# *Chapter 9*

## CONCLUSION: THE POWER AND LIMITS OF TRANSNATIONAL DEMOCRACY NETWORKS IN POSTCOMMUNIST SOCIETIES

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This book has explored Western efforts to support civil society in widely varied settings throughout Eastern Europe and Eurasia during the 1990s. The authors show how the political landscapes across the regions have changed strikingly since 1989. Because institutions associated with liberal democracies have proliferated, many of these societies look as if they are conforming to international norms: One-party rule is no more; citizens regularly turn out for elections; NGOs have mushroomed; the media are no longer exclusively controlled by the state; many constitutions now protect citizens' rights.[1]

The cases show that Western groups have influenced incremental change at the local level. Many examples show how Western groups have been crucial to the existence of local NGOs in terms of funding and training. In 1990 few NGOs existed; by 2000 they were connected to colleagues and activists in other societies. The case studies show how Western groups have affected the form of new institutions. More than other types of assistance—economic, in particular—the strategies of Western NGOs that were working with local NGOs often resulted in the transfer of ideas and practices or helped indigenous cultures evolve in a direction consistent with democratic practice. In contrast to studies of development in other parts of the world, or of economic assistance to Eastern Europe and Russia, we did not find widespread corruption and collusion.[2]

However, our study also reveals a complex picture. While a "third sector" now exists in these societies, in many cases it cannot truly be described as "civil" or "civic" minded. NGOs often are weak factors in their local culture; they focus more on issues of importance to people outside their community than on the needs of those nearest them. Their influence on elites and decision makers is negligible to nonexistent; in many states in these regions power is still centralized.

The evidence suggests that neither assistance nor transnational networks alone make a state democratic. The influence of the transnational networks, and particularly of activist nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that help to spread norms at the microlevel (that is, within and among specific groups of activists), has been substantial. The macrolevel changes in state behavior that recent studies of norms and networks document, however, appear not to have occurred.[3] Local and Western NGOs have had very little effect on the actual functioning of new fragile institutions. In parts of Eastern Europe and Eurasia, such as Russia and Central Asia, authorities have engaged in abuses, even as networks became more dense. The diffusion of norms and practices associated with democracy has in many cases been affected more by regional norms and practices than by imported international ones.[4] The findings from Eastern Europe and Eurasia suggest that democratic as well as human rights norms and practices are not as robust as the scholarly literature seems to suggest.[5] Western NGOs unfamiliar with the domestic settings and relying on foreign experts and advisers to formulate strategies were hampered in their ability to help make new institutions function. These imported practitioners tended to be good architects, but they did not have the skills to build the structures that they had helped to design.[6]

In this chapter I explore how our findings might alter policy debates about assistance and scholarly debates about the influence of international norms and transnational networks.[7] Although the policy and the scholarly communities rarely speak to one another, the overlap is significant in terms of their concerns and the implications of our findings.[8] At the most fundamental level both are interested in understanding the conditions under which ideas, norms, and practices, such as those inherent in democracy, diffuse inside states.

In this chapter I elaborate on the implications of our findings for NGOs. I then discuss the policy community's analysis of assistance, particularly to Russia, which has been almost devoid of actual empirical evidence and reflects misunderstandings about the exact role that powerful states play in supporting or undermining transnational networks. I note how some of these misunderstandings are shared in the scholarly community. I detail how our findings from Eastern Europe and Eurasia both corroborate and challenge arguments that have focused mainly on the power of norms and networks. The authors in this book

find that, although networks influence specific communities of activists, the networks have little power to create fundamental change in the absence of support from the host state and powerful Western states. I conclude by discussing important areas of further investigation suggested by our findings.

## THE ROLE OF NGOS

The case studies here highlight many constraints on transnational democracy networks that were at work in Eastern Europe and Eurasia in the 1990s. Western NGOs, central to the advocacy networks, fell prey to significant organizational issues. They relied on young, enthusiastic, but often inexperienced, staff members.[9] They were plagued by overly flat organizational structures, so that no one was entirely sure who was directing the work, which led to inefficiency. Too few people with small budgets worked on enormous issues, such as rebuilding civil society in Bosnia after a war that claimed the lives of more than 200,000 or helping support NGOs in Russia after seventy-five years of authoritarian rule. NGOs that talked only about their successes in order to generate resources raised undue expectations about their effectiveness. They engaged in what the organizational theorist Nils Brunsson describes as the "decoupling" of principle from practice, of "scripts" from behavior.[10] For example, Western groups would talk as if transparent elections had occurred, when in fact the state had greatly manipulated the electoral process. Or groups would emphasize how many local NGOs existed, never mentioning that few, if any, had developed advocacy skills. Western diplomats held fragile and often highly dysfunctional institutions up as shining examples of democracy, and thus these became "rituals that are used for external display."[11] While some NGOs were good at self-promotion, the vast majority were reluctant to be introspective or to learn lessons from their own or others' experience.[12]

When the interests of Western actors dominated transnational networks, such as when Western contexts were the main source of strategies, the networks had unintended negative consequences. For example, the efforts to link local groups to Western networks has come at the cost of ties *between* like-minded groups and has diverted local groups' attention from pressing local needs. Local NGOs that might have campaigned against uranium tailings in the local drinking water flocked instead to biodiversity because donors were more interested in fostering campaigns around transnational environmental issues, while governments and big businesses were pressuring local NGOs to stay away from the uranium issue. Activists might use the discourse of Western-style feminism but fail to mobilize around issues that affect the day-to-day lives of families in postcommunist settings.

In some cases an imbalance in a network has contributed inadvertently to a decline rather than an increase in ideas and practices associated with democ-

racy within the activists' community. It often leads to tremendous competition between groups for funding, as NGOs spring up around issues important to donors, simply to receive money. These observations reveal that networks as such are not inherently balanced entities. Moreover, variations in their structures—for example, how they are weighted, how much financing they have from governments, how local activists are embedded—seem to be related to their efficiency.

The case studies have shown that Western assistance can make a difference if NGO strategies are derived from local ingredients rather than a global cookbook. Western NGOs are, in the second decade after the collapse of communism, just beginning to understand the mix of these ingredients. The practice of applying recipes that worked in Bosnia to Russia or Uzbekistan did not help make new fragile democratic institutions sustainable. Instead, donors and NGOs are having to generate and use as many different strategies and solutions as there are communities engaged in transformation. The reality that strategies and solutions can be developed only in these societies and not in Western capitals poses organizational challenges for NGOs and donors.

Because of the overwhelming reliance on Western practitioners, Western NGOs could not gauge how they should have adapted their strategies to the inherited historical legacies and to the rapidly changing political environment of a country in transition. Often unclear was what the country was moving toward; Russia in 2000 was not the same as Russia in 1992; Slovakia in 1994 and 1999 looked quite different from Czechoslovakia in 1990. Infrastructural assistance and human capital development based on strategies imported from the West may have been appropriate for the early periods when new institutions remained unformed. Later, however, Western NGOs confronted new problems posed by both the transition from communism and the great variation in postcommunist governments.[13] By the late 1990s political parties no longer needed help campaigning; they needed help responding to constituents. Media organizations had been formed, but many were only nominally independent because economic "reform" had created controlling business interests. NGOs existed all across the regions, but some were actually nongovernmental individuals; little, if any, advocacy informed their agenda.

The authors here suggest that when new institutions have emerged and a critical mass of local NGOs and other institutions has developed, reactive strategies that call for local proposals and respond to domestic needs are more likely to be effective in helping to develop sustainable institutions. Regional experts and especially local activists can help devise explicit strategies for reducing the political isolation that this study identifies as widespread among the new local groups that have sprung up since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even where local groups' transnational ties are strong, Western NGO strategies should focus more, for example, on incentives for encouraging these

groups to develop horizontal (that is, within-country) ties with political parties, trade unions, other local NGOs, and the like. Those Western groups that team regional and local experts with Western practitioners will be better able to read the political and organizational contexts, develop close working relationships with local groups, and implement informed strategies.

Quantitative analysis of programs does not begin to capture the dynamic process of change in diverse groups across the political spectrum in many formerly communist states. Yet both donors and NGOs alike have been reluctant to move away from numbers. This has limited their ability to talk about how ideas and practices actually diffuse. In theory, the spread of ideas beyond activists within a network is a positive outcome. In practice, however, American NGOs and donors alike have feared the congressional response to newspaper headlines claiming that assistance "helped" communists or nationalists; they fear, with some justification, that this would dry up U.S. government funding. Public education about political transitions would help increase the tolerance for NGOs to talk about what really happens, rather than what Congress seems to want to hear.

In this vein it is worth considering, as is sometimes argued, whether the work of Western NGOs and their strategies have contributed to, or resulted in, the rise of "illiberal democracies," countries where rulers hold elections but nevertheless govern in autocratic ways.[14] This book provides much evidence that, for good or ill, assistance to the societies across East-Central Europe and Eurasia tends to influence developments only at the margins. Assistance may have a significant influence within a certain community in these formerly communist states, but it is unlikely that Western NGOs and their local colleagues could in any way alter the internal balance of power within one of these states, either toward or away from democratic rule.

Variations in outcomes across the regions are the result of many factors.[15] Little discussed is that the building blocks of democratic states, whether they are political parties, independent media, or civic groups, are inherently neutral, not exclusively positive organizational structures. As we know from Nazi Germany, they can serve as the building blocks of a fascist state. Elections can lead to bad outcomes for a country in which autocrats rise to power through the ballot box. Nationalist interests can capture the media. Indigenous NGOs can be mobilized to support fascists.[16] Does this mean that NGOs, donors, and policy makers should avoid the promotion of parties, elections, independent media, and civic advocacy groups? Because the results have not been exclusively positive, does that mean all assistance should be stopped?

None of the cases suggests this. Moreover, given the transnational links that already exist between activists in the West and in many formerly communist states, it is too late to turn back the clock. Additionally, local demand drives much of this work. That institutions can be subverted does not mean that activ-

ity should stop but that organizations should be more critical and thoughtful about their activity. NGOs, states, and donors must think preventatively to ensure that democracy assistance programs foster democracy and to ensure that their efforts to strengthen transnational democracy networks actually do so.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY DEBATES

Policy makers in the United States and Europe have an interest in understanding how Western efforts to support the development of democratic institutions have affected Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Failed democratization has, at least three times in the last two hundred years, led to overturning the global balance of power.[17] Government officials, particularly in the United States, have tended to exaggerate their own influence on changes in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, but there is no exaggerating the importance of the political transition, nor the hoped-for consolidation of democracy, in these states. The political trajectory of Russia, for example, is key to Europe's stability in the next two decades. It will influence every major security issue of the day, from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to crime and corruption to the spread of disease.[18]

Unfortunately, the debate about the effect of assistance has been problematic. Through the 1990s it grew increasingly partisan, parochial, and less empirically based. By 2000 the Republicans in the U.S. Congress were excoriating the Clinton administration for just about everything bad that occurred in Russia, while the Democrats defensively built the "Clinton legacy" on foreign policy.[19] Critics of assistance and crusaders for it have tended to focus mainly on Russia, to the exclusion of other states in the region, and have limited their criticism to the United States, as if no other Western states or organizations were involved. This book shows that U.S. and European groups have worked in many states with mixed results.

The authors here suggest that any critique of assistance should be a fairly focused exploration of a specific type of assistance in a particular place. Blanket statements about U.S. assistance to Russia, for example, usually fail to distinguish meaningfully between economic, democratic, and traditional security programs, such as those funded by the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act.[20] Criticism must focus on specific sectors within each type of assistance. The effect of assistance to political parties and elections is different from the effect of assistance to advocacy groups. The effect of assistance to independent media looks different from the effect of assistance to foster the rule of law.[21] The focus of the analysis should be at the nongovernmental level; governments mainly fund but do not actually carry out the work.

Analysts should also distinguish between the activists targeted by assistance and the policy makers who were not. Democracy assistance is intrinsically limited, as many of the case studies here have shown. Assistance, especially at the

nongovernmental level, cannot force decision makers to comply with international norms or practices. It can help transfer or develop skills in people who may, from time to time, work with or serve in government. That Russia's Vladimir Putin or Serbia's Slobodan Milosevic, for example, was outside the scope of democracy assistance is no small detail, yet this is often overlooked in discussions about influence; these men, and others within their countries' governments, have played an enormous role in determining how new political and social institutions actually function in new states.

Western states do have a role to play and thus power to exert. They financed many nongovernmental efforts aimed at supporting the development of institutions commonly associated with democracies, such as civic advocacy groups. The actions of Western decision makers and international organizations have sometimes undermined the work done by the transnational networks—for example, Western support for leaders in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, some of whom are corrupt and ambivalent about democracy.

In both realms, that of funding and that of counterproductive actions, powerful Western states behaved inconsistently throughout the 1990s. The discrepancy in verbal and monetary support, especially by the United States but also by Europe, for the development of democratic institutions in postcommunist states was great. Despite what U.S. policy makers said repeatedly about the importance of developing democratic institutions in Russia, from 1992 to 1996 USAID spent the majority of its Freedom Support Act budget in Russia on market reform while allocating at times as little as 6 percent for democracy assistance. Policy makers offered various explanations for the low amounts of democracy assistance in the early years after the collapse of the Soviet Union (such as Russia had little "capacity" to absorb the funds or the work of Western groups). While these may be correct, they do not account for later figures, which decreased even as capacity increased. They also do not explain why so much more money was allocated to market reform at a time when capacity in the economic sector was perhaps even more limited.[22] In contrast to many pronouncements, particularly in the United States, policies suggested that markets were the first priority and institutions associated with democracy a distant second. This seems to have been a mistake: Economic institutions may have been important to stabilizing the situation in these countries, but political and social institutions play a crucial role in controlling corruption, now rampant in many postcommunist states.

Policy debates about the effect of democracy assistance are incomplete without an understanding of how the larger international environment has affected the transition of states in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. The limits of transnational democracy networks are exacerbated when Western policy makers fail to understand how support for the promotion of democracy is affected by and affects other policies pursued by governments. The actions of the "international community" often have the unintended consequence of undermining the work

done at the activist or NGO level. The Euro-Atlantic powers, and institutions such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Council of Europe, and NATO influence decision makers to comply with or ignore international norms and practices associated with democracy and human rights.

The Euro-Atlantic community of states has been inconsistent in its response to postcommunist states. NATO used force against Serbia for abuses of human rights, but in other cases where the offenses were more widespread and civilian casualties greater, such as in Chechnya, the international community has barely responded.[23] An international environment that permits abuses in some states and punishes them in others makes for a highly fragmented template against which new fragile institutions are developing. The responses of international organizations and governments to leaders such as Vladimir Putin and Boris Yeltsin, who have tolerated enormous abuse of civil and human rights, has isolated democratic activists and undermined the very policies that Western diplomats hoped to be pursuing—the development of democratic institutions.[24]

Many in the West were eager for Russia to be labeled a democracy; they supported Yeltsin because they feared that Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov would come to power. The result was that international organizations and powerful Western states evidently set the bar quite low for what is considered democratic. As has been documented many times in places as disparate as the Philippines and Chile, policies based on the fear of communists are not the same thing as supporting democracy. As a result, the Russian leadership appears to have learned the wrong lessons about democracy: The Western, and especially U.S., response to institutional change in Russia suggested that the *form* of institutions was as important as their functioning.[25]

Finally, absent from most policy debates about assistance is the degree to which the state and society in question, whether Poland, Russia, or Uzbekistan, is moving toward or away from integration in the Euro-Atlantic community—not as a product of assistance but as state policy with public support. Perhaps it is not surprising that Western NGO strategies have had the greatest influence in those states where the majority of the population wants to democratize and integrate rapidly into NATO and the European Union. Western NGOs in such contexts provide additional resources in an environment already moving toward democratic governance. Examples include the work of Western NGOs on media in the Czech Republic and women's groups in Poland. In such cases Western NGOs and other outside groups have facilitated the transformation process.

By contrast, the effectiveness of particular strategies in the contested political environments of thinly integrated states such as Russia and unintegrated states such as Uzbekistan has been much more mixed and is much more sensitive to the dynamics of the international environment. In Russia, for example, activists are increasingly isolated from the government that they seek to influence and the citizens whom they hope to represent. At the same time the support for

Russia's president by Western governments such as Great Britain tends to alienate the activists from those governments as well.

In unintegrated states that allow Western NGOs to work, such as in several states in Central Asia, the influence of NGOs and transnational networks is particularly limited. Effective Western NGO strategies in such contexts were those that focused on the periphery of the political sphere, such as working with local cultural organizations and training journalists. Strategies of infrastructural assistance were virtually impossible to implement, given the restrictive nature of the political regimes. Infrastructural assistance to public advocacy groups, with the risks of infighting among recipients and limited influence upon broader goals, was a long-term investment; should the domestic political regimes change, the groups that received funding might one day be in a position to take a leading role in democratization.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOLARLY DEBATES

Transnational democracy networks are a form of transnational advocacy, related to and often overlapping the human rights and environmental networks.[26] International relations scholars have paid increasing attention to the power of these networks, but the cases in this book suggest that the limits of these networks are considerable and need to be better understood.

### *SIMILARITIES*

For more than a decade the networks have engaged in campaigns that "strategically linked activities in which members of a diffuse principled network," in this case centered on the support of democratic institutions in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, "develop[ed] explicit, visible ties and mutually recognized roles in pursuit of a common goal." As described by Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in *Activists Beyond Borders*, "core network actors mobilize[d] others."[27] Networks developed around issues such as women's rights, environmental degradation, political party formation, free trade unions, and independent media. Environmental networks have campaigned against the dumping of nuclear waste in the Barents Sea. The human rights networks formed under the Helsinki Final Act still exist in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. In Russia, Belarus, and throughout Central Asia they track torture, arbitrary arrest, detention, and disappearances. Other human rights networks formed around issues of conscription, hazing in the military, and the treatment of civilians, refugees, and those who care for the wounded in Chechnya. Some networks intersect at specific events such as elections or the persecution of particular individuals.

Democracy work, like human rights work, is fundamentally a social phenomenon. As Keck and Sikkink argue, personal relationships have a dramatic influ-

ence on success or failure. In countries with little or no democratic tradition, democratization appears to be influenced by how people reconcile ideas and practices common in democracies with their long-held domestic beliefs and customs. Personal relationships are central to this process. While new technologies like the Internet and fax machine have facilitated the building of networks, the case studies in this book suggest that ideas spread best through face-to-face contact. Over and over Western NGOs present ideas and practices that derive from norms. Local political activists accept, reject, or adapt these ideas and practices. Which norms and standards of behavior win out over others is the result of human agency; therefore the exploration of advocacy networks must be grounded in the activities of individual actors, both foreign and domestic.

The cases here suggest hypotheses about the conditions under which ideas are likely to spread. These hypotheses should be tested in other cases:

- If new ideas and practices are presented in a way that directly competes with local organizational cultures, local people are likely to reject them.
- If Western NGOs promote ideas and practices that in some way complement local customs, local people tend to adopt and adapt them.
- Central to the diffusion of ideas and practices is the support of local political entrepreneurs; they are the brokers through which the Western NGOs interact with the society.

The power of these groups, like advocacy networks elsewhere, lies not in their access to brute force, funds, or political office but in their ability to spread information. In the post-Soviet context the Western parts of the networks helped level the playing field in terms of information, by getting hardware to groups, helping to set up printing presses, translating texts and mailing newsletters to people, and conducting thousands of hours of training sessions on topics connected with the specific issue around which they were mobilized.[28] "Information politics," this redistribution of knowledge, was particularly important in the post-Soviet context, where the state had monopolized information and kept like-minded groups of people from banding together. It helped empower people whose voices had been muffled by communist authorities for as long as seventy-five years. Networks organized around a specific issue, such as the war in Chechnya or nuclear waste, used information and publicity as a shaming technique against authorities that were perpetrating the crimes.

## *DIFFERENCES*

The case studies from Eastern Europe and Eurasia challenge dominant trends in the literature concerning international norms and transnational advocacy

networks. Implicit in much recent work is an idealized picture of a seemingly steady march toward increased compliance, as human rights and democracy norms "cascade" through "the international community." At this moment in "world time" many scholars expect to see such norms grow particularly strong.[29] The post-Soviet cases here challenge this growing conventional wisdom and provide a detailed look at how Western ideas and practices interact with local cultures and norms.[30]

Case selection seems to play a role in the comparative weight that scholars give to the power or to the limits of norms and advocacy networks. Latin Americanists working on human rights and scholars of the antiapartheid movement have evidence that international norms have power. Journalists even write about the "Pinochet effect," referring to efforts in Chile, Argentina, and Uruguay to investigate the human rights abuses of leaders.[31]

However, Eastern Europe, and especially Eurasia, looks quite different. In the states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, not a single legal case has been brought—never mind one resulting in conviction or other form of accountability—on behalf of the millions of citizens killed under Stalin. Instead, in a 1999 poll that asked Russians to choose the "most outstanding personalities of all times and all nations," Stalin ranked in 1999 in fourth place with 35 percent, up from 11 percent in 1989. More Russians object to people who have gotten rich since the collapse of the Soviet Union than to people carrying portraits of Stalin.[32] President Vladimir Putin was reported to have toasted Stalin on his birthday in December 1999; in May 2000 the Russian state issued commemorative coins in honor of Stalin as a "war hero."[33]

In the mid- to late 1990s Russia and many states in Central Asia experienced significant regression in human rights and democracy, despite the presence of many conditions that scholars have argued caused positive change elsewhere. For example, "principled-issue networks" have existed around many aspects of both democracy and human rights, some as far back as the Helsinki Accords of 1975, and became increasingly dense in the decade since the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the chapters in this book show, the degree to which local activists are connected to these transnational networks varies greatly. Leaders in many of these countries, such as Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin, have shown concern for the opinions of Euro-Atlantic decision makers, expending effort to host and visit European and American leaders, seeking and gaining membership in many Euro-Atlantic "clubs." This variable concerning reputation has been an important one in the literature. The states that emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union, and especially Russia, have been dependent on and have received billions of dollars in financial assistance. Hundreds of millions of dollars have gone to support democracy work.

Yet even with these conditions, outcomes in postcommunist states, especially Russia, diverge from the expectations generated by much of the literature on the

power of norms. Although a few postcommunist states are steadily moving in the direction of democracy (Poland, for example), some have regressed (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Georgia), while others, such as in Central Asia, are experiencing conditions worse than under the Soviets.[34] Wherever we look in Eastern Europe and Eurasia, the transition process looks shaky, and the scope and direction of change within these countries contrasts starkly with the triumphant stories in the international relations literature.

The case of Russia is particularly troubling because of the role that it plays in the region and in international politics. By the late 1990s Russia's federal and local authorities had grown increasingly bold in their threats to civil liberties and human rights. The state especially targeted independent media outlets. In numerous cases environmentalists, human rights activists, and even students and academics—Russians but also Americans and Europeans—were intimidated, interrogated, trailed, jailed, robbed, accused of treason, beaten, and run out of the country.[35] The bloodiest part of the regression was the brutal way that the Russian federal forces prosecuted the second war in Chechnya; troops have routinely violated both the Geneva Convention and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.[36]

The harassment of activists and the war in Chechnya are not unprecedented in post-Soviet Russia. Activists, however, viewed the regression in the late 1990s as more serious and stark than anything Russia had experienced since before Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985. Nevertheless, Putin enjoyed nights at the opera and pints of beer with Tony Blair, tea with the queen of England, was the toast of the town at the July 2000 G-7 meeting in Okinawa, and was warmly included in the July 2001 meeting in Genoa, although Russia had neither a strong industrialized economy nor a robust democracy.

The Russian and Central Asian cases discussed in this book suggest that the likelihood of successful diffusion of norms may be overstated in the literature. The norms that many scholars presume to be increasingly robust, cascading, and shared, such as human rights and democracy, appear in fact to be rather weak, inconsistently applied by powerful states, and repeatedly overwhelmed by historical legacies. The reasons why so many actors in the international system forgive or overlook significant noncompliance, and thereby help to weaken the norms that they profess to be diffusing, deserves additional attention from scholars.

Whatever the reasons, the consequences are stark. The logic of democratic state behavior is muddled. Because the incentives are ambiguous and contradictory, the diffusion of norms does not occur in the (more or less) linear fashion that the literature often depicts.[37] In contrast to expectations generated by studies on human rights, the way that the Euro-Atlantic states have responded to Russia seems to say that it is perfectly possible to be "norm violating" *and* a member of the "in-group" or at least invited to its functions.[38] Thus punishment for lack of progress is absent.

Moreover, the case of Russia suggests that we need to better identify the precise role of powerful states and decision makers in successful outcomes. Especially when dealing with a state as vast and still relatively powerful as Russia, networks have only a limited ability to bring about change if they do not have the support of states. The fall of the Berlin Wall, for example, had as much, if not more, to do with decisions made by Mikhail Gorbachev than with the work of activists and NGOs. Likewise, the power to keep states like Russia out of the in-group, or to change the policies of other countries that abuse rights and threaten new institutions, resides not with advocacy networks but with states like Great Britain and the United States. Nowhere is this clearer than in the inability of transnational networks to protect local activists.[39]

Finally, the cases here make clear that cultural context and historical legacy matter to transnational advocacy networks. Culture, history, and politics do not determine all outcomes, but contextual factors are necessary to the diffusion of norms inside states. In order to be influential, ideas for encouraging the development of democratic institutions, whether in Bosnia, Russia, or Kyrgyzstan, must be compatible with local organizational cultures. Context matters to local people, and ignoring it in research obscures the dynamic of contestation between international and domestic norms.

## AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The case studies here suggest many important areas for further research. Scholars and policy makers alike have reason to embark on a definitive study of the effect of Western assistance on political and social institutions in Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Ideally, this project would be revisited in ten or twenty years' time in order to build knowledge longitudinally. Policy and scholarship should also compare findings in Eastern Europe and Eurasia in a systematic fashion with those from Latin America and elsewhere.

Several areas deserve additional inquiry. The size of the target country matters, not simply geographically but in terms of the amount of assistance relative to the economy. The ratio of assistance dollars to the size of the local economy seems to be an indicator of the degree to which external assistance can affect the internal balance of power. For example, in Burundi and Rwanda assistance seems to have played a much more central political role than in, say, Russia.[40] Where development assistance has essentially replaced the state, the correlation with increased dependence and even chaos is high.[41] We need to look at these dynamics, as they may shape politics in Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

The cases in this book show that historical legacy matters too, but scholars need to establish under what conditions is it likely to matter. For example, how is the salience of historical legacy related to economic prosperity? David Con-

radt criticizes the famous study by Gregory Almond and Sidney Verba on postwar Germany for just this reason:

> In neglecting to examine directly or systematically the effects of history upon political culture, [Almond and Verba] were unable to deal satisfactorily with the problem of change. If there is a relationship between a country's "traumatic history" and its political culture, what happens to political values over time as the traumatic events become increasingly remote to an increasingly large segment of the population?[42]

Conradt found that trauma decreased in salience as the economy in Germany developed. In Russia polling data have suggested that trauma seems to become more salient as the economy falters. This correlation needs to be developed further.

Many of the findings of our study confirm earlier work done by some other observers of democracy assistance.[43] Those studies also stressed the need for increased participation by local citizens and more attention to context. The comparisons of strategies in this book provide a range of case studies to support suggestions about *how* Western donors should adapt to the dynamic conditions of political and social transition. They also highlight how, on occasion, such as in Kazakhstan, policies promoting economic and political developments work at cross-purposes.

Our findings suggest that if Western groups pursue a business-as-usual approach in the coming years, their influence on the development of sustainable democratic institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia will diminish dramatically. Given the lack of response by NGOs to earlier studies, however, we have little reason to believe that they will respond to these findings. Why is that? Why have organizations—NGOs but also government groups such as USAID—been generally reluctant to change? What is it about how NGOs are configured that inhibits their changing? This organizational behavior too warrants examination by scholars.

## IN CLOSING

This book, like most, reflects the period in which it was written. As a post–cold war study it has focused on the rise of transnational efforts to help build democratic institutions and the difficulties of political and social change in the societies emerging at different rates and with varied burdens from communist, socialist, and Soviet legacies. When the cold war was over, many were inclined to hope or believe that great power politics were finished, the bipolar system shattered, and international norms on the rise: People had triumphed, at the Berlin

Wall, in Prague, in Budapest, and on top of tanks in Moscow rather than under them.

By the new century, however, a close look at the states and societies of Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Eurasia, and their interaction with the West reveals that all are, in many ways, between eras. We are still crossing from the old world order to something new. The new—particularly as embodied by the transnational, the changed conceptions of sovereignty, the links between populations thousands of miles apart—has power but not all the power. What may have looked like the "road to democracy," like the "path to socialism" in another era, turns out to be circuitous and bumpy, and occasionally it even leads backward. When scholars return in ten or twenty years to review the cases in this book, will they find that the power of transnational democracy networks has increased or diminished? Will the constraints have been overcome or have proved overwhelming? Most important, will the people in these regions have prospered or become more impoverished? Will fragile institutions be robust or will they have collapsed? The cases here will, we hope, have convinced critics and crusaders alike that these issues are crucial as we move into an increasingly interlinked global future.

## NOTES

1. On the tendency to conform to international norms, see Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (1998): 903.

2. By 2000 several investigations were pending concerning the abuse of Western economic assistance to Russia from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and USAID. See Janine Wedel, *Collision and Collusion: The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe, 1989–1998* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998). For a critique of development assistance in Africa, see Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian, 1998).

3. On transnational networks see the pioneering work of Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

4. The dynamic of international versus domestic norms has been effectively highlighted by Jeffrey Legro, "Which Norms Matter: Revising the 'Failure' of Internationalism," *International Organization* 51, no. 1 (Winter 1997): 31–63; Andrew P. Cortell and James W. Davis Jr., "Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms: A Research Agenda," *International Studies Review* 2 (2000): 65–87; Amy Gurowitz, "Mobilizing International Norms: Domestic Actors, Immigrants, and the Japanese State," *World Politics* 51, no.3 (1999): 413–45.

5. Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink, eds., *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Press, 1999); Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Audie Klotz, *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle Against Apartheid* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); Daniel C. Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2001).

6. On this point see also Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999); Nancy Lubin, "U.S. Assistance to the NIS," in Karen Dawisha, ed., *The International Dimension of Postcommunist Transitions in Russia and the New States of Eurasia*, pp. 350–78 (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1997).

7. I draw not only on the evidence presented in this book but also on my involvement with democracy assistance programs in Russia since the early 1990s, including working from August 1994 to July 1995 in Moscow as a program officer with a U.S.-based NGO that helped support political party activists. This chapter also draws on arguments that I developed in "Democracy Assistance and Russia's Transition: Between Success and Failure," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (Spring 2001): 69–103, and "Russians' Rights Imperiled: Has Anybody Noticed?" *International Security* 26, no. 4 (Spring 2002): 39–69.

8. Gideon Rose, "Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy," *International Security* 25, no. 3 (Winter 2000–1): 87–123. Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, speaks to both scholars and the policy community, and in that it is rare.

9. One former employee of an NGO referred to "crisis hiring" wherein the NGO quickly sent a staffer overseas to become immediately immersed in the fray (Stephen Biegun, former trainer for the International Republican Institute, interview by author, August 25, 1998).

10. Nils Brunsson, *The Organization of Hypocrisy: Talk, Decisions, and Actions in Organizations* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley, 1989), as cited in Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 65.

11. Ibid. In this case *external* refers to those outside the "democracy assistance" community.

12. This observation comes from my attendance at a series of meetings held in 2000 by USAID's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, Office of Democracy and Governance, to evaluate lessons from ten years of democracy assistance to Eastern Europe and Eurasia. See Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, pp. 8–10, on USAID's failure to learn, adapt, and change.

13. On the variation in outcome and how the term *postcommunism* means little, see Charles King, "Post-postcommunism: Transition, Comparison, and the End of 'Eastern Europe,'" *World Politics* 53, no. 1 (October 2000): 143–72.

14. Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (November–December 1997): 22–43.

15. King, "Post-postcommunism."

16. Sheri Berman, "Civil Society and the Collapse of the Weimar Republic," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 401–29. Rwanda is a more recent example of genocide that occurred despite the presence of a large number of NGOs and churches; see Uvin, *Aiding Violence*.

17. Examples of failed democratization that led to shifts in the global balance of power would include France under Napoleon, 1803–1815; Germany under Kaiser Wilhelm, 1914–1918; and Nazi Germany, 1939–1945. See Jack Snyder, *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and National Conflict* (New York: Norton, 2000), 20–21.

18. The U.S. Mission (Russia) Performance Plan for 2000–2002 claims that "the consolidation of democratic institutions and values in Russia over the long term is a vital US national security interest" (as cited in David Cohen, McKinney Russel, and Boris Makarenko, "An Assessment of USAID Political Party Building and Related Activities in Russia," report prepared by Management Systems International for USAID/Moscow, Office of Democracy Initiatives and Human Resources, June 30, 2000, p. 38). The U.S. Embassy Mission Performance Plan for 1999–2001 argues that "a prosperous, democratic, cohesive Russia will promote stability at home and among its neighbors. A weak, divided, conflicted Russia will invite destabilizing, outside interference and project dangerous uncertainty" (U.S. Embassy, "Mission Performance Performance Plan FY1999–2001," n.d., Moscow, p. 4). On the distinction between *transition* and *consolidation*, see Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Postcommunist Europe* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Larry Diamond, Marc Plattner, Yun-han Chu, and Hung-mao Tien, eds., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies: Themes and Perspectives* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

19. Speaker's Advisory Group on Russia, "Russia's Road to Corruption: How The Clinton Administration Exported Government Instead of Free Enterprise and Failed the Russian People," September 2000, at http://policy.house.gov/russia (November 1, 2001); Samuel R. Berger, "A Foreign Policy for the Global Age," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 6, (November–December 2000): 22–39.

20. Examples include Speaker's Advisory Group, "Russia's Road to Corruption"; Berger, "Foreign Policy"; and Stephen F. Cohen, *Failed Crusade: America and the Tragedy of Postcommunist Russia* (New York: Norton, 2000).

21. On the effect of assistance to parties and elections in Russia, see Mendelson, "Democracy Assistance and Russia's Transition"; more generally, see Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*.

22. The argument that NGOs engaged in democracy assistance are less expensive than the corporations under contract for economic assistance (which were paid more than NGOs) is not a reflection of the marketplace but of the priorities of Western policy makers. The result on the economic side of assistance seems to have been inflated budgets and stays at fancy hotels (Wedel, *Collision and Collusion*).

23. Physicians for Human Rights, *War Crimes in Kosovo: A Population-Based Assessment of Human Rights Violations Against Kosovar Albanians* (Washington, D.C.: 1999); Physicians for Human Rights, "Medical Group Releases Final Data on Russian Atrocities in Chechnya; Calls on Clinton to Take a Stand on War Crimes," press release, June 2, 2000, http://www.phrusa.org (November 1, 2001).

24. Western and Russian organizations tracked human rights abuses during the Yeltsin era and continue to do so in the Putin era. These include "filtration" or concentration camps in the first and second war in Chechnya (Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch); hazing and torture among conscripts in the military (Committee of Soldiers' Mothers); and treatment in prisons and jails (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and Nizhni Novgorod Society for Human Rights). Labor activists argue that the unpaid wages long owed to Russian workers are also a form of human rights abuse (Irene Stevenson, executive director, American Center for International Labor Solidarity, update on labor conditions in Russia after the fall of the ruble, AFL-CIO headquarters, Washington, D.C., September 9, 1998).

25. Perhaps nowhere is this more problematic than in the international stamp of approval issued to elections. A memo written by the the National Democratic Institute's in-house expert on observing international elections notes that "autocrats have become more sophisticated in their attempts at electoral manipulation." He also notes that "autocrats know [that observers tend to focus on election day] and increasingly attempt to manipulate other elements of the electoral process so that election day seems more-or-less normal," prompting observers to release statements just forty-eight to seventy-two hours after polls close (Patrick Merloe, "Lessons Learned and Challenges Facing International Monitoring," in-house memo, National Democratic Institute, Washington, D.C., March 1999, pp. 3, 5).

26. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*.

27. Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, p. 6.

28. For example, while working in Russia in 1994 and 1995, I attended numerous meetings on elections and political parties held by the National Democratic Institute. These sessions included information about transparency in elections, such as how to monitor an election, and about all aspects of competitive campaigns, such as getting out the message and the use of polling data.

29. See Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics"; Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *The Power of Human Rights*; Klotz, *Norms in International Relations*; Kathryn Sikkink, "Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America," *International Organization* 47, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 411–42; Audie Klotz, "Norms Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and U.S. Sanctions Against South Africa," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 451–78; Richard Price, "Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines," *International Organization* 52, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 613–44; Paul Wapner, "Politics Beyond the State: Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics," *World Politics* 47, no. 3 (April 1995): 311–40; Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell, "Piecing Together the Democratic Peace: The CSCE, Norms, and the 'Construction' of Security in Post–Cold War Europe," *International Organization* 53, no. 3 (1999): 505–35; John Boli and George M. Thomas, eds., *Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations Since 1875* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999).

30. On the need to study the interaction see Jeffrey T. Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," *World Politics* 50, no. 2 (January 1998): 324–48; and Cortell and Davis, "Understanding the Domestic Impact."

31. Klotz, "Norms Reconstituting interests"; Sikkink, "Human Rights"; Ellen L. Lutz and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Human Rights Law and Practice in Latin America," *International Organization* 54, no. 3 (2000): 633–59; Anthony Faiola, "Pinochet Effect Spreading," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2000.

32. One survey in 1999 found that 55 percent felt negatively toward people "who got rich in the last ten years" versus 29 percent who felt negatively toward "people carrying portraits of Stalin." Fifty-two percent felt positively toward Stalinists. Figures come from a series of polls conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion, http://www.RussiaVotes.org (November 1, 2001), as cited in Edward Skidelsky and Yuri Senokosov, *Russia on Russia: Issue Two: The Fate of Homo Sovieticus* (London: Social Market Foundation and the All-Russian Center of Public Opinion Studies, 2000).

33. Ian Traynor, "Russia's New Strongman Puts Stalin Back on a Pedestal," *Guardian* (U.K.), May 13, 2000, as carried on David Johnson's *Russia List*, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson (November 1, 2001).

34. Cassandra Cavanaugh, "The Iron Hands of Central Asia," *Washington Post*, August 2, 2000. (Cavanaugh is a researcher for Human Rights Watch.) See also Sophie Lambroschini, "Central Asia: Russia Sanctioning Anti-Islamic Crackdown," *RFE/RL*, August 2, 2000; see also the weekly updates on human rights and democracy in Central Asia in "Voice of Democracy," an e-mail publication by the Kazakhstan 21st Century Foundation; and those from EurasiaNet, http://www.eurasianet.org (November 1, 2001).

35. See "On the Violations Committed in the Course of Registration and Re-Registration of Public Associations in the Russian Federation in 1999" (report prepared by the Information Center of the Human Rights Movement and the Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, Moscow, February 15, 2000); Boris Pustintsev, Citizens' Watch, St. Petersburg, "Russian Authorities Declared War on Human Rights NGOs," courtesy author's e-mail correspondence with Alyson Ewald of the Sacred Earth Network, May 2000; Yuri Dzhibladze, president, Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights, interview by author, Moscow, March 24, 2000; Masha Lipman, former deputy editor, *Itogi*, interview by author, Moscow, May 18, 2000. (*Itogi* was taken over by a state-owned company, Gazprom Media, and most of the journalists were fired in April 2001.) For examples of non-Russians being harassed, see Joshua Handler, "Under Suspicion," *IEEE Spectrum* 7, no. 3 (March 2000): 51–53, where he recounts his October 1999 experience when the FSB, a successor to the KGB, confiscated his research materials, and he was expelled from Russia. Handler had been an environmental activist with Greenpeace before enrolling in a doctoral program at Princeton University. The number of foreign missionaries expelled from Russia has increased. A program officer from the National Democratic Institute, a U.S.-based NGO, fled the country in 1999 after repeated harassment and threats from the FSB. The British charity that removes land mines, Halo Trust, was accused of treason and expelled from Russia (Halo Trust program officer who asked to remain anonymous, telephone interview by author, May 31, 2000). For other examples see Masha Gessen, "In Russia, Echoes of the Old KGB: Going After Foreign Aid Workers and Others," *U.S. News and World Report*, July 30, 2001, as carried on Johnson's *Russia List*, http://www.cdi.org/russia/johnson (November 1, 2001).

36. Many groups have gathered testimony on the abuses by federal forces, including Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, Physicians for Human Rights, the Russian groups Memorial and Committee of Soldiers' Mothers in St. Petersburg, the French group Doctors of the World, and the Nobel Peace Prize recipient Doctors Without Borders. See in particular "Civilian Killings in Staropromyslovski District of Grozny," *Human Rights Watch* 12, no. 2 (February 2000); "No Happiness Remains: Civilian Killings, Pillage, and Rape in Alkhan-Yurt, Chechnya," *Human Rights Watch* 12, no. 5 (April 2000); "February 5: A Day of Slaughter in Novye Aldi," *Human Rights Watch* 12, no. 9 (June 2000); Rachel Denber, deputy director, Europe and Central Asia division, Human Rights Watch, testimony before U.S. House Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, May 23, 2000, available at http://www.house.gov/csce/denber.htm (November 1, 2001). Francis Boyle, a University of Illinois law professor who, on behalf of Bosnian Muslims, won a suit against Yugoslavia for committing genocide in Bosnia, filed suit with the International Court in the Hague in July 2000 on behalf of Chechnya, accusing Russia of committing genocide. See "Chechnya Seeks Genocide Finding Against Russia," *RFE/RL Briefing Report,* August 15, 2000, available at http://www.rferl.org/welcome/english/releases/chechnya000815.html (November 1, 2001).

37. See, for example, Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *Power of Human Rights.*

38. Ibid., p. 38. Russia has membership or a special relationship with many international organizations, including NATO, the G-7, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Council of Europe.

39. Transnational groups have no concrete ability to protect their partners and must rely on policy makers to do so. Several incidents in 1999 and 2000 suggest that even non-Russians who work for Western NGOs are not always safe in Russia, yet Western decision makers have not been willing to do much when representatives of NGOs are kicked out, according to activists from British and American NGOs with whom I spoke. For an alternative argument, see Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, *Power of Human Rights.*

40. See Michael S. Lund, Barnett R. Rubin, and Fabienne Hara, "Learning from Burundi's Failed Democratic Transition, 1993–1996: Did International Initiatives Match the Problem?" in Barnett R. Rubin, ed., *Cases and Strategies for Preventive Action,* pp. 47–91 (New York: Century Foundation Press, 1998).

41. Uvin, *Aiding Violence.*

42. David P. Conradt, "Changing German Political Culture," in Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, eds., *The Civic Culture Revisited* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1989), p. 225.

43. Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad*; Lubin, "U.S. Assistance to the NIS."