.

The merits of partnering have been acknowledged by many social scientists. Civil society has more chance to be established and sustained through coalition networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997, Tarrow 1998 and 2005). Magdziak-Miszewska (2002) implies that cooperation between democratically-minded nongovernmental groups on both sides of the Belarus-Poland border may be of the most realistic option of democracy assistance. As the local
NGOs are linked up with Polish NGOs, such networks make bringing new ideas and practices to the country more possible. Other researchers recognize that the success of civil society assistance efforts in the post-communist region is possible only in partnership with domestic actors (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Jacoby 2006).

Also, scholars also recognize that building of sustainable civil society requires continuity in supporting groups—long-term funding and partnership (Henderson 2003, 153; Ottaway and Chung 1999; Jarábik 2006, 86; Quigley’s 2000; Siegel and Yancey 1992). Polish NGOs’ relationships with Ukrainian non-governmental organizations or civil society groups in Belarus that have uninterruptedly lasted for years, may contribute to the development of civil society in recipient countries. As Tudoroiu (2007, 340) argues, short-term foreign financial can help develop NGOs; but such short relationship is “not enough to insure the large-scale diffusion of democratic values within the population and civil society’s associated rapid development.”

Reaching a Wider Audience and Encouraging Networking Internally

In addition to external partnering, scholars find that fostering internal networking with citizens and with other civil society groups is crucial for both building and strengthening of civil society (Henderson 2002; McMahon 2000, 253; Richter 2002; Wilde 2002, 433). One of the critiques of Western civil society assistance is the lack of networking—rather than facilitating networks among groups, foreign aid favored those NGOs that had already connections with the West. The lack of networking strengthened the division of the civic community between “the haves and the have-nots” (Henderson 2003, 10; Narozhna 2004, 248). In other words, rather than fostering networks between different civil society groups, Western aid contributed to the
emergence of isolated (although well-funded) civic groups. Scholars point to the attention that lack of networking may result in small groups’ abilities to develop habits of cooperation, solidarity, and trust among assistance recipient organizations, as well as the marginalization of civil society groups.

Polish NGOs facilitate the developed of links between different groups in the society by reaching new civil society groups in new places and making connections between their new and long-term partners.

In the case of Ukraine, today many Polish NGOs find it also important to work on the geographical expansion of the sector, networking between organizations and increasing the capacity of Ukrainian non-governmental sector. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the development of Ukrainian NGOs was limited to big cities in the Western part of Ukraine. The Western part is not only geographically closer to Poland, but also historically and culturally. Thus, it should not be surprising that there have been many projects with Western Ukrainian partners. However, today many Polish NGOs are recognizing the needs of local societies in Eastern Ukraine and the fact that organizations that have emerged in Eastern Ukraine are small, nonprofessional and isolated. Hence, Polish NGOs are shifting their focus there (Morawska 2008). Polish NGOs cooperate with organizations from Kharkiv, Donetsk, Berdyansk and in the Odesa Oblast located in southern Ukraine. However, contacts with entities from Volynsk Oblast and L’viv Oblast, which are easier to maintain because of the geographical proximity, still dominate.

One of the projects which aimed at the strengthening civil society through networking was the project funded by the Stefan Batory Foundation and implemented by the FSLD in the

---

5 Polish NGOs activists think of Eastern and Western Ukraine even though in the literature, especially the electoral studies make more distinctions, as presented earlier in the dissertation.
cooperation with Ukrainian partners in Donetsk in 2003. The project aimed at the creation of the coalition of NGOs in the Donetsk region, so that they can work together on local problems and strengthen their role vis-à-vis local government. Ukrainian organizations from the Donetsk region could meet and discuss, as well as learn from Polish example, during their training and visits to Poland.  

Eastern Ukrainian organizations are also additionally encouraged by grants they can obtain from the Stefan Batory Foundation.

Similarly to the Stefan Batory Foundation project, the EEDC, for example, came up with the project “From the Local Initiative to Civic Activity: Support for the Young People’s Initiative in Ukraine” that was implemented in Chernihiv Oblast, Sumy Oblast, Zaporizhia Oblast, Odesa Oblast, Kherson Oblast, Ternopil’ Oblast, Poltava Oblast, Kharkiv Oblast (EEDC 2008). Within the project were organized visits to Poland so that forty seven participants could become familiar with the forms of cooperation between Polish NGOs. Moreover, the project taught about the advantages resulting from networking and organized many activities in Ukraine. By participating in them, representatives of Ukrainian organizations coming from various regions could meet each other. The project aimed to contribute to the creation of a network of regional non-governmental youth organizations in Ukraine. The organization also distributed nineteen mini-grants within the call for proposal mode.

A common method in Polish NGOs’ projects is that when looking for partners in Eastern Ukraine, Polish NGOs work with the Western Ukrainian partners and then try to include in a project those from the East. The scheme of such cooperation can be illustrated in the following way.

---

6 Based on the database obtained during the interview with Katarzyna Morawska.
7 Ibid.
An example of a project in which there are two Ukrainian partners – one from the West and another from the East is the 2007/2008 project initiated by FSLD Krakow and financed with the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights money at the disposal of the Delegation of the European Commission in Kyiv. One of the Ukrainian partners was an NGO from the Ivano-Frankivsk in the West Ukraine, and another from Donetsk located in the distant Eastern oblast of Ukraine. The project, entitled “I am a Citizen: Shaping Citizens' Attitudes Among Young People in Ukraine,” aimed at facilitating interest and spreading awareness of social issues and local problems among the young people in Donetsk through the improvement of the civic, social and political education at schools. ²

In other words, the Western Ukrainian organizations provide a bridge to the Eastern ones. The inclusion of the Western long-term partners also gives a higher probability that the project will succeed. It is natural that organizations prefer working with partners with whom there are long-established relations and whom they can trust, as mutual trust is very important in project work (Bobołowicz 2008). As Ukrainian civil society is different in Western and Eastern regions, Polish NGOs recognize this challenge and provide networking for the civil society groups.

However, sometimes it may seem to be difficult to engage partners from Eastern Ukraine. Thus, the EEDC employs Ukrainians who have better understanding of the situation in the Eastern Ukraine (Kazanecki 2008). The Education for Democracy Foundation (FED), however, prefers to work with its partners in L’viv on the projects that address activities directed toward

² Based on the database obtained during the interview with Katarzyna Morawska.
the local communities in Dnipropetrovsk. There are three purposes for such cooperation. First, Western Ukrainian organizations may have better access to the local communities in Eastern Ukraine than do Polish agencies. Second, through such cooperation Western Ukrainian and Polish NGOs are able to find other Ukrainian partners. Third, it is more appealing to the Eastern Ukrainian organizations when they can see the achievement of Polish and Western Ukrainian organizations’ cooperation and how organizations from the West work (Fedirko 2008; Kujawska 2008).

In case of Belarus, the strategy is to avoid working in big cities like Minsk, Grodno or Vitebsk, but rather to reach small local communities; but it is also possible through already established contacts with long-term Belarusian partners. Moreover, Belarusian groups sometimes prefer to have a direct contact with Belarusian rather than with Polish organizations for safety reasons. Interesting is how one of the Belarusian organizations facilitates the creation of networks with other groups in Belarus as well as with Polish entities. This organization has activists in many regions of Belarus through whom the Polish NGOs are able to reach local communities. There are from 130 to 150 leaders in Belarus who share the same ideas and vision, and who are very active in some regions. Sometimes these leaders are in charge of informal groups, groups of friends, civic groups, and so forth. Through this linkage Polish NGOs are also able to reach these grassroots groups.⁹

It rarely happens that Polish NGOs work with new Belarusian partners without having earlier contact with them either through projects, or through meetings, and conferences, international forums. One of the ways in which Polish NGOs have reached other organizations is through such events as the Warsaw Regional Congress of NGOs under Council of Europe auspices. This event gathered 200 NGOs from the Central and Eastern Europe (Pisarski 2008).

⁹ For safety reasons the author omits the reference here and subsequently—when necessary—in the chapter.
There also is the Forum of Central and Eastern Europe organized in Krynica in Poland every year in September. This event gathers many NGOs from the region (Morawska 2008). The Forum is a platform for the exchange of views, ideas, and contacts among politicians, businessmen, and NGO regional activists, and a chance to meet potential partners.

Moreover, the Council of Europe funds the Regional NGO Congress of Council of Europe, and annual meeting with the aim of activating dialogue with the national non-governmental organizations from the forty-seven member countries of the Council of Europe. In 2006, the congress was organized in Warsaw and in 2007 in Kiev; both meetings gathered more than 200 NGOs from the Central and Eastern Europe (Pisarski 2008). Non-governmental organizations discuss current issues in the sphere of the participation of the civil society in the building and consolidation of democracy.

Networking between the non-governmental organizations is also facilitated by the establishment of the communication platforms for non-governmental organizations, such as www.non-gov.org, or www.tri.net.pl. The latter website has been run by the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation and the PAUCI Foundation since 2006, and is addressed to nongovernmental organizations from Germany, Poland, and Ukraine which might be interested in tri- or bilateral cooperation (Dymek 2008). This virtual Ukrainian-Polish-German forum provides a communication tool for NGOs and gives up-to-date information on trilateral projects. In May 2007, thanks to the support of Bosch Foundation, the first German-Polish-Ukrainian meeting was held in Warsaw and gathered fifty NGOs. Participants exchanged information on how to improve civil society cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe in the areas of civic education, ecology, youth empowerment, local government support and migration (PAUCI 2007).
At the initiative of FSLD also was created an international network of independent civic organizations, operating in the sphere of civic education – the Education for Democracy International Network, EDIT-Net (www.editnet.org). The network includes organizations from eight countries (Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Russia, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Mongolia) and is a platform for co-operation and exchange of experience between organizations that build their programs on a foundation of local culture and traditions. Member organizations of this network organize each year hundreds of workshops in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia in which participate several thousand non-governmental organizations’ leaders, teachers, representatives of local administrations, and local educational authorities (FSLD 2007).

Different Forms of Communication

Polish NGOs use diverse activities within cross-border projects with Belarusian and Ukrainian partners. We can divide those activities into 1) information-dissemination through exchange, seminars, conferences, visitations, fellowships and internships; and 2) training.

Activities that belong to the first category are the most frequently used. Exchanges are two-way visits of experts, mass media representatives, employees of non-governmental organizations, decision-makers, local authorities, students, and so forth from Poland, Ukraine or Belarus. Workshops or seminars, however, are aimed to facilitate joint work in developing methodologies or ideas in the form of discussion between participants working in the same area of specialization. Scholarships or fellowships are aimed at providing extended academic and professional experiences for Belarusians and Ukrainians. A common form of project activities are study visits. These visitations bring Ukrainians and Belarusians to Poland to “look and see”
as well as to travel around the country to meet with relevant counterpart organizations and foundations.

Figure 6.1 presents the popularity of Polish NGOs funded from grants available within the Stefan Batory Foundation and PAFF in 2007.

Figure 6.1. Frequency of Various Types of Indirect Activities in Ukrainian and Belarusian Projects Implemented by the Polish NGOs
Source: Stefan Batory Foundation (2007); FED (2005)

One of the Stefan Batory funding programs is “East-East program” launched in 1991 by the Open Society Institute, and it supports projects implemented by Polish organizations in cooperation with at least one partner organization from the region of Central and East Europe, Central Asia or the Caucasus. Another grant by the Stefan Batory Foundation is “Citizens in Action” program. It is financed by the Ford Foundation and aims to support democratic changes and the development of civil society in Belarus and Ukraine. The data show that workshops/seminars were the most popular form of activity in 2007. This category includes eight workshops and two conferences organized in Ukraine. Study tours represented a second popular form of activity.
The PAFF data include projects financed within the “Region in Transition” Program administered by the Education of Democracy Foundation in 2007. The goal of this program is to support democratic and free market changes in countries of Eastern Europe, primarily through sharing the Polish experience in the form of study tours, as the data show.

Some of those forms of cooperation are implemented in Poland and some in the recipient country. Although partnership is the main principle guiding cooperation of Polish NGOs with Belarusian and Ukrainian partners, Polish NGOs are divided on the issue whether activities within projects should take place in Poland or in a recipient country.

The advantage of organizing activities in Poland is that participants are exposed to the culture, experience, and practices of the nonprofit sector in Poland. These activities help Ukrainian and Belarusian activists to gather ideas, information, and contacts. The disadvantage is that most of money for the organization of these activities is spent primarily by Polish NGOs in Poland. Pawel Kazanecki (2008) from the EEDC is a strong advocate of activities taken in the recipient country: “the aid makes sense when money is spent in Belarus not in Poland. If money is spent in Poland not in Belarus, Polish NGOs are no different than the ‘Marriott Brigade’—Western experts who were coming to support Poland at the beginning of the 1990s residing and giving advice in Hotel Marriot.” Similarly, Fenrych (2008) is in the opinion that visits of Belarusian people in Poland do not translate into the visible changes.

Other Polish NGO activists, however, realize that political situation in Belarus might complicate successful implementation of a project. There is a high probability that majority of Belarusians who come to Poland are KGB employees (Piekło 2008). Katarzyna Bielawska (2008) from the Democratic Society East Foundation, is in the opinion that bringing a group of potential beneficiaries for training in Poland is more promising than sending money or sending
Polish experts there. Training meetings, in her opinion, expose citizens of authoritarian countries to the idea of democracy. Many Belarusians know little about life in the democratic neighboring countries and once they see how much better off people are living in Poland, they may be encouraged to act as advocates of pro-democratic changes Belarus.

Similarly, the Casimir Pulaski Foundation, represents the type of organization that limits its activities vis-à-vis Belarus to those being organized in Poland—organizing study tours, direct training or workshops. However, organization of activities in Poland is not an easy undertaking, because sometimes those Belarusians who come or plan to come for events organized by the Polish NGOs are very often repressed, threatened or turned back from the border by Belarusian border guards. There were examples that some participants in events organized in Poland did want to come back home, because these individuals found out from the family members that the Belarusian police officers were waiting for him in front of his house.

Taking into account pluses and minuses of activities organized in Poland and abroad, Polish NGOs do not restrict their projects to only one form of communication. Very often within a given project there is a marriage of methods, for example foreign civil society groups come for training/conference/workshop to Poland, and/or organize activities in their home countries.
Assessing the Results of Polish NGOs’ Activities

Representatives of Polish NGOs claim that much has been achieved with the Polish NGOs’ assistance. However, it is still difficult to assess the impact of these efforts on democratic changes in the recipient countries. In interviews, the representatives of Polish NGOs tended to divide the results into the tangible (measureable) results, and results that are difficult to gauge.

While evaluating the short-term results, Polish NGOs look for results of their cross-border activities that are specific, straightforward and easy to measure. Among the “touchable results” Polish NGOs activists mentioned are the visible products of projects, such as a parents’ council established in the school, a customer service unit created in the city hall, European School Clubs established, and the like (Stanowski 2005a). The NGOs report some specific areas in which something has changed in a particular school, the village, town or city. For example, Paweł Bobołowicz of the Foundation for Young Democracy says that, based on his observation and opinions gathered from Ukrainian partners, the quality management ISO 9001 project in Berdyansk city, located on the Sea of Azov in Eastern Ukraine, in which the foundation was involved, has contributed to the better cooperation between civil servants and people. The project upgraded procedures of the city and made public institutions more accessible to citizens through, for example, the installation of a stand with informative handouts in the city hall. Improved communication of public administration with citizens was one of the activities on the way to receiving the certificate of quality by the city hall, and changed the view of citizens about the governmental entities (Bobołowicz 2008).

Using PAUCI as a case, the table below shows other examples of how the Polish NGOs tend to report the results of their projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Project</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skills for the Future: The School of Ukrainian Young Government Leaders (2001, 2003, 2004 editions)</td>
<td>Improving the knowledge and skills of young Ukrainian Deputies serving on local councils by transferring Polish experience in selected aspects of local governance.</td>
<td>Work in groups according to the specific interests of the participants: education, social policy, communal property, service management and local finances and economic transformation of rural areas. Workshops in Ukraine, study tours to Poland, and final conference.</td>
<td>The program created a network of 150 young Ukrainian Local Council Deputies who have been trained in Poland and maintain close relationships with Polish counterparts sharing information, ideas and practices. Statutes were created for several Ukrainian cities. Creation of local development agencies based on Polish models in the Ukrainian cities of Kobelyaki and Izaslav. The preparation of local development strategies for several cities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referendum Issues and Public Awareness of the European Union</td>
<td>The program shared Poland’s experience with the European Union referendum process and aimed to support the pro-European community in Volyn Oblast in Ukraine. The program was implemented by the Polish NGO the Foundation Nowy Staw and the Ukrainian Center for Public Youth Organizations of Volyn Oblast.</td>
<td>Twenty-five young Ukrainians from Volyn, including fifteen journalists, participated in a four-day workshop and six-day study visit to Poland during the Polish EU referendum. Participants observed how advocates and opponents of Polish EU accession ran their campaigns and participants discussed how to improve debate about the EU in Ukraine.</td>
<td>Volyn regional media produced over 80 EU-referendum-related articles. Participants initiated new Polish-Ukrainian cross-border programs and launched a new regional cooperation website <a href="http://www.euromixbug.org">www.euromixbug.org</a> Volyn residents created several secondary school-based European Clubs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging Pro-European Values through Social and Youth Policy Awareness</td>
<td>The project introduced over 170 local government officials from Donetsk, Khar’iv, and Sumi Oblasts to European standards for social and youth policies. The program was implemented by the Institute of Public Information (Gdynia, Poland) and The Youth Debate Center (Donetsk, Ukraine).</td>
<td>The study visits included seminars on EU standards for social and youth policies, the EU legislative process, the Copenhagen Criteria and the Polish model of adapting EU standards on a local level. Ukrainian officials met with a number of officials from Gdansk and Sopot in Poland.</td>
<td>The project created a group of pro-European professionals in Eastern Ukraine willing to introduce reform at the local level.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on PAUCI (2005)
Whereas it is difficult to measure effects of democracy assistance on democratization in general, it is possible to observe how the non-governmental organizations develop. In the opinion of Grzegorz Gromadzki and Agnieszka Komorowska (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation, the NGOs in Ukraine are “growing as mushrooms after the rain;” and Polish NGOs have actively been working on establishment of some of them. Some projects become successful to such extent that they become institutionalized and registered as organizations. Bobołowicz (2008) gave two examples of organizations, such as the Polish-Ukrainian Education Center, and the Association of Quality Cities in Ukraine—that first originated as projects—to be established in the future.

On one hand, some results can be measured immediately. On the other hand, the results can be assessed, in fact, from the perspective of ten years, especially if the activities within the project focused on the spreading information, establishing contacts, offering scholarships, internships, training, and the like. In such instances, the common practice among Polish NGOs is to base their decision about the continuation or termination of projects on surveys conducted among participants of specific projects.

Recently, ten years of work of Polish organizations in Crimea have passed; and some evaluations of the impact of Polish activities in this region can be made. Polish NGOs’ work in Crimea was a long gradual process starting with helping Tatars to fight for their self-identification and showing these Tatars the example of the Polish Kashubians.\textsuperscript{10} Later, Tatars received financial assistance for the construction of school buildings; and finally there was a training period for teachers, as well as local authorities, to explain how these schools should operate within the region. During several years, in close cooperation with the Crimean Tatars,

\textsuperscript{10} Kashubians were able to preserve their unique language and culture in Poland. Today, in some towns and villages in northern Poland, Kashubian is the second language spoken after Polish and it enjoys legal protection in Poland as an official regional language. It is the only tongue in Poland with this status. It was granted by an act of the Polish Parliament. This language is taught in regional schools and many geographical names of Kashubia (North-Central Poland) are written in this language. More about Kashubians see \url{http://kaszubia.com/}
several schools providing education in the Tartar language were built (Bielawska 2008). The Crimean Tatars strengthened their national identity, cultural and historical heritage that were repressed for such a long time. Today, if the Crimea Tatars have some idea for a project, they just contact Polish NGOs. Also, there are many Tatar students at Polish universities who are coming back to the Crimea and “let’s wait few years and see how they will make use of their knowledge and experience” (Kujawska 2008).

Scholars suggest that the results of democratizing projects can be captured not only by searching for the effects on institutions, or on society at large, but also by searching for the changes in people’s lives (Quigley 1997; Richter 2002, 56). In other words, it is easier to observe the impact on the particular participants (Pisarski 2008). Polish NGOs’ activists give numerous examples of changes in their Belarusian or Ukrainian partners’ behaviors. Jan Fedirko (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy says that the fact some Ukrainian civil society activists with whom the Foundation used to cooperate decided to join the group of Yushchenko’s supporters before the Orange Revolution, and later held high official positions in the government, can be attributed to the Foundation activity (Fedirko 2008).

Taking into account the Belarusian suppressed civil society, one could say that there is no visible progress in changing Belarusians’ behaviors. However, the fact that Polish NGOs are finding ways to maintain contact with Belarusian groups that want their country to be free, as well as the fact that the Poles and Belarusians work together under various projects show that something is changing, in the opinion of Marta Pejda (2008) from the Zagranica Group. Moreover, she argues that whereas the impact on democratization is harder to prove, because time-consuming investments and results are difficult to assess right now, it is easier to
demonstrate certain civil society groups that were exposed to new ideas and approaches through the participation in projects.

Indeed, as Marta Pejda (2008) suggests, Polish civil society activists are able to trace the link between their assistance and a change in the specific civil society groups in Belarus or Ukraine. There are some examples of journalists who after training, visits to Poland, and close cooperation with Polish journalists, have started to write articles about local issues (Bielawska 2008). Also, people who participated in FED’s civic education projects at school in Ukraine became pro-democratic activists and hold high positions in the government in Ukraine (Kujawska 2008). However, young people who participate in youth exchange programs, scholarships, and internships are especially receptive to Polish NGOs’ activities.

According to Jan Piekło (2008), the project RAZOM, which is directed to young people, shows amazing effects. This initiative helps fight negative stereotypes, and shapes the open, tolerant, democratic attitudes of the younger generation of the Poles and Ukrainians. For the success of this initiative speaks also the fact that RAZOM is positively evaluated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and continues to be funded by the MFA every year, in the opinion of Piekło (2008). Moreover, there is an interest in giving this initiative a more institutionalized character. There are talks and initial plans with the Germans to join this project and make it a tripartite Polish-Ukrainian-German exchange program.

It might take longer to wait for the visible results, but it might be more promising to invest simply in people. Thus, rather than targeting the opposition in Belarus, the majority of Polish NGOs aim to invest in people, influence their behaviors and opinions. An important objective is to show to post-communist societies that, in their struggle for a democratic state, other methods can be used in order to bring about the desired change. In the opinion of Urszula
Sobiecka (2008) from the Polish-American Fulbright Commission, the Lane Kirkland program, which each year attracts a new group of young scholarship recipients from the post-communist countries serves this purpose. The program demonstrates a strong impact on people from post-communist countries, which can be assessed by participants’ actions and efforts to make changes in their own countries. About 50 percent of participants from the post-communist countries who receive scholarships represent academia. Upon their return home, they write and publish, based on the experience they have gained during their stay on scholarship in Poland.

The Polish American Fulbright Commission found a way to stay in touch with participants of the Lane Kirkland program, which allows the organization to have updated information about their situations. There are conferences organized every three years for all current and past participants. During these meetings, the scholars have a chance to interact and complete surveys in which respondents are asked about their current occupations and career developments since the end of the program (Sobiecka 2008). In the opinion of Dąbrowski (2008) from the College of Eastern Europe in Wroclaw, there is a huge potential in education programs in Poland – internships, scholarships, and schools; and there are plans to create an association of these people and to provide a similar follow-up mechanism that would allow Polish organizers to monitor the development of participants, or for the participants to contact each other.

For the effectiveness of educational programs speaks the fact that there are some scholarship recipients and participants in exchange programs and internships who actively work on pro-democratic initiatives upon their return to a home country, like one of the residents of Berdyansk city in Ukraine. During the 2001-2002 Lane Kirkland scholarship program, she chose to study thoroughly the topic of decentralization and local governance; and she established many contacts with Polish NGOs which had an experience in this area (Sobiecka 2008). Upon her
return to her home city of Berdyansk, she undertook many initiatives to make Polish and Ukrainian NGOs, as well as local authorities interested in the topic of implementation of the quality management system ISO 9001 in Berdyansk. She also established later an organization named the European Road that aimed at promotion of knowledge about the European Union. This organization, together with others in Ukraine, organized the European Day in Berdyansk’s schools.

Opinions of Ukrainian or Belarusian participants who were exposed to new ideas and approaches through educational programs also speak for the way in which involvement in exchange programs, scholarships, or internships affected individuals’ lives. One young participant, Lyudmila Kuzminova, today Chief of the Department for the Youth Policy of the Donetsk Oblast State Administration, said: “the main thing that I realize is not to be passive but to act, and that we have many things to learn. The most impressive thing was that Polish local government focuses on the protection of every person in the region” (PAUCI 2005). Maria Shibneva, from Ternopil, who took part in program Young Ukrainian Lawyers Intern in Polish Business, said: “this one-month internship contributed a lot to my professional growth and improvement. I attended a program at the School of Polish and European law where I learned about Poland’s system of practical legal implementation” (PAUCI 2005).

Most representatives of Polish NGOs interviewed for this study believe that without Polish NGOs’ work with particular Ukrainian groups, such as students, teachers and civil society organizations, the Orange Revolution would have been less likely to occur. Polish NGOs could not predict the moment of the revolution, but knew that pro-democratic forces with which they had contacts in Ukraine sooner or later would speak up. The real breakthrough and beginning of all changes was Pora—which activated and mobilized young people, without whom the Orange
Revolution would not have been possible. By observing the actions of Pora, Fedirko (2008) thinks that one could have expected that some changes will come, but that these changes would be in form of the Orange Revolution, one could not. Probably, in order to assess the pre-revolutionary engagement of Polish NGOs, it would be instructive to trace links between members of Pora and Polish NGOs.

Taking into account the experience with the Orange Revolution, it became clear that it is necessary to strengthen contacts not only political, but above all, interpersonal: “through the strengthening of contacts we show what democracy is” (Boratyński 2005). In the Orange Revolution participated people who had the chance to have such contact. All efforts taken by Polish people during a ten-year-period prior to the Orange Revolution contributed to some extent to the changes in Ukraine. Discussions about freedom and patriotism among Ukrainian and Polish intellectuals, such as Bogusia Berdychowska, or Jerzy Giedroyc, facilitated efforts of Polish NGOs (Kazanecki 2008). However, just like the assessment whether Polish NGOs’ actions contribute to the democratization in the recipient country, it is difficult to evaluate definitively which factor had the effect on the Orange Revolution. Probably one single factor would not make an effect, but rather many different factors taken together: “the activities of all NGOs have some degree of impact on what happened in 2004 in Ukraine, but it is hard to tell for sure” (Dymek 2008). However, what has been the most important is that “we [Polish NGOs] in our small scale create an environment from which others can learn, if they want” (Michałowski 2005).

In the evaluation of the Polish NGOs’ efforts, one should also remember, as many interviewees pointed out, that the opportunities that Polish NGOs give within projects also depend on the recipients themselves, i.e. experiences they gain, which circles they represent and
also from which country they come (Sobiecka 2008). In the opinion of Sobiecka (2008) one can observe that the same opportunity may be differently used by Ukrainian and Belarusian participants of the Lane Kirkland scholarship program. For example, Ukrainians finish their studies in Poland and defend their theses or dissertations successfully, and after individuals’ returning to their home country one can observe the rapid growth in their career path within a short period. A different case involves Belarusians who postpone their graduation day. After coming back to their country, they hide the fact that they participated in this scholarship program, because there are negative articles in the press that the Kirkland Program is training members of the Belarusian opposition. Thus, in contrast to Ukrainians, the participation in the program harms Belarusians’ careers, and about ten percent of Belarusian participants in the program decide to stay in Poland (Sobiecka 2008).

More often it happens that Ukrainians come with the initiative first; they learn very fast, and when project ends they try to organize similar initiatives in other places of Ukraine, as Aleksandra Kujawska (2008) from the FED reports. For example, Ukrainian teachers at first were participating in anti-corruption campaigns for teachers in Poland; and then they did the same in Ukraine (Kujawska 2008). Moreover, as Paweł Kazanecki (2008) from the EEDC notes, in Ukraine activities proceed faster than in Belarus; and the results of some projects are visible after two months in Ukraine, but in Belarus—after two years.

Finally, there is a significant divergence in Ukrainians’ and Belarusians’ mentalities, which explains why projects in Ukraine have been producing more substantial results. As Kazanecki (2008) said: “Belarusian society is in despair—only a minority of Belarusians support Polish efforts; they do not know which way they want to go, and even a democratic opposition sometimes is inconsistent in its behavior. Therefore, it has been difficult to work there.” Despite
all efforts, Kazanecki (2008) after fifteen years of activity has a sense of failure in Belarus, because there are effects that are difficult to be gauged. It is like "tilting at windmills." He would be more satisfied with the results, if he saw Belarusian leaders of opposition groups understanding their actions against the Belarusian government better. He criticizes the Belarusian opposition for passiveness and indecisiveness. In his opinion, the opposition forces are weak, threatened, and not ready to take responsibility for their actions.

At the same time, Kazanecki (2008) reminds that before the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, it also was difficult for the EEDC to work; and today, Ukraine is blooming, when it comes to the development of civil society. Thus, he is in the opinion that if both parties have a good faith in the success of cooperation, and if one maintains a consistent sequence of certain actions aimed at a specific group in one area, sooner or later the progress must be visible.

When asked about the choice of actions, all representatives of Polish organizations interviewed for this study, consider their actions to be important; and they carry out projects in areas which are perceived by the recipient groups as good for the local community and which tackle specific problems. A growing number of projects that emerge in order to tackle a specific problem and which provide concrete ways to address these problems contribute to the success of the collaboration of Polish and foreign partners in recent years.

Finally, Rafał Dymek (2008) from the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation said that Polish NGOs are aware that democratization is a process which in certain areas must go simultaneously: “it is like a pyramid—there cannot be a single thin foundation because it will collapse.” Thus, even though Polish NGOs take different approaches and at the first sight, their actions might not have a direct connection with democratization in the recipient countries, all Polish NGOs strive to achieve this goal; they just do not use the same means, as Dymek (2008)
argues. It is difficult to say which activities are more effective, because each of them in some way contributes to democratization. The projects targeting the media can be important, because media have impact on public opinion and are influential; but it is pointless to say that there are more or less important, because “it is like trying to decide what is more important brain or stomach –without each man cannot live” (Dymek 2008). All interviewees also agreed that they take an action not only because they believe that it is useful and has a positive effect on local community in the recipient country, but organizations also are more likely to focus on activities at which they are good and in which they specialize.

Advantages of Polish NGOs’ in Assisting Democracy

This section presents the possible reasons why Polish NGOs, with their cross-border work, can have a potential to play an important role in democratic diffusion to neighboring states. The most common advantage is that Polish NGOs are more likely to be familiar with local groups as well as the situation on the ground and how it is developing. As expressed by Grzegorz Gromadzki and Agnieszka Komorowska (2008) from the Stefan Batory Foundation: “The Poles have a better understanding of what is happening in Eastern Europe. It is just easier for Poland than for the Western countries to understand post-communist countries’ affairs, and it is easier to work in these countries because of close cultural and historical links.” Because of this better understanding of the internal conditions, norms and political situation, neighboring Poland has a chance to be more successful in democracy assistance than Western actors. Arkadiusz Goliński from DMK adds that historically Poland has always been the bridge between the East and the West and that today Polish NGOs, with their assistance, may perform this function pretty well.
It is natural that the Poles have more knowledge about Ukraine and Belarus, just as the Portuguese know more about Morocco or Algeria (Bobiński 2008). Such factors as cultural, historical, and geographic proximity always give a higher probability that someone from Poland would be an expert in the region. Polish people are not experts in Latin American issues, because there is no demand for such expertise. Many Polish NGO activists have Belarusian or Ukrainian roots, or are fascinated with the country (Stanowski 2005a). Przemysław Fenrych (2008) from FSLD, however, avoids stating that Poland has a greater knowledge about the East, but would say that because of the historical past and the culture that Poland shares with its neighbors, it is easier to work there.

Polish NGOs’ activists feel more experienced, because they also travel to the East as Aleksandra Kujawska (2008) from FED noted. On the other hand, the Poles travel there, because they feel comfort when traveling to other post-communist countries because of the absence of language and cultural barriers—an important advantage over other assistance providers (Bobiński 2008). However, often Westerners who are interested in the region travel there and acquire the same knowledge, because—as stated by Artur Radziwiłł (2008) from CASE—“the geographical proximity does not give you the right to know, you have to engage yourself in order to know.”

Poland’s knowledge about the East has even grown since the collapse of communism, and this understanding is best seen among young people. It also has become popular to study Eastern European matters, and this trend was already visible before the Orange Revolution (Michałowski 2005). There are multiple centers that educate about Eastern issues in Poznan, Warsaw, Wroclaw and in other academic cities. This program offers interdisciplinary education about countries from the territory of the former Soviet Union. Programs combine different
disciplines, such as political science, history, economics, anthropology, and philology. From the Center for East European Studies at Warsaw University led by Professor Jan Malicki, for example, have emerged many prominent figures that help shape, in direct and indirect ways, foreign policy today.\textsuperscript{11} In contrast, in Western Europe, especially in Germany, which used to have many experts on East European issues, there is an observable retreat in the interest in Eastern matters indicated by the closure of many departments and institutes at the universities that were once centers of Eastern European knowledge (Kazanecki 2008).\textsuperscript{12}

Another major answer to the question about the effectiveness of Polish democracy assistance was that Poland, with its outreach experience with post-communist transformation, can serve as a relevant example to the Eastern European neighbors that shared a common past—dominance by the Soviet Union—and today want to go the same way as Poland. Thus, Poland may be better at sharing with its experience with democracy and free-market reforms than other model examples such as Switzerland. However, more importantly, as Rafal Dymek (2008) from the Polish Robert Schuman Foundation expressed, “it is not the model that is important but the road itself; and Polish experience with some more and less successful aspects of transformation can be very helpful.” Moreover, the geographical and cultural closeness facilities certain activities, such as cross-border cooperation or exchange programs which can serve as a faster and easier conduit of sharing Polish experience (Radziwiłł 2008).

Another factor contributing to the effectiveness of Polish democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine in the opinion of Polish NGOs is a language. Polish assistance providers

\textsuperscript{11} Jan Malicki is historian and director of Centre for East European Studies at University of Warsaw. Between 1981 and 1985 he was participant and organizer of several underground initiatives, in 1985 trialed and sentenced as political prisoner. For more about the center and its educational activities see http://www.studium.uw.edu.pl/?id=11&lang=en

\textsuperscript{12} The situation of Eastern European Studies also is described in the report available at http://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/coe21/publish/no7/05Bremer.pdf
find few language barriers—the similarity between the Slavic languages makes communication easy. Even if the Poles do not know these languages, these aid providers can communicate with Belarusian and Ukrainian partners. It is natural that during the meetings between the Poles and Ukrainians, participants speak in their own languages, and everybody understands one another (Stanowski 2005a). In the case of Belarusian partners, many Polish partners can still communicate in Russian. As Katarzyna Morawska (2008) from the FSLD said, “the only positive aspect of the Soviet Union is that the whole region speaks Russian, although it has been changing in countries like Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan.” There also is a renaissance of Russian language in Poland, and many young people again want to learn this language.13

Moreover, many Polish NGOs hire employees who speak many languages—Ukrainian, Tatar, Russian, German, Belarusian, Estonian, and Lithuanian—making communication even easier. Language skills are very important if an organization wants to reach small local civil society groups and a native speaker is in a better position to recognize if a partner is reliable (Goliński 2008). In addition to language itself, very important in mutual relations is also the communication style. The style people from the West are using is very different from that of Eastern people; this might impede communication (Stanowski 2005a). A use of translator in the conversation only hinders contact, because instead of listening to the partner one focuses on what a translator is saying; therefore there is nothing more important than direct contact between people (Michałowski 2005).

Polish NGO representatives also frequently mentioned in interviews that Polish aid providers have the advantage over Western donors with their understanding of political reality as well as social norms and practices that exist in the local society. Having a more detailed, nuanced knowledge about the local situation in the Eastern European countries that result from shared

---

13 See also Stemplowski (2001).
post-communist conditions, Polish NGOs are more likely to know how to act in order to achieve planned results. In order to bolster this argument, Paweł Bobołowicz (2008) from the Foundation for Young Democracy gave an example that because of having problems with project implementation in an Eastern region of Ukraine, the Foundation decided to contact local authorities there in order to get support: “because we knew that mayor of the city in the eastern part of Ukraine is treated like a tsar, we contacted him and he said to the Ukrainian people involved in a project that if anybody will create obstacles during the project implementation, he or she will be dismissed. In this way through an undemocratic tactic we were able to realize a democratic project.”

Having the experience of underground work, Polish NGOs are also better equipped to work in Belarus and to deal with obstacles from the Belarusian regime. Some leaders of Polish NGOs mentioned during interviews that because they were a part of opposition forces in Poland not such a long time ago, none of the Lukashenko regime’s techniques of repression and KGB provocations will discourage these Polish activists from working in Belarus. Moreover, some interviewees for this study point out that an important factor in providing democracy assistance to authoritarian countries is to know people; and Western donors might do not have access to such people. One of the representatives of Polish NGOs working in Belarus says that “five to six employees were refused an entry to Belarus, but still money is being delivered, workshops are being organized in Belarus by means of reliable partners and channels that were established over many years.” He says that he personally knows about 15,000 people; thus, even if one person cannot perform work or is not able to leave Belarus, others will do it.

Moreover, Polish NGO assistance providers are of the opinion that the fact that they are more forgiving when it comes to formal issues is also an asset in dealing with partners from the
authoritarian or democratizing countries. Western donors “are very much concerned about getting invoices, receipts, and do not understand problems with bank transfers, and other issues that arise due to the situation in which recipient organizations operate. Sometimes it negatively influences their decision to finish project” (Bielawska 2008). Similarly, Goliński (2008) from the DMK put it that Western democracy aid providers cannot do one project in two months due to their pragmatism, and careful structuring and systematic planning of each step of their activity; “but sometimes things simply cannot be achieved in the desired manner and pace.”

All representatives of Polish NGOs interviewed agree that their activities are important, because Polish government officials act sometimes too emotionally toward Belarus by threatening, for example, sanctions, and the NGOs’ activities also complement the Polish Governments’ assistance methods (Pisarski 2008). In fact, Polish NGOs make the Polish Government’s program possible, in the opinion of Magdalena Dębikowska (2008) from the EEDC. Polish NGOs work pretty well and correspond with Jan Nowak-Jeziorański words:

The Treaty could be signed within a few minutes; changes in the mentality shaped through centuries by historical experience cannot be done from day to day. This requires time and deliberate effort. It is the interest of the Polish state to support social initiatives, which aim at closer and mutual understanding between people. Only through direct knowledge of the Poles and Germans, Poles and Russians, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Czechs and Slovaks one can build a lasting foundation for the agreements concluded at the level of government.  

Polish NGOs’ activists argue that projects in which Western donors, like for example the Swedes, give money and the Poles provide their experience with local governance reform is more relevant, since a Swedish models are too complicated and not really applicable to the Ukrainian situation (Fenrych 2008). In Fenrych’s (2008) opinion “the creation of Polish-America-Ukraine Cooperation Initiative in which Americans gave money, Poles know-how,
evidenced that the US recognizes the cultural distance between the people of America and Ukraine and that people closer could do something in a more efficient way using foreign resources” (Fenrych 2008). Katarzyna Morawska (2008) from the FSLD is also of the opinion that Polish experience is more relevant and that cooperation of Western donors with Polish NGOs is for the benefit of each party. She gives an example of the USAID project, in which Polish NGOs were involved, for members of parliament in Armenia who wanted to arrange an office of expertise and analysis. The project was funded by the USAID; but a visit of Armenian politicians was organized to Poland, because such office existed and was well-developed in Poland and this model was better applicable than distant Western models. Another example was also the Dutch-Polish-Ukrainian project in the framework of Matra Program created by the Dutch MFA, which already has ended for Poland, because it is in the EU now. In this initiative, Poland served as regional expert and the Dutch provided money and the Netherlands’ example of governance (Morawska 2008).

Given the views of Polish NGOs officials on their cross-border work, the question remains what the others think about this type of assistance. In addition to links established with Polish NGOs in the past that today translate into the cooperation with Western donors in Belarus and Ukraine, NED representatives also give other reasons for the Endowment’s work with Polish NGOs in the post-communist region when asked why choose to cooperate with Polish NGOs. As Potocki (2008) pointed out, NED finds Polish organizations reliable partners because of their skills and knowledge. Similarly, in his earlier work, Carothers (1999, 267) mentions that some American democracy groups are also making use of third-country trainers and experts by sending Polish experts to Ukraine, Chileans to Bolivia, and South Africans to Malawi. He makes
a points that “the knowledge and skills they bring are often much more relevant than that of American experts” (Carothers 1999, 267).

According to NED’s representatives, every Polish organization with which NED is cooperating has its own niche and does specific work. For example, in Potocki’s opinion, Pawel Kazanecki’s group is expert at promoting local media—newspapers particularly—because his organization has assisted with this kind of activity in Poland and contributed to the successful development of independent media in Poland when it came above ground in 1989. Today, as Potocki emphasized in the interview, Kazanecki’s EEDC does this work in Belarus and Ukraine. Another example of Polish NGOs that do specific work is Krzysztof Stanowski’s FED. It was an expert at civic education in leadership training in Poland and today is transferring its knowledge to other post-communist countries. Regulski’s FSLD has been doing local government work.

Moreover, the importance of cooperation with Polish NGOs, especially in Belarus, stems from more practical reasons: because of the difficult political situation in Belarus, Potocki and Rohozinska cannot get visas; therefore they must go to Vilnius, Kiev, or Warsaw to meet with Belarusian groups. Polish NGOs have established long-term links with groups in Belarus, and many employees can still travel there. Polish NGOs serve as a conduit of information about the situation in Belarus, they also find new groups and recommend NED as a donor, or give small Belarusian organizations grants to help them grow. When Belarusian organizations are big enough, they can apply to NED for a direct grant.

When it comes to evaluation of Polish NGOs work, Potocki pointed out that it is a very difficult process. For example, in the case of newspapers, one can see improvement in quality or circulation; or other activities, one can see that some organizations managed to expand to cover different regions. Yet, sometimes, effects are less observable. It is hard to evaluate, for example,
whether some programs with youth groups have been successful or not, because in Belarus youth groups are particularly repressed by the government and many young people often get put in jail in Belarus. Therefore, it is almost impossible to say whether these projects contributed to the development of youth groups’ activities. Thus, as Potocki (2008) pointed out, it is also important to adopt in different fields different kinds of evaluation criteria. In general every Polish group is doing something unique; and NED decides to cooperate with them based on their skills and expertise that might be useful on the other side of the border:

We think that each Polish group brings special skills, they have a lot of experience, including that transition experience of doing something first in the underground and then in an open and legal way…Poland has a unique comparative advantage in different things: independent media, local government, and think tanks …. (Potocki 2008).

When asked whether NED finds Polish NGOs to have greater expertise in civil society assistance in contrast to other organizations in CEE, Potocki would rather avoid saying that Poland is any better in civil society assistance. Potocki suggested that Polish NGOs are more active in civil society assistance, because Poland had a much longer underground period, a much bigger underground and much more successful transition than most other countries. Moreover, Poland has a particularly strong number of models for successful transformations, such as local government, civic education, and local press. The school reforms in civic education work have been done better in Poland than anywhere else in CEE. Moreover, the local government in Poland serves as a model in the region; local independent press is also success story. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania have other success stories. Civil society, in terms of democracy building, is very strong in Slovakia because “they had Meciar during the 1990s and Slovak NGOs had to be political for a much longer time than in Poland,” in the opinion of Potocki (2008).
Polish expertise in the fields mentioned above is reflected in the NED’s cross-border projects with Polish NGOs in Belarus and Ukraine. Almost 70 percent of NED’s funding for Polish NGOs’ projects in Belarus is spent on the development of media and publishing, while about 23 percent is spent on democratic education in Belarus.\(^{15}\) Similarly to the cross-border projects in Belarus, Ukrainian projects implemented by Polish NGOs also have focused on independent media and democratic education. However, there are additionally some Ukrainian projects that focus on the local government reforms, specifically the improvement of transparency by the introduction of anti-corruption programs. Cross-border projects with Polish NGOs aimed at the development of the Ukrainian third sector have focused on training seminars for local representatives of NGOs at the district levels in Ukraine (especially from the central and eastern regions) and workshops for local youth organization leaders.\(^{16}\)

Of NED’s other cross-border projects in the post-communist region, implemented by Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian partners, the dominant emphasis is on undertakings directed towards the region in general (in which Ukraine and Belarus only are two of the recipients). The Czech organization, The People in Need Foundation, is a pioneer in this type of activity. Since 1998, the foundation has been offering training, study tours, material support and networking activities for democracy to groups of journalists, economists, and political science students in the former Soviet Union. Lithuanian organizations, however, implemented projects that aimed at supporting an independent radio station, assisting local NGOs and independent newspapers and facilitating the activities of local government officials from democratizing countries through

\(^{15}\) Data on NED cross-border projects in Belarus implemented by Polish NGOs goes back to 1993; however the author obtained detailed description of the projects only for those projects funded between from 2000 to 2007. The information refers to Belarusian projects sensu stricto only, as well as to projects directed toward the whole post-communist region, in which Belarus has been one of the targeted countries.

\(^{16}\) Cross-border projects directed toward Ukraine dominate the NED assistance to Polish NGOs in terms of monies spent—55 percent of total grants for Polish NGOs between 1993 and 2007.
public meetings, training workshops, roundtables, and study visits to Lithuania. Slovak organizations seem to have been specializing in election-monitoring projects. These projects focused on strengthening domestic media monitoring programs prior to key elections, development of media reform strategies, and facilitating networking among election-monitoring NGOs from Eastern Europe and Eurasia. In particular, one of the Slovak organizations, the Pontis Foundation, aimed to strengthen a voter education and mobilization campaign prior to the summer 2006 presidential elections in Belarus by organizing an informal coalition of Belarusian NGOs and think tanks to analyze public opinion polls in order to craft an effective “get-out-the-vote” campaign.  

As compared to other CEE actors with which Polish NGOs cooperate, there is one more thing that Potocki and Rohozinska find unique about Polish NGOs’ work and a kind of phenomenon in the whole CEE. Poland is the only country from CEE where there are strong NGOs doing cross-border work that are not only based in the capital city, Warsaw, but also in other regions of Poland. In terms of NGOs implementing projects abroad, there is a network in Szczecin, Lublin, Wroclaw, Gdansk and Krakow. In Czech Republic, there are groups based in Prague (there is one based in Brno); in Slovakia there are NGOs based just in Bratislava, and in Lithuania there are few groups based in Kaunas, but the majority is in Vilnius (Potocki 2008). Rohozinska (2008) thinks that since regions in Poland are diverse themselves, regional NGOs can share their knowledge with different models of the same reform, and thus they can demonstrate that there is a “local way of doing reform; there is no cookie-cutter formula.

Finally, it becomes clear to anyone who spends a significant amount of time with representatives of Polish NGOs that these are energetic people who know a lot about the region.

---

17 Based on the data on NED cross-border projects with the CEE countries in Belarus and Ukraine obtained during the interview with Potocki and Rohozinska.
A lot of good will, enthusiasm and interest in the East is another advantage of Polish NGOs. Also, as Kazanecki from EEDC noted, the driving force for some of the Polish NGO activists is their personal commitment; for some of them have Belarusian or Ukrainian roots.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that whereas Polish NGOs also offer grants and establish organizations just like Western donors, the primary method of their democracy assistance to recipient countries is based on the partnership with civil society groups in these countries. Cross-border work is what dominates and defines Polish democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine. The study has evaluated Polish democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine in terms of its potential to diffuse democratic ideas and practices to recipient countries. The analysis has put Polish NGOs cross-border in the light of common critical evaluations of Western democracy assistance found in the literature. Unlike pitfalls found in Western democracy assistance practices, Polish NGOs’ projects engage civil society groups across the border. There is always a partner from the recipient country in a project—such partnership increases the likelihood that programs will be well-tailored to the local context of the recipient country. Furthermore, Polish NGOs’ cross-border work has a capability of fostering links between civil society groups by introducing other groups into projects, thus contributing to the networking and geographical expansion of the sector in the recipient country. The study also shows that Polish NGOs projects pursue long-term relations, and do not equate civil society with NGOs. Such features of cross-border work give more chance for civil society in Belarus and Ukraine to be sustained, and also
make diffusion of democratic ideas and practices to groups in Belarus and Ukraine more likely to happen.

Moreover, the study shows that strategies of reaching and working with civil society groups vary in authoritarian countries, like Belarus, versus those that are newly democratic states, like Ukraine. Such findings give a reason to argue that Polish NGOs cross-border projects have a high chance to succeed in diffusing democratic ideas and practices to Belarus and Ukraine (and more effectively, if these organizations avoid the mistakes of Western donors).

Although partnership is the main principle guiding cooperation of Polish NGOs with Belarusian and Ukrainian partners, Polish NGOs are divided on the issue whether activities within projects, such as workshops, conferences or training sessions, should take in Poland or in a recipient country.

The chapter further presents the results reported by Polish NGOs in their documents and interviews about cross-border projects. It shows that some results of cross-border activities are tangible and easy to measure and that NGOs can report some specific areas in which something has changed, for example in a particular school, the village, town or city. More frequently, however, it is difficult to gauge the tangible results, especially if the activities within the project focused on the establishing contacts, offering scholarships, internships, training, and so forth. Polish NGO activists point out that the success of civil society assistance should not only be measured in terms of organizational capacity but also in term of changes in behaviors of Belarusian and Ukrainian partners. This study shows that cross-border projects give a great opportunity for Belarusians and Ukrainians to interact and learn from the Poles.

Next, this analysis has presented opinion of Polish NGOs activists as to why Polish cross-border projects may play an important role in assisting democracy in Belarus and Ukraine.
Interviewees pointed out many advantages of Polish democracy assistance, such as: 1) better understanding of the internal conditions, norms and political situation in the recipient country; 2) Polish experience with political and economic transformation is more relevant for neighboring countries; 3) the geographical and cultural closeness facilitates certain activities that otherwise would not be possible; 4) Polish NGOs activities are more flexible in relation to changes; 5) Polish NGO have an ability to target civil society groups unreachable for other donors 6) enthusiasm and interest in the East of Polish NGOs activists who implement cross-border work.

In addition, this chapter presents views of representatives of National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the US organization, which provides financial support for Polish NGOs cross-border projects. NED finds Polish organizations reliable partners because of their 1) skills and knowledge (each Polish group with which NED is cooperating does specific work); 2) established links with Belarusian and Ukrainian partners and ability of reaching new civil society groups; 3) Poland has particularly strong number of models for successful transformations, sin areas such as local government, civic education, and local press; 4) Polish cross-border projects demonstrate that there is a local way of doing reform, and there is no cookie-cutter formula.

To sum, different modes of analysis—scholarly literature, as well as documents and opinions of Polish NGOs and Western donors—gave strong arguments and lead to the same conclusion as to why Polish NGOs have a potential to diffuse effectively democracy to neighboring countries and thus play an important role in the democratization of these countries.
CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation has taken a detailed look at the example of democracy assistance offered by young democracies, which has not been studied before. The study explored reasons for former recipients’—Polish governmental and non-governmental entities—engagement in democracy assistance and the cooperation between them and with Western donors. The investigation presented the Polish approach to democracy assistance and actors and factors that have shaped this attitude. Next, the study has explored the ways in which the Polish government and Polish NGOs engage in democracy assistance. Finally, this work has investigated the possible impact of Polish democracy assistance projects on civil society groups and on overall democracy diffusion in the post-communist region.

This chapter first presents findings from the Polish case and then assesses the implications of these findings for the fields of comparative politics and international relations, as well as for the practice of democracy assistance.

Findings from the Polish Case

The origins of Polish democracy assistance lie in the dissident movement, which emerged in the 1970s and 1980s. Without the actions of Solidarity activists and all who contributed to the
success of the movement, the remarkable growth of Polish non-governmental organizations as well as their involvement in democracy assistance would not have been possible. In almost every one of the Polish organizations engaged in democracy assistance, there can be found some traces of the Solidarity tradition; for many Polish NGOs involved in this cooperation were established by individuals associated either with underground movement in Poland in the 1980s, or later with the system change. Inspired by the Solidarity spirit, those individuals found it natural and important for Polish NGOs to form partnerships with civil society groups abroad and to help them in their struggle to democracy.

Polish NGOs played an important role during the transformation period—they became the first to pick up important social issues during the transformation; built bridges between the state and public sector; supported many political, social and economic reforms; and lobbied the government to introduce institutional changes in the third sector. Having experience with activities helping Poland to move toward democracy and then toward the consolidation of democracy, Polish NGOs developed the desire to share this experience beyond Poland’s border. They later played an important role in lobbying the government to establish a governmental aid program.

This study demonstrates that Polish NGOs gave an impetus for the creation of the Polish Governmental aid program. Whereas the Polish Government’s involvement in aid provision also stems from Poland’s membership in international organizations, the choice to provide aid for democratizing purposes originated domestically. The Polish Government finds it important to engage in democracy assistance to Poland’s neighbors because of the belief that democracy is crucial for sustainable economic development of aid recipient countries. Another reason is that Poland received a significant contribution from the international community in the past, and it is
important to give something back. Finally, the Polish Government also engages in aid provision for political and strategic reasons. Democratization of neighboring states is perceived by Polish elites to safeguard Polish international and political interests because of the belief of these elites that Poland cannot be truly free and secure without democratic neighbors. Moreover, by helping other countries in the post-communist space, the Polish Government demonstrates that takes a leading initiative in making the Eastern border safe and democratic and thus strengthens Poland’s position in the European Union.

After examining the Polish Government’s approach to democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine, the analyst finds it difficult to tag Polish aid as belonging to one of two types of democracy assistance approaches—political or developmental. Instead, Polish programs present features of both approaches that respond to the different situation in each recipient country; and this is in fact a significant finding of this research.

The Polish Government’s and Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance in Belarus and Ukraine demonstrate that there are major differences in aid efforts in democratizing Ukraine and authoritarian Belarus. These divergences manifest themselves in approaches and strategies used to target civil society groups. In the case of Belarus, there is a focus on activities that promote independent culture and the Belarusian language, as well as initiatives aimed to activate civil society in Belarus. Cross-border projects have established a radio station, a television channel, and internet websites in order to provide access to credible information about Belarusian history, literature and the social and political situation in Belarus as well as about international events. Since Lukashenko became President and Belarus moved toward authoritarianism, projects in Belarus have changed from those directly fostering democracy in the country through mobilizing non-governmental organizations, to projects working for democratic change in an indirect way.
As the result of repression against Belarusian non-governmental organizations, Polish NGOs’ cross-border projects in Belarus are implemented with individuals—young people, teachers, parents in their local communities—as well as informal groups working underground. Many programs targeted at these groups aim to educate and activate them to be more socially responsible for their local community, region, and country.

Projects in Ukraine show more variety than Belarusian ones. The Polish Government-funded programs focus on the state’s capacity to enforce decisions associated with complex political (especially local governance building), economic and social reforms as well as on Ukraine’s integration with the European Union. In order to achieve these goals the Polish Government cooperates not only with Polish NGOs but also with local and central entities in Poland. However, Polish NGOs are still the major recipients of Polish Government funds. Although Polish NGOs’ projects in Ukraine have evolved from those aimed only at training people to participate in public life to projects focused on cooperation with Ukrainian local authorities, Ukrainian civil society actors are still major partners of Polish NGOs. Polish NGOs’ projects with Ukrainian partners deal with media development and training of journalists, as well as with civic education (activities aimed to teach citizens of recipient countries values, knowledge, and skills relating to democracy).

The ability of Polish NGOs to reach civil society groups, and the experience with this process, make Polish NGOs’ cross border activities important for Poland’s democracy assistance. Polish non-governmental circles also participate in debates over directions of aid, and these agencies are the major partners in implementation of Polish democracy assistance. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs delegates a considerable share of its funds to the post-
communist countries through Polish NGOs, and the largest amount of money goes to projects in Belarus and Ukraine.

This research also reveals many connections between Western donors and Polish NGOs that stem from links established during the time of communism. Poland was the largest recipient of American assistance from the CEE region. The most substantial help came from the United States Government and US private foundations and covered such areas as human rights protection, freedom of the press, and citizens’ participation. The bulk of funding to NGOs in Poland is granted by the National Endowment for Democracy, and this organization is today one of major donors to Polish NGOs’ cross-border projects. Since 1992, Polish NGOs have dominated the cross-border projects funded by NED, because leaders of some Polish NGOs fostered the idea of cooperation with other civil society groups in the region. Also, NED funds Polish organizations because of their skills and knowledge, successful transformations in areas of local government, civic education, and the local press, as well as because Polish cross-border projects demonstrate the appropriateness of adapting initiatives to different context.

This study demonstrates that critiques found in the literature against Western donors’ strategies to support civil society, do not apply to Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance. If mistakes made by Western donors contributed to the lessening or even lack of impact on civil society and democratization, the absence of these faults in Polish NGOs’ projects puts these organizations in a better light in terms of their potential to exert a positive influence. Examination of the Polish NGOs’ democracy assistance efforts shows that these organizations adapt their programs to political conditions, identify the strengths that Belarusians and Ukrainians already have, and combine these propensities with the donors’ skills and insights of Polish organizations. Polish NGOs’ activists do not believe in a donor-driven mentality; they
think that ideas should come from recipient groups and that majority of the resources must go to
the groups inside these countries.

Polish NGOs create micro-grant programs that support grassroots initiative and develop
local organizations. Moreover, the study has demonstrated that Polish NGOs do not perceive
NGOs as the only civil society assistance recipients. Polish agencies try to reach a wider
audience of civil society groups in the recipient countries and work on improving the capacity of
all forms of communication with those groups.

Finally, Polish NGOs look for long-term relationships with Belarusian and Ukrainian
partners, believing that these ties have a greater chance to contribute to the development of these
societies, and encourage networking and partnering both internally and externally. Polish NGOs’
projects engage civil society groups across the border. There is always a partner from the
recipient country in a project—such partnership increases the likelihood that programs will be
well-tailored to the local context of the recipient country. Moreover, civil society in Belarus and
Ukraine has more chance to be sustained through coalition networks with Polish NGOs, and thus
makes diffusion of democratic ideas and practices to groups in Belarus and Ukraine more likely
to happen.

Polish NGOs believe that because of the advantages of a regional actor—such as lack of
language and cultural barriers in communication; greater familiarity with local actors, and close
personal ties; a nuanced knowledge about the situation of local communities; understanding of
the internal conditions, norms and political situation that is more easily acquired; and enthusiasm
and a vested interest—neighboring democracies can be better democracy engineers than more
distant countries. Moreover, Polish NGO activists believe that through ability to form linkages
between civil society groups, interactions, and cooperation on an equal basis, Polish NGOs’
actions contribute to activization of societies in recipient countries and thus to changes in recipient countries. Polish NGOs are of the opinion that without their work with particular Ukrainian groups, such as students, teachers and civil society organizations, the Orange Revolution of 2004 in Ukraine would have been less likely to occur.

**Implications for Theory and Practice**

This dissertation makes some contributions to research on democracy assistance, which motivated questions addressed in this study. However, this dissertation also participates in important debates about democratization and democratic consolidation, the role of external actors in these processes, and regional diffusion of democracy.

The study has examined the Belarusian and Ukrainian cases, in order to understand how they fit into the theoretical constructs on democratization. The purpose of this analysis has been to investigate *if and how* understanding of Belarusian authoritarian restoration and Ukraine’s path toward democratic consolidation is reflected in Polish democracy assistance.

The analysis of Belarus demonstrates that this country is an authoritarian state, in which the political power is severely concentrated in hands of the President, and where there is no place for democratic institutions and or any political opposition. The Belarusian government uses indoctrination through media and the education system, constant surveillance, closure of Belarusian organizations, and harassment of civil society activists. Political and civil rights are highly abused.

Ukraine, however, presents itself as a post-communist country that has pursued a convoluted path toward democratic consolidation since the 2004, which marked the democratic
breakthrough. Prior to the Orange Revolution, Ukraine was considered to have a hybrid regime with growing concentration of power in the hands of the President (D’Anieri 2007b; Fritz 2007; Kuzio 2000; Levitsky and Way 2002; Nahylo 1999; Wilson 2006; Zimmer 2006). Today, the country displays many features of political and civil liberties, but given Linz and Stepan’s (1996), Diamond and Platter’s (2001), Przeworski’s (1991), O’Donnell’s (1988), and Schmitter’s (2005) conditions for democratic consolidation, Ukraine has encountered many problems with this process. Difficulties with commitment to democratic rules and adherence to democratic practices by elites, unconstitutional activities, lack of transparency during economic transition, unclear lines of accountability, rent seeking, an existence of oligarchs, and weakness of civil society vis-à-vis a government are some of Ukraine’s obstacles toward democratic consolidation. Ukraine’s problems with democratic consolidation also show that this process does not take place in stages. Instead, just as Linz and Stepan (1996, 7) claim, elite conflict, civil society activity, economic development, and new institution building are mutually dependent processes taking place simultaneously.

By examining differences between authoritarian and democratic countries, the study has revealed different democracy assistance needs of societies in authoritarian countries versus those societies of somewhat or newly democratic states. Those differences have been reflected in the Polish democracy assistance, and these diversities send an important message to practitioners. For example, if practitioners are working in an authoritarian country like Belarus, it might be more appropriate to target civil society and encourage overall social mobilization instead of focusing on developmental aid, since this type of support is usually channeled through governments of recipient countries. Whereas it is difficult, if not impossible, to cooperate with a government that is hostile to democracy, in the case of a country that is a new democracy, it may be suitable to
not only support civil society groups but also other entities. It is feasible to target the government in order to assist it building of democratic institutions; improve state capacity to implement political and economic reforms; and support political society (parties, lobbies, and the like).

Tailoring assistance to different political circumstances in recipient countries shows that the Polish approach to democracy assistance in general is in fact complex. Therefore, the study contributes to the democracy assistance literature, by defining a context-driven democracy assistance which gives priority to those kinds of aid that would produce the greatest results in a concrete situation and that could be tailored to the specific features of the situation in recipient countries. In other words, such an approach responds to challenges and opportunities for aid provision.

Another contribution to the theory and practice of democracy assistance is that civil society plays an important role both as a sender and as a recipient of democracy assistance. Whereas there is a significant amount of literature referring to non-governmental organizations being recipients of Western aid, the role of non-governmental organizations as transmitters of democracy assistance to other civil society groups across the border is a relatively new phenomenon. This study is the first attempt that investigates the efforts of non-governmental organizations in depth.

The study unveils a strong emphasis in Polish democracy assistance on civil society development, regardless the recipient country’s political situation. However, at the same time this research shows that Polish democracy assistance takes into account the different roles civil society plays within the context of an authoritarian regime and a new democracy. In order for civil society to play an important role in undermining an authoritarian regime and facilitating the establishment of democratic rule, it has to overcome certain obstacles. To initiate the transition to
democracy in Belarus, Polish NGO activists focus on the “education” of civil society activists about their role and responsibility for social and political actions, as well as about the democratic values and practices. Then, Polish NGOs emphasize activization of Belarusian society and cooperation between civil society groups to help them overcome passiveness and facilitate linkages. Later, these groups can organize themselves into a united opposition front that is able to mobilize the masses. As Ukraine’s Orange Revolution demonstrated, a civil society-based opposition was considered a real alternative to the regime, and the regime got the sense that the nation did not accept it and that people were ready to take action to fight for their freedom. Similarly in Belarus such a signal may facilitate the collapse of regime, in addition to other possible ways of bringing down authoritarianism.

The chapter about aid to Belarus shows that Polish groups are in many cases nurturing, the needs of civil society where its formation is impeded; thus the exposure of Belarusian civil society to external influences cannot be ignored and may be an important factor in building and strengthening civil society. Not only financial aid but also significant moral support to pro-democratic groups and close alliances with external actors are important for developing social capital and stimulating the growth of civil society-based opposition toward an authoritarian regime. Polish groups help create conduits for outside influences. The cooperation of Belarusian civil society groups with Polish NGOs demonstrates that a complete cut-off of civil society groups in an authoritarian country from external influence cannot be combated.

However, the study also shows that in case of an authoritarian country, it is important to make a distinction between civil and uncivil society, since some non-governmental organizations may be supported and financed by anti-democratic governments. Therefore, it also is crucial to recognize that civil society includes a range of people—women’s groups, young people,
teachers, and journalists that can mobilize a “popular upsurge” and delegitimize a regime or compel it to be more responsive to its citizens.

In order for civil society to contribute to the durability and quality of democracy, the case of Ukrainian civil society shows that it may be feasible to strengthen civil society’s role vis-à-vis the government, so that it counterweighs and disperses state power, and acts as a bridge between citizens and governments, as well as a watchdog for citizens interests. A strong, robust civil society that is capable of generating political alternatives is an important factor in solidifying democratic tendencies in the country, as scholars argue. Additionally, on the question of why projects regarding Ukrainian local governance are conducted in partnership with civil society organizations in Ukraine, Polish NGOs respond that such projects prepare Ukrainian organizations to constitute an important social control on processes that are taking place at the local administration level. Moreover, since non-governmental organizations act as advocates of the local community’s interests, such cooperation places civil society as a partner in resolving problems of successful democratic governance and thus may contribute to good, effective and responsive government.

Finally, Ukraine’s case shows clear geographical divisions with respect to democracy weaken the civil society’s overall role in this process. Instead of applying consociational strategies, Ukrainian leaders polarize society in order to use those divisions in their struggle for political power. Therefore, Polish NGO activists recognize that achieving a consensus among civil society groups and people regarding democracy in their country is an important challenge for Ukraine. Also according to the scholarly literature, one of the conditions for the success of democratic consolidation is when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate (Dahl 1997; Huntington 1991;
Inglehart 1988; Linz and Stepan 1996; O’Donnell 1988; Putnam 1983). To deal with this problem of civil society polarization, Polish organizations foster creation of networks between civil society groups in Ukraine through, for example, projects in which there are two Ukrainian partners – one from the West and another from the East.

The study found that civil society groups can be givers of aid, not just recipients. This dissertation unveils the origins, reasons and strategies of organizations from a relatively new democracy for engaging in democracy assistance. The model of cross-border cooperation between Polish civil society groups and Ukrainian or Belarusian counterparts originated in the Solidarity Movement; thus this approach may be viewed as a new legacy in the post-communist literature, in addition to well-known legacies of communism. Instances of such cooperation between civil society groups are found in other regions; and this study may provide an inspiration for the investigation of those collaborative works, in depth and for comparison.

Polish organizations engage in assisting civil society groups in other countries for moral reasons—to help other civil societies just as Polish civil society activists were helped to break communism down. Polish NGOs’ activists also had a need to share their experience from the Polish transformation with other countries. Polish NGOs have engaged in activities in Ukraine and Belarus, because there were needs that the Polish activists saw as well as requests for their experience and skills on the recipient side. Members of Polish organizations feel an obligation to help their counterparts across the border also for personal reasons—because activists have either Ukrainian or Belarusian roots or have family across the border; or simply to help a friend or to have a peaceful neighbor. Also, Polish NGOs perceive their engagement in democracy assistance as their contribution to meeting Poland’s foreign policy goals towards the state’s neighbors. These goals are: healing the wounds of the past between Poles and Ukrainians and Belarusians,
given the inglorious historical events between nations; increasing security in the neighborhood, given the strong belief of Polish elites that Polish democracy would not be secured if the state were not protected by democracies surrounding it; and finally raising Poland’s profile oin the international arena, especially in the European Union.

The Polish case shows that the role of nongovernmental organizations in democracy assistance may be important for the governments that want to engage into aid provision. The work with Polish NGOs is essential for the Polish Government, because the government is not able to reach and cooperate with civil society in recipient countries and is not authorized to send funds directly to these groups. The Polish NGOs provide the “added value” represented by their knowledge of specific developing countries’ realities, but more importantly, the ability to work with civil society groups in the experience of working for democracy. The ability of Polish NGOs to target civil societies and reach local communities is valuable, especially when authorities from the recipient countries are hostile to democracy.

Moreover, the investigation of the cooperation between governmental and nongovernmental entities demonstrates that Polish NGOs are regarded as consultants to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with respect to the foreign aid provision. The MFA takes into account the opinions of Polish NGOs regarding recipient countries of Polish Government aid, as well as targets and areas of support in these countries—e.g. civil society, media, local governments, and the like. Such consultations allow the MFA better to design its aid offer to a particular recipient country. Moreover, as subgrantees of Polish Governmental aid, Polish NGOs also are aware of drawbacks of the annual funding process, such as short-term funding or a long waiting period for funds; and therefore organizations actively participate in making this process more efficient, so that funds can be used in a fast manner.
The Polish organizations’ engagement in democracy assistance is important for the Polish authorities, but also to Western donors; for this record sends another message to foreign democracy assistance donors. As the Polish case shows, instead of providing direct grants to recipient countries, it might be more feasible for Western donors to take advantage of knowledge and skills of regional NGOs and finance their cross-border projects in the recipient countries. For donors interested in the post-communist region, for example, Polish non-governmental organizations’ engagement projects can be the channel through which the final beneficiaries in Belarus and Ukraine could be reached, as National Endowment for Democracy case shows. NED finds Polish organizations reliable partners because of their skills and knowledge, and because Polish NGOs were engaged in transformations that can be emulated by other countries in the region. As a result of such cooperation, NED became a major donor to civil society groups in the post-communist area.

The arguments and findings presented in this study have potential policy-making implications for donors like the European Union, for example. As presented in this study, the major problem is that the EU does not provide instruments adequate to deal with non-democratic neighbors, because its policies envision cooperation with the governments, rather than directing assistance at society. Whereas the EU’s approach has recently been changing, the importance of civil society is still not sufficiently taken into account by EU democracy assistance to Belarus and Ukraine. Thus, similarly to NED, the EU could develop long-term partnerships with local non-governmental organizations, thus making its assistance more relevant to the specific conditions of a recipient country, and making civil society a more important priority of its assistance.
Another important contribution of this study is that Polish NGOs’ engagement in democracy assistance shows that there might be another strategy of delivering democracy assistance, in addition to well-known strategies of direct grants or opening local organizations. This new strategy is based on assisting democracy through the collaborative work of actors across the border in the region, named by democracy assistance practitioners “cross-border work.” This study suggests that cross-border work as democracy assistance may complement other methods. Furthermore, this dissertation advances the new assumption that democracy assistance cross-border work is an explanation for the observable regional democratic diffusion.

There are some studies about the impact of transnational influences (Bunce and Wolchik 2006; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Smith et al. 1997, Tarrow 1998 and 2005), but no research describes and thoughtfully analyzes civil society assistance networks composed of civil society groups in neighboring states.

The demonstration of the merits of cross-border work allows the conclusion that this assistance has a potential to exert an influence on civil society groups and democracy diffusion. The aid has a potential to diffuse democratic ideas and behaviors to civil societies for several reasons. There is a great deal of evidence of avoiding the pitfalls of strategies employed by other donors, such as insufficiently taking into account the situation of the civil society groups in the recipient countries; neglecting local circumstances; short-term funding for big organizations instead of small local groups; equating civil society with non-governmental organizations; and failure to create networks among civil society groups in the country.

Cross-border cooperation engages civil society groups in neighboring states to take an active role in the implementation of projects. Moreover, such cooperation facilitates certain activities that otherwise would not be possible and allows for the flexibility and quick adaption
to the local context. Furthermore, longevity of cross-border cooperation increases the possibility of exerting influence on groups in the neighboring society. Finally, cross-border work has a capability of fostering links between civil society groups and contributing to the geographical expansion of the sector in the recipient country.

By demonstrating the democratizing potential of cross-border projects to exert an impact on civil society groups, this study shows that this form of democracy assistance may be an explanation for regional democracy diffusion, observed by international relations scholars, but not yet thoroughly explored. By addressing the active role of neighbors in democratic changes in the region, this research sheds new light on the concept of regional democratization through cross-border initiatives. This investigation also enhances understanding of the way in which the so-called “post-communist divide” between Central and Eastern European countries and post-Soviet states can be mitigated by CEE actors in the region. Democracy assistance undertaken by Polish NGOs might also be one of the explanations of recent mass mobilizations that have occurred in the post-communist region since 2000 as well as others to come. However, this impact of neighboring states on democratic changes in recipient countries requires further investigations.
REFERENCES

Interviews


Newspapers and Magazine Articles


**Fieldwork and Other Primary Materials**


http://wiadomosci.ngo.pl/wiadomosci/128473.html


http://www.cvk.gov.ua/pls/r001/webproc0r


http://www.cv.k.gov.ua/vnd2007/w6p001e.html

Central Election and National Referendum Commission of Belarus. 1995. 

Central Election and National Referendum Commission of Belarus. 2006. Message: Election of 
the President of the Republic of Belarus 19 March 2006. 


http://www.nmnby.org/pub/0802/18m.html

Cieszkowski, Andrzej. 2007. Between East and West—the Role of Poland in the European 
Union’s Eastern Policy—Political, Cultural and Spiritual Consequences of Poland’s 
location at the Eastern Borders of the EU. April 17, 2007. Warsaw: The Polish Forum of 
Young Diplomats.


http://www.coe.int/T/E/NGO/Public/Warsaw_mediaconf_res_en.asp

http://www.president.gov.ua/en/content/constitution.html


http://forbelarus.eu/article_info.php?articles_id=167&osCsid=0a36ccbeccda4d97be6a83c799aa3456


International Center for Non-for-Profit Law (ICNL) online library 2006, available at www.icnl.org/knowledge/library.htm

http://www.loc.gov/rr/european/polpress/indepres1.html#fore


Lipskaya, Elena. 2000. Re-registration of NGOs in Belarus. European Foundation Centre. 


Mingarelli, Hugues. 2006. ENP as a Mechanism and Tool of Transformation and Deepening Integration with the EU: The European Commission. In The Eastern Dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy. Warsaw: Center for International Relations.


PAUCI. 2007. Młodzież Razem: Odległość nie jest przeszkodą [Young People Together: Distance is not an Obstacle]. A brochure obtained during the interview with Jan Piekło.


Polish Aid: Co-operation with Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia” obtained  
during the meeting with representatives of the MFA, June 27, 2008, Warsaw. The MFA  
brochure entitled “

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2007b. Polish Aid Program Administered by the Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Warsaw

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2008a. Polish Aid Program Administered by the Ministry of  
Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland. Warsaw

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2008b. Polish Aid: Co-operation with Eastern Europe, South  
Caucasus and Central Asia. A brochure obtained during the meeting with representatives  
of the MFA.

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Development Co-operation Department. 2006. The Annual  

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: Development Co-operation Department. 2007. The Annual  

Šałajeva, Alena. 2007. “Education in Belarus.” In Hopes, Illusions, Perspectives: Belarusian  

SEED (Support for East European Democracy) Act of 1989, (H.R. 3402), 101st Congress, 1st  
sess. (17 November 1989).


Skrzypiec, Ryszard. 2008. Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations in Programs and  
Activities of Polish Political Parties. Warsaw: OFOP (Polish National Federation of  

Stanowski, Krzysztof. 2005a. Opinion expressed in Program RITA: 5 lat współpracy. [RITA  
Program: 5 Years of Cooperation]. Obtained during the meeting with Aleksandra  

Stanowski, Krzysztof. 2005b. The Zagranica Group’s meeting on the role of Polish NGOs in  
Shaping Polish Foreign Policy toward the East. September 24, 2005.  
http://wiadomosci.ngo.pl/wiadomosci/128473.html

[Poland-Ukraine: NGOs’ cooperation].  

338


http://www.usaid.gov/pl/close-ou.htm#SHOWING%20SUPPORT%20IN%20EVERY%20WAY%20POSSIBLE

USAID. 2007. NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Washington, D.C.


Books and Secondary Materials


340


Gliński, Piotr. 2006. *Style Dzialań Organizacji Pozarzadowych w Polsce [Diffrent Forms of NGOs’ Activities in Poland]*. IFiS PAN.


Huntington, Samuel. 1968. Political Order in Changing Societies. New Haven: Yale University


Annette Zimmer and Eckhard Priller. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag fur Socialwissenschaften/GWV Fachverlage GmbH.


Tarlow. Cambridge: Ukrainian Research Institute of Harvard University, The Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies.


APPENDIX 1

LIST OF INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED

POLAND

Polish Non-Governmental Organizations


20. Zagranica Group (ZG), Warsaw. Marta Pejda, Executive Secretary, June 27, 2008.

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

Development Co-operation Department. Miroslaw Sycz, Vice-Director, and Agata Czaplińska, Head of the Implementation of Development Assistance Program, June 27, 2008.

UNITED STATES

National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Rodger Potocki, Director of Europe and Eurasia, and Joanna Rohozińska, Program Officer of Europe and Eurasia, November 20, Washington D.C.
APPENDIX 2
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for Polish Non-Governmental Organizations

1. Is democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus one of the main goals of your organization in relation to other goals?

2. What is the reason for your organization’s engagement in democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus?

3. How does your organization promote democracy in Ukraine and Belarus?

4. How would you say your organization is different from others, such as [name] that do similar work in Ukraine and Belarus in regard to democracy promotion?

5. Which of these activities are most effective in promoting democracy?
   (a) democratic institutions building
   (b) monitoring of human rights
   (c) education development
   (d) supporting free media
   (e) civil society development
   (f) direct financial support
   (g) rule of law development
   (h) others

6. In which form of democracy assistance is your organization involved and why?

7. (Depending on above answer) Why does your organization emphasize (does not emphasize) development of civil society? What does the organization view as being the role of civil society and NGOs in the promoting of democratic states?

8. How do you look for recipients of your democracy assistance activities? What criteria are being used in the decision to grant either financial or nonfinancial assistance?

9. How does your organization look upon the idea of projects aimed at facilitating the development and increasing the involvement in politics of Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs?
10. Do you have any such programs? Please describe their nature and process.

11. Which of the following activities were initiated by your organizations?
   (a) building NGOs networks in Ukraine/ Belarus
   (b) creating websites or other information sources
   (c) organizing conferences, travel opportunities
   (d) organizing trainings, internships etc.

12. How does the organization go about funding these projects?

13. Does the organization engage Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs into projects?

14. How do you select Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs for project partners? What criteria are being used?

15. Do you have any informational brochures about these projects? Are there any reports following up from projects that I could have?

16. Do you have a list of organizations and projects funded by your organization with dates, locations, and amounts of the assistance? Could I have a copy of this information?

17. Has the cooperation with Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs been efficient? Have you encountered any problems/ obstacles from Ukrainian and Belarusian sites that withheld or delayed some activities?

18. Is your organization a partner in multilateral events/ projects promoting democracy that have been initiated by different institutions and organizations, such as Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or European Commission? If yes, please describe.

19. What impact do you see your organization having on democracy development in Ukraine and Belarus? To what extent would you say your organization’s activities in supporting democracy/ civil society are effective? Are the results of your activities observable? Please provide support for your argument. How could these activities be improved?

20. Have your organization’s goals, strategy, or decision-making regarding democracy promotion activities in Ukraine and Belarus changed? If yes, why and how? What are the future plans of the organization?
Questions for Government Officials from the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

1. From the MSZ website we can find out about different types of foreign assistance activities that MSZ provides within Polish Aid initiative. How important is democracy assistance compared to other forms of assistance offered by the MSZ?

2. Is Poland obliged to secure part of its budget for foreign assistance or does it on a voluntary bases? Does the membership in the European Union (EU) put on Poland such an obligation to provide assistance to non-member neighboring states? Please explain.

3. If the EU has impact on the decision to provide foreign assistance, does it also have an impact on in what form and where Polish assistance should go?

4. Do Polish democracy assistance activities complement the EU efforts to influence democratization in non-member states? If yes, in what sense?

5. Since when has Poland have been supporting democracy in Ukraine and Belarus?

6. Can you tell me about the total amount of the assistance to Ukraine and Belarus that Polish governments have disbursed so far? Do you have detailed information on how monies were used?

7. Would you say that Polish activities aimed at democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus are more effective than the EU ones? If yes, why is it so?

8. To what extent could the following make Polish democratic assistance more effective from the EU one? Please explain.
   (a) better understanding of social and cultural factors in Ukraine and Belarus
   (b) close political cooperation
   (c) nature of projects themselves
   (d) involvement of Ukrainian and Belarusian partners
   (e) cooperation with Polish NGOs
   (f) no language barrier
   (g) others?

9. What is the reason for the government’s involvement in democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus?

10. To what extent did the following factors impact on the decision to promote democracy in Ukraine and Belarus? Please evaluate each.
    (a) security concerns beyond Polish eastern border
    (b) historical and cultural ties with Ukraine and Belarus
    (c) close economic cooperation
    (d) geographic proximity
11. Which of these factors would you say to have the strongest impact on the decision to promote democracy in Ukraine and Belarus?

12. What in your opinion is the role of NGOs in building democratic state? Are Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs increasing their ability to influence the public opinion and politics in their countries?

13. Please explain MSZ activities that aimed at promoting democracy.

14. Which of the following actions does the MSZ find as the most important in promoting democracy? Why?
   (a) democratic institutions building
   (b) monitoring of human rights
   (c) education development
   (d) supporting free media
   (e) civil society development
   (f) direct financial support
   (g) rule of law development
   (h) others

15. Does your ministry interact at all with Polish NGOs when promoting democracy in Ukraine and Belarus? What does this cooperation look like?

16. Does the MSZ initiate projects and encourage Polish NGOs to participate in them? How does the ministry offer the cooperation and decide about the project partners?

17. Can you list the names of these joint projects with the dates, and names of Polish NGOs involved in these democracy assistance initiatives in Ukraine and Belarus?

18. Do Polish NGOs share the same idea on democracy promotion initiatives with MSZ? Are there any disagreements?

19. Do you have any mechanism for communicating with NGOs the MSZ ideas about the ways of promoting democracy?

20. To what extent do the NGOs democracy assistance activities complement the ministry activities?

21. Would you say that the cooperation with the NGOs is satisfactory and fruitful? What are the benefits and drawbacks that result from such work with NGOs? How the cooperation could be improved?
22. Have you encountered any problems/obstacles during project implementation? Was/is it the MSZ, Polish NGOs or maybe Ukrainian and Belarusian parties that contributed to the failure of the project? Have ever Ukrainian and Belarusian parties withheld or delayed some Polish activities?

23. What is your opinion about the current political situation in Ukraine and Belarus? Has it changed for good or for worse? Why?

Questions for Foreign Donors of Polish NGOs’ Projects

1. Is democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus one of the main goals of your organization?

2. What is the reason of your organization’s engagement in democracy promotion in Ukraine and Belarus?

3. How is your organization promoting democracy in Ukraine and Belarus?

4. Why is the organization assisting Polish NGOs in their democracy promotion efforts in Ukraine and Belarus?

5. Since when has the organization provided funds for projects by Polish NGOs in Ukraine and Belarus?

6. Does the organization have other partners with whom it cooperates on democracy assistance projects in Ukraine and Belarus? Who are they?

7. Do you have a list of organizations funded by your organization with amounts of the assistance? Could I have a copy of this information?

8. How important is the co-operation with Polish NGOs in relation to cooperation with other partners?

9. Does the organization’s assistance to Polish NGOs projects stem from the established links since the time of communism? What was the nature of linkages between the organization and Polish NGOs in the past?

10. Has the cooperation with Polish NGOs been efficient?

11. To what extent would you say Polish NGOs’ activities in supporting democracy/civil society in Ukraine and Belarus are effective?

12. Do you have any democracy assistance programs/projects in which your organization is the only initiator of activities in Ukraine and Belarus? Please describe the nature and process of these projects.
13. If the answer is “NO” to question 10: Why does the organization provide assistance through other partners?

14. If the answer is “YES” to question 10:
   • Why is the organization engaging in projects by itself?
   • Does the organization engage Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs into projects?
   • How do you select Ukrainian and Belarusian NGOs for project partners? What criteria are being used?
   • Does the organization build links between recipient countries’ NGOs?
   • Do you have any informational brochures about these projects? Are there any reports following up from projects that I could have? To what extent would you say your organization’s activities in supporting democracy/civil societies are effective? Are the results of your activities observable? Please provide support for your argument.
### APPENDIX 3

#### OECD DATA ON OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Table A3.1. Amount of ODA Provided by Selected Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Countries (Current Prices, $ millions)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>960.37</td>
<td>987.14</td>
<td>2470.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
<td>459.05</td>
<td>439.7</td>
<td>1797.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>882.63</td>
<td>819.66</td>
<td>1953.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>1706.64</td>
<td>1743.6</td>
<td>3921.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>1704.26</td>
<td>1664.18</td>
<td>2563.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>396.34</td>
<td>370.84</td>
<td>973.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>5741.59</td>
<td>4104.71</td>
<td>9940.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>5580.68</td>
<td>5030</td>
<td>12267.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>179.42</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>500.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>198.59</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1189.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>2278.31</td>
<td>1376.26</td>
<td>3928.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>10640.1</td>
<td>13507.96</td>
<td>7690.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg</td>
<td>111.79</td>
<td>122.97</td>
<td>364.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>3041.58</td>
<td>3134.78</td>
<td>6215.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>129.96</td>
<td>113.22</td>
<td>315.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>1321.49</td>
<td>1263.56</td>
<td>3727.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>258.54</td>
<td>270.62</td>
<td>402.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1375.68</td>
<td>1194.82</td>
<td>5744.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>1572.72</td>
<td>1798.95</td>
<td>4334.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>897.62</td>
<td>890.37</td>
<td>1680.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>3863.51</td>
<td>4501.26</td>
<td>9920.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>8785.98</td>
<td>9954.89</td>
<td>21752.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>16.16</td>
<td>16.16</td>
<td>178.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>90.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>8.61</td>
<td>44.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>182.71</td>
<td>212.07</td>
<td>671.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>18.72</td>
<td>28.81</td>
<td>355.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>67.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>68.79</td>
<td>81.91</td>
<td>..</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


# APPENDIX 4

POLISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS' ASSISTANCE DATA

Table A4.1. Polish NGO Projects Financed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Title of the project</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BELARUS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNAK Christian Culture Foundation</td>
<td><a href="http://www.susvet.info">www.susvet.info</a>, Internet – an Opportunity for Young Civil Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom and Democracy Foundation</td>
<td>The Belarus Center for Documentation and Assistance to the Victims of Political Repression 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center of Civil Education Poland - Belarus</td>
<td>Support for Independent Information in Belarus with a Particular Focus on Radio Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belarusian Historical Association</td>
<td>The Belarusian Internet Library Kamunikat.org 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Initiatives Bureau</td>
<td>The Leaders for Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East European Democratic Center</td>
<td>Support for Independent Book Publishing and Distribution in Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Meeting Center - Nowy Staw Foundation</td>
<td>Training for Belarusian Social Organizations on How to Run Election Campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prince Konstanty Ostrogski Foundation</td>
<td>Open Prospects - Activating and Supporting Social Groups Threatened with Marginalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Nowak Jeziorański College of Eastern Europe</td>
<td>The Belarusian Publishing Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East European Democratic Center</td>
<td>Support for Independent Local Press in Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Center for International Relations Foundation</td>
<td>Belarus -Live 2008 - From Virtual to Real Communities. Project based on information and cultural exchange, aiming to increase access to information about the country and its people, combined with the Belarusian school of journalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UKRAINE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Stefan Batory Foundation</td>
<td>Ukraine on the Road to the EU – Support for Public Administration and Civil Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZNAK Christian Culture Foundation</td>
<td>Introducing Transparency Standards into the Work of Local Governments in Eastern Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabled Children Assistance Association &quot;Step by Step&quot; in Zamość</td>
<td>“One Step Further” – Implementing the Guided Teaching System in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Association of Local Civil Groups Leaders</td>
<td>Support for Watchdog Organizations in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

375
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Project/Program</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation</td>
<td>Europe in the Ukrainian Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foundation of Borderland Culture</td>
<td>European Neighborliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wielkopolska Association for Rural Development</td>
<td>Polish-Ukrainian Youth Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe</td>
<td>Program Supporting Self-Employment “The Coach” – innovative solutions for social activation of disabled individuals in Lviv Oblast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher School of Public Administration in Szczecin</td>
<td>Self-Government as a Trigger for Local Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Medical Mission Association</td>
<td>Activities Aimed at Preventing and Fight against HIV/AIDS in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Polish Robert Schuman Foundation</td>
<td>Together in Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE- Center for Social and Economic Research</td>
<td>Development of the Early Warning Indicators of Economic Crises for Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASE- Center for Social and Economic Research</td>
<td>Preparation of the Strategy for Social Benefits Monetization Reform in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polish Red Cross</td>
<td>Poland and Ukraine – Together Toward the Common Future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy</td>
<td>European Union Funds for Local Governments in Ukraine – how to effectively manage European Projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Tomasz Dec Foundation for Mentally Ill Persons</td>
<td>Support for Health Care Reform in Ukraine through Instruction on How to Build Modern Psychiatry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy: The Malopolska Institute for Local Self-Government and Administration</td>
<td>Introduction Program for Public Administration Units in Eastern Ukraine on How to Attract Investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASZ DOM [Our Home] Association</td>
<td>Transforming Care and Educational Youth Centers in Ukraine - Child and Family Support System Reforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Society for Malopolska</td>
<td>Active Youth - the Future of Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foundation for Managerial Initiatives</td>
<td>New Challenges, New Quality – Implementing Standards for Quality Management Systems ISO 9001 in the City Council of Dnipropetrovsk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI</td>
<td>European Neighborhood Policy toward Ukraine: Change of Perception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Polish-Ukrainian Cooperation Foundation PAUCI</td>
<td>Together Again - Youth Exchange Program 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Association Of Economic Consultants Pro-Akademia</td>
<td>Supporting the Implementation of the Bilateral Agreements between Ukraine and the World Trade Organization in Small and Medium Businesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School for Leaders Association</td>
<td>The Third Ukrainian School for the NGOs Leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy</td>
<td>Transparent Ukraine: Building Effective and Ethical Self-Government in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Public Affairs Foundation</td>
<td>Study Program for Ukrainian Public Policy Analysts (1st Edition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Strategic Studies Foundation</td>
<td>Society and Army – Mutual Trust as the Starting point for a Strong Civil Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East European Democratic Center</td>
<td>Experts’ Support in Providing Legal and Social Basis for Local Self-Government Reform in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The BORIS Association- The Support Office for the Movement of Social Initiatives</td>
<td>Development of Self-Help Networks in Ukraine</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Federation for Educational Initiatives  Creating Cooperation Initiatives for Education in Rural Areas

The Other Space Foundation  Social Campaigns - From Know How to Implementation, Support for Building Civil Society, Activating Social Groups and Working Toward Reducing the Extent of Social Exclusion in Ukraine

European Meeting Center – Nowy Staw Foundation  Academy of Democracy - support for political and civic education in Ukraine

The B4 Association  Come and See – Marketing and Promotion of Agro-tourism and Ecological Farming in the Carpathian Mountains in Eastern Ukrainian

Source: Based on the list of Polish NGOs projects financed by the MFA within 2008 Call for Proposals, obtained during the interview meeting with the MFA officials in June 27, 2008. Translations were made by the author.

Table A4.2. Allocation of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bilateral Funds in 2008 (Total PLN million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Central Administration</th>
<th>Local Administration</th>
<th>Polish Embassies</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia and Southern Caucasus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkans</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Source: Based on the “Polish Aid Program Administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland” issued by the MFA in 2008.

Note: *Total Bilateral MFA Assistance in 2008 equals PLN 62 million plus PLN 18 million (allocated directly from the MFA budget to TV BELARUS) which gives a total of PLN 80 million.

Table A4.3. Number of Polish NGOs Projects Financed by the MFA in 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Projects Implemented by NGOs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belarus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moldova</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Asia and Southern Caucasus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Balkans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on the list of Polish NGOs projects financed by the MFA within the 2008 Call for Proposals, obtained during the interview meeting with the MFA officials in June 27, 2008.
APPENDIX 5

NED DATA ON CROSS-BORDER WORK

Table A5.1. The NED Cross-Border Projects with Central and Eastern European Countries in the Post-Communist Region, 1993-2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poland</th>
<th>Czech Republic</th>
<th>Slovakia</th>
<th>Lithuania</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>20,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>129,952</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>129,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>200,737</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>157,500</td>
<td>34,650</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>192,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>430,210</td>
<td>29,690</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>459,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>433,921</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>553,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>244,010</td>
<td>24,744</td>
<td>52,000</td>
<td>66,673</td>
<td>387,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>209,543</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>126,814</td>
<td>20,633</td>
<td>421,990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>69,109</td>
<td>87,017</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>221,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>211,500</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>49,270</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>335,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>273,155</td>
<td>21,559</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>294,714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,635,528</td>
<td>369,752</td>
<td>315,101</td>
<td>157,306</td>
<td>3,477,687</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The data obtained from the NED.
APPENDIX 6

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

May 6, 2009

Paulina Pospieszna
Department of Political Science
College of Arts & Sciences
The University of Alabama

Re: IRB # 08-OR-104-R1 (Renewal) “Poland’s Promotion of Democracy in Ukraine and Belarus”

Dear Ms. Pospieszna:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has granted approval for your renewal application.

Your renewal application has been given expedited approval according to 45 CFR part 46. Approval has been given under expedited review category 7 as outlined below:

(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your application will expire on May 4, 2010. You will receive a notice of the expiration date 90 days in advance. If your research will continue beyond this date, complete the relevant portions of Continuing Review and Closure Form. If you wish to modify the application, complete the Modification of an Approved Protocol Form. When the study closes, complete the appropriate portions of FORM: Continuing Review and Closure.

Please use reproductions of the IRB approved informed consent forms to obtain consent from your participants.

Should you need to submit any further correspondence regarding this proposal, please include the above application number.

Good luck with your research.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

CarriPort, MSM, CIN
Director & Research Compliance Officer
Office for Research Compliance
The University of Alabama