

Civil Society Assistance in Central and Eastern Europe

The Cases of Poland and Slovakia

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List of Abbreviations

BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany)
BORIS	The Support Office for the Movement of Self-Help Initiatives (Poland)
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
CIM	Institute for International Relations (Poland)
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise (USA)
CSA	Civil Society Assistance
CSD	Civil Society Development Program (Slovakia)
CSDF	Civil Society Development Foundation (Poland)
DANIDA	Danish International Development Assistance
DFID	Department for International Development (United Kingdom)
DPP	Democracy Promotion and Protection
ECF	European Cultural Foundation
EDI	Economic Development Institute, World Bank
EFC	European Foundation Center (Brussels)
ETP	Environmental Training Partnership Foundation (Slovakia)
EU	European Union
FED	Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji (Foundation for the Education of Democracy, Poland)
FIP	Associations for the Forum of Non-Governmental Initiatives (Forum Inicjatyw Pozarządowych, Poland)
FES	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Germany)
FNS	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (Friedrich Naumann Foundation, Germany)
FSLD	The Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (Poland)
FTUI	Free Trade Union Institute (USA)
G3S	Gremium of the Third Sector (Slovakia)
GTZ	Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)
HBS	Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Germany)
HFHR	Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights (Poland)
HSS	Hans Seidel Stiftung (Germany)
HZDS	“Movement for a democratic Slovakia” (<i>Hnuti za Demokraticke Slovensko</i>)
IDEE	Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (Poland)

IRI	International Republican Institute (USA)
ISP	Instytut Spraw Publicznych (Institute for Public Affairs, Poland)
IVO	Inštitút pre verejné otázky (Institute for Public Affairs, Slovakia)
KAS	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Germany)
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (Germany)
KOZ	Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (USA)
NED	National Endowment for Democracy (USA)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPOA	Civil Society Development Foundation (Slovakia)
OSF	Open Society Foundation (Slovakia)
PDCS	Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (Slovakia)
Phare	Poland Hungary Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy
SAIA-SCTS	Slovak Academic Information Agency – Service Center of the Third Sector (Slovakia)
SEED	Support for East European Democracy (USAID Program, United States of America)
SEQUA	Stiftung für wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und berufliche Qualifizierung (Foundation in support of economic development and professional qualification, Germany)
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNS	Slovak National Party (Slovakia)
SPACE	the Social Policy Analysis Center (Slovakia)
SPLIT	The Network of Information and Support (Poland)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development (USA)
VENRO	Verband Entwicklungspolitik deutscher Nichtregierungsorganisationen
VPN	Public Against Violence (<i>Verejnost' Proti Nasili</i>) (Slovakia)
WRZOS	Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs in Poland (Poland)
ZRS	Association of Workers of Slovakia (Slovakia)
ZPMP	Association for the Assistance of People With Mental Handicaps in the Slovak Republic (Slovakia)

1 Introduction

1.1 The Rise of Civil Society Assistance

Is it feasible to promote and strengthen civil society from abroad? This is the main question of this dissertation. Since the middle of the 1990s this question is of utmost importance for practitioners and theorists alike. With the end of the communist bloc and the transformations taking place in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and the New Independent States the promotion and protection of democracy from abroad has become a major challenge for democratic states. With hardly any experience in the field and after only a few not very useful lessons in development aid, donors quickly move eastwards with the ambitious aim of promoting democracy and little idea how to do so. The main actors were state agencies of international assistance such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) or the British Department for International Development (DFID), and international organizations such as the United Nations or the European Union. Additionally, non-state actors such as charity organizations, foundations, trade unions and associations went abroad, as well as quasi-independent but fully state financed “democracy foundations”. These are foundations that specialize in extending political assistance to other states such as the US National Endowment for Democracy (NED) or the German political foundations. But neither the former nor the latter donors had any instruments at hand to master the challenge. Even the German political foundations that were very active in the democratization processes in Southern Europe¹ could not draw on previous experiences – the situations were too different in post-communist countries that faced the “*triple transition*” (Offe 1991) of simultaneously transforming the economy and political system, and sometimes even the territory.

The theoretical debates of the time failed to provide answers and concepts how to master the task ahead. The international scholarly community was taken by surprise by the fall of Communism and the peaceful transformations taking place in Central and Eastern Europe. International Relations theorists, on the one hand, provided theories explaining an international system marked by bipolarity, and hardly focused on the question how the political system of a state was affected by international processes.² In consequence they offered no answers to the pressing question how to support democracy from the outside.

1 Powell (1996) e.g. stresses the important role of the German political foundations in the democratization process in Spain.

2 For an excellent review of the international relations literature tackling the question of international influences on the political system, see: Hartmann (1997).

Comparative analysts concerned with democratization, on the other hand, neglected the impact of international factors on democratization and exclusively focused on domestic factors of democratization. Broadly speaking, scholars approached democratization processes in two different ways, stressing either the importance of structural factors in explaining regime change (see e. g. Lipset 1981) or the importance of actor choices and constellations (see e.g. O'Donnell/Schmitter 1987). Common to both approaches, however, is the assumption that the origins of regime change lie exclusively in the domestic realm. Both approaches thus fail to integrate international factors into the analysis of democratization processes, a task which has been identified as one of the major current challenges to democratization theory (Remmer 1995). Only in the middle of the 1990s did comparative analysts start to investigate the "*international dimension of democracy*" (Whitehead 1996) and recognize the importance of international factors in explaining regime change such as "*demonstration effects*" (Pridham 1994), "*contagion through proximity*" (Whitehead 1996), processes of diffusion of democratic institutions, practices and ideas (Diamond 1997, Whitehead 1996), conditionality (Schmitter 1996), or the efforts of international state and non-state actors to directly promote and protect democracy from abroad (Offe/Schmitter forthcoming). The prominence of international factors in explaining regime change thus is, in the words of Alex Pravda, "*the result of a long academic journey*" (Pravda 2001: 1) and comes as a reaction to transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, which can hardly be explained without accounting for developments in and the final collapse of the Soviet Union.

In 1989/90, however, practitioners that aimed to assist the new democracies at their Eastern borders were left with few concepts on how best to assist democracy abroad. Nonetheless they were eager to help, and moreover, faced a massive demand of international assistance and advice, as is evident in the following quote:

"We need advice, here, now, immediately" (President Vaclav Havel to a NDI delegation in December 1989 cited in: Glenn 1999: 6).

In face of an immense international eagerness to assist the historic developments in Central and Eastern Europe and a pressing appeal for assistance, donors largely resorted to the models they knew best: their own democratic system was used as a template that donors aimed to transfer to other places. As a consequence, "*institutional-modeling*" became the prevailing donor strategy (Carothers 1997). Donors approached democratization processes with an internal checklist in mind made up of the major institutional features of democracy: free and fair elections, competing political parties, an independent judiciary, an effective public administration, independent media etc., and established institutions according to this

checklist (Carothers 1996a: 98p). According to Wedel (1998), donors thus perceived democracy assistance as a transmission belt that transmitted missing links into other places.

The initial focus on institutions, however, did not deliver the desired results. Although formal democratic rules were in place, the new structures often did not perform like their Western role models. The rise of “*democracies with adjectives*” (Collier/Levitsky 1997) such as “*delegative*” (O’Donnell 1994), “*defective*” (Merkel 1999) or “*illiberal*” (Zakaria 1997) increasingly raises the awareness that formal institutions alone do not constitute a sufficient basis for a consolidated, representative and legitimate democracy. O’Donnell points out that new democracies often fail to consolidate. Although elections are in place and ensure “*vertical accountability*”, “*horizontal accountability*” that prevents the abuse of power and the misuse of authority is missing. Informal practices and habits of the previous regime often persist and prevent the effective functioning of formal institutions, thus resulting in “*formal institutions with informal practices*” (Olson 1999). With regard to the consolidation phase in particular, the academic attention thus shifts to forces outside the institutional arena of parliaments and parties highlighting the importance of “*informal rules*” (O’Donnell 1996), “*social capital*” (Putnam 1993), associations and neo-corporatist arrangements (Schmitter 1992), and civil society. Civil society is thus recognized as a crucial element that guarantees a successful transition to democracy.³ The proclaimed virtues of civil society are manifold: Civil society and its institutions trigger democratic behavior or a ‘civic ethos’, result in inter-personal trust and ‘social capital’. A vibrant civil society acts as a ‘watch-dog’ controlling the power of the state. It also ensures accountable government by providing an intermediary sphere between the state and the people. And finally, civil society enhances public discourse and generates a public sphere in which citizens can debate freely and independently over the state and other authorities.⁴

As regards the prominence of the concept of civil society, it comes as no surprise that donors supplemented their initial emphasis on institutions in the middle of the 1990s and increasingly focused on citizens and civil society. Bottom-up strategies to assist democracy that aimed to strengthen democratic forces inside society seemed to be a more valuable device than building democracy from the top-down. This is even more so, as the euphoria concerning the “*reemergence of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe*”, to cite a book title of the time (Rau 1991), quickly dwindled. Civil society and citizens’ activities leveraged

3 See e.g.: Diamond (1994), Linz/Stepan (1996), Lauth/Merkel (1997), Fagin (1998).

4 For the democratic functions attributed to civil society see e.g.: Diamond (1994), Fagin (1998), Croissant Lauth/Merkel (2000), Kraus (1999).

democracy in countries such as Poland or the Czech Republic.⁵ Hopes were thus high that the reemerged civil societies in Central and Eastern Europe would act as a catalyst for regime change. This was, however, not the case. In contrast, civic participation in CEE remained low (Howard 2003). Several analysts point to the weakness of civil society in post-communist countries and to likely negative consequences for the consolidation of democracy.⁶ Triggering the development of civil society thus became a major concern of donors interested in democracy assistance. Carothers points out (1999b: 59):

“Many aid providers have come to see civil society development as the key to unblocking stagnant or failing transitions over the long term”.

As a result, we witness an immense rise of civil society assistance in CEE. Santiso (2001: 12) even characterizes civil society assistance as the *“most rapidly expanding pillar of democracy aid”*. There is no donor that does not provide programs focusing on civil society. The PHARE democracy program of the EU, the British Know-how Fund, parts of the SEED program of the USA (Support for East European Democracy), and the activities of German political foundations are just a few examples. On top of that, a wide spectrum of private actors supports civil society in CEE, many of which have never been involved in international aid before (Quigley 1997). Schmitter (1996: 39) notices:

“The international context surrounding democratization has shifted from a primary reliance on public, inter-governmental channels of influence toward an increased involvement of private, non-governmental organizations ...”.

5 See for the importance of citizens' activities and mass protests in bringing about regime change in CEE, e.g. Ekiert/Kubik (1999).

6 See e.g. Ost (1993), Sztompka (1993), Wesolowski (1995), Wiesenthal (1997), Merkel (2000), Offe (2000a), Howard (2003).

1.2 Key Interests and Concerns

The burgeoning phenomenon of civil society assistance requires academic contemplation. The question arises whether it is at all feasible to trigger and sustain civil society development from the outside. Civil society is commonly understood as

“The realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules” (Diamond 1994:5).

It is truly domestic and endogenous in character and thus not easily open to external design. Civil society is more than a collection of non-governmental, formally structured, independent, voluntary, and self-organized organizations. Additionally, civil society necessitates an ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) (Hegel), a “*civic ethos*” (Offe 2000a), or “*civilizational competence*” (Sztompka 1993). Civil society thus relies on certain patterns of behavior, moral qualities, and liberal values that developed in Western Europe over centuries. One may doubt that such patterns of behavior and moral qualities come as a result of externally conducted programs and projects. The question thus is: what is the outcome of civil society assistance? Does civil society result in more civil society, despite everything said above, or does it trigger unintended and surprising effects?

The literature at hand provides few answers to these questions. The great magnitude of civil society assistance contrasts with the little scholarly attention to this new phenomenon. Existing studies on civil society assistance mainly focus on donors, their strategies, projects and programs (Wedel 1998).⁷ The “*question of strategy*” (Carothers 1997) stands in the forefront. More often than not, research is driven the concern of donors to “... *devise effective strategies to support a wide variety of democratization processes*” (Santiso 2001: 1). The focus on donor activities, projects and programs, however, reduces assistance merely to a business of right strategies and best practices. Moreover, this approach accounts for nothing more than an assessment of the output rather than the outcome of assistance. The overemphasis on donors falls short of capturing the various ways how recipients respond to the efforts of donors, and how civil society assistance is perceived, adopted, and adapted in different domestic contexts. Donors do feel the need to evaluate their activities and are eager to find effective tools to assess the outcome of assistance. They ways and means how this is

⁷ Examples of studies that largely focus on donors, in particular American donors, and on donor strategies are: Carothers (e.g. 1997, 1999a), Crawford (1996), Diamond (1997), Glenn (1999), Guilhot (2003), Hansen (1996), Jenkins (2001), Ottaway/Chang (1999), Quigley (1997), Santiso (2001).

done are, however, generally inadequate.⁸ Besides the methodological problems of finding measurable indicators and isolating causal effects, the problem has much to do with donor wants. In general, evaluation is the final event in a project. Although a full assessment is only feasible years after the activity and the funding came to end, this is rarely done. Moreover, donors fail to appreciate that the outcome of assistance is more than anything the result of the combined efforts of international assistance on the one hand, and domestic processes on the other. However, no donor wants to hear that his activity together with the efforts of the Americans, British and the European Union had this or that result. International assistance largely remains a national enterprise (Guilhot 2003) and this leaves little room for donor-funded evaluations that focus on the combined efforts of international actors in certain issue areas.

Only recently case studies have been presented that aim to grasp the outcome of assistance in single countries or issue areas.⁹ These studies provide, however, mixed results.¹⁰ Some studies jump to the conclusion that international assistance makes a valuable contribution to the transformation processes in the East and helps to consolidate democracy and civil society,¹¹ or argue at least that the small impact of international aid is the result of inappropriate donor strategies and approaches:

“The current crisis of development cooperation and debate on aid effectiveness should not overshadow the significant and decisive influence international assistance to democracy and good governance has had on the shape and direction of democratisation. It nevertheless requires us to revisit traditional strategies and devised innovative approaches to foster democracy” (Santiso 2001: 20).

Others, however, point out that the effect of international assistance ranges from modest to negligible (Carothers 1996a: 95pp), or even argue that Western assistance had negative effects:

8 This is the conclusion of Golub (1993) who analyses the evaluation practice of donors and highlights the various problems in current practices of evaluating democracy and civil society assistance. One must note that most of the problems he identified in evaluation practices are still relevant today. See for a new attempt to put the issue on the agenda: Bartsch et al (2003).

9 Examples are Chandler (2004) who investigates civil society assistance in Bosnia, Henderson (2002) who focuses on the case of Russia, Ekiert/Kubik (2000) who analyze international aid to Poland or McMahon (2004) who studies Western assistance to Women's NGOs in CEE.

10 See for example the various case studies on Western impact on democratization in CEE in Zielonka/Pravda (2001), summarized in Smith (2001: 53pp): *“The extent to which the West has had ... an impact on democratic consolidation in Eastern Europe has varied from case to case. The West's influence has been both indirectly and directly wielded, and to greater or lesser extent, depending on the country in consideration (ibid: 53).*

11 See for example: Ekiert/Kubik (2000), Coston (1998), several case studies in Pravda/Zielonka (2001).

*“The grant game encourages donors as well as grant recipients to behave in ways that hinder rather than facilitate civic development” (Henderson 2002: 140p) ... „ ...
“Although aid has been crucial in expanding NGO capacity, it has discouraged groups from functioning as a civil society” (ibid: 143).*

The most puzzling question facing scholars of civil society assistance is thus not only if civil society can be developed externally, but moreover when, and under what conditions this may happen? In other words, what are the causal mechanisms running from international assistance to domestic outcomes? Representatives of donor agencies conducting civil society programs are often puzzled by the paradox that the very same projects and measures produce lasting results in one country and remain without any effect in another country. The question is: What determines the fruitful ground on which civil society assistance falls?

The purpose of this dissertation is to provide robust answers to these questions. The dissertation thus aims to assess the outcome of civil society assistance in two case studies and to identify conditions that ensure that international assistance contributes to a vibrant civil society. In order to do so, emphasis is placed less on donors and their programs and projects. Instead, the main beneficiaries of civil society assistance are the main focus of the analysis. The aim of the dissertation is not to evaluate the effectiveness of different donors, rather to determine to what extent international assistance shaped civil society development in recipient countries. Which institutions, ideas, attitudes and concepts found their way into domestic settings? How has the assistance been perceived, adopted and adapted internally? In other words, the dissertation aims to grasp the outcome in contrast to the output of assistance. The outcome of assistance is, however, evident in recipient organizations, and especially in their activities and achievements. Moreover, a focus on recipients and their activities allows us to pinpoint unintended outcomes and consequences of civil society assistance. For all these reasons, this analysis will concentrate on a small number of recipients, so-called “main recipients” that may be, and often are, supported by a wide range of different donor organizations. Only the focus on the rooting of recipient organizations in society and a clarification of the consistency of recipient’s achievements with the normative concept of civil society allows us to reveal the effects of external assistance. The dissertation thus clarifies to what extent main recipient organizations act as carriers of civil society, whether they transmit the interests of their constituency into politics, whether they fulfill a watch-dog function and whether they are connected to society. In brief, the dissertation project aims to determine whether major recipients of aid fulfill democratic functions

attributed to civil society. This study therefore analyzes main recipients, their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness as carriers of civil society.¹²

The focus on recipients, however, does not imply that the donor side is neglected. In order to determine to what extent civil society development is shaped by foreign actors, resources and advice, the inflow of foreign assistance needs to be assessed on a quantitative as well as qualitative basis. A descriptive approach to donors, their programs and projects is thus necessary. In order to attain a broad picture of civil society assistance in CEE, the analysis concentrates on four major donors that have been of special importance in the region.

The chosen examples are the European Union as the largest supranational actor, the United States as the largest non-European national donor, and Germany as the largest European national donor active in CEE. Finally, the Soros foundation provides an example of private commitment. As for civil society, the research focuses on so-called 'infrastructural organizations' who aim to strengthen civil society by providing necessary infrastructure and support. The main reason for this sample lies in the heavy emphasize given to those organizations by donors.

The dissertation project will do all this by assessing the outcome of foreign assistance on civil society in two case studies: Poland and Slovakia. Being geographically close to the EU, the two countries Poland and Slovakia have been chosen because the prospect of EU membership is an important factor on democratization processes in both countries.

"The emphasis which most East European countries have given to joining European multilateral institutions has provided a powerful imperative for continuing with democratization so that they can meet the membership conditions" (Smith 2001: 54).

The interest of the dissertation is, however, less to assess the impact of possible EU membership on civil society in democratizing countries, but rather to analyze the outcome of financial and technical assistance directly granted to domestic actors. Therefore the impact of EU membership will be held constant with a most-similar systems approach. However, among the countries geographically close to the EU, Poland and Slovakia are the most dissimilar.

12 Main recipients have been identified by analyzing available project lists of the following donors: USAID, NED, EU (Phare), and the largest two German political foundations (FES, KAS). Thereby only programs and projects are covered that are explicitly designed by donors with the goal of supporting civil society. Main recipients are defined as NGOs that (1) are frequently supported by Western funds, hat (2) receive assistance from at least three of the donor organizations under investigation, and (3) whose budget relies to at least 30% on foreign sources.

On the one hand Poland, which is culturally homogenous, has a firm national identity and no major ethical or cultural cleavages. It is the country in the former communist block with the most encompassing dissident movement, a forerunner with regard to democratic reforms with no major drawbacks on its way to becoming a consolidated democracy. On the other hand Slovakia, which is a rather small and ethnically heterogeneous country characterized by late independence and a late and feeble national awakening. Slovakia showed only weak traces of dissident culture during communism, and was governed by a repressive communism system that left little room for experiments with liberalization. Furthermore, Slovakia faced an authoritarian reverse wave between 1994 and 1998. One has to note, however, that both countries are among the most Catholic countries in Europe and that both were at least partly part of the Habsburg Empire. Nonetheless, a comparison of both countries is capable of revealing the effects of foreign assistance in two different domestic settings that are additionally shaped by thoroughly different cultural and historical developments structuring civil society development. A comparison of civil society assistance in Poland and Slovakia thus provides the possibility to analyze the effects of foreign assistance in two different domestic settings.

The core of the claim developed in subsequent chapters is that civil society assistance may well contribute to a vibrant civil society. The empowerment of democratically oriented non-state actors and their inclusion into the range of decision-makers as well as the introduction of new ideas into domestic settings are the main mechanisms that can bring about change and result in a rise of associational life. The outcome of assistance depends, however, on certain facilitating conditions. These are firstly the type of transaction between donor and recipient. Secondly, domestic actor constellations determine the attractiveness of new ideas to the range of decision-makers and thus their introduction into domestic settings.

1.3 The Structure of the Dissertation

The dissertation begins with three chapters that are mainly theoretical and conceptual. Here theoretical clarifications, key claims and hypothesis that are central to this project will be developed. Then the methodology guiding the empirical research is presented. Finally, civil society assistance is analyzed in the two case studies Poland and Slovakia.

The first chapter focuses on the concept of civil society. More often than not, civil society is defined vaguely. Additionally, civil society is understood in various ways.

“Present-day political models that use the concept of civil society not only contradict one another but are also relatively poor in categories” (Cohen/Arato 1992: 83).

As a result, the concept is not easily open to empirical scrutiny (Beyme 2000). For the envisaged research project, a clarification of the term is therefore as crucial as an identification of observable indicators of a 'vibrant civil society'. An empirical analysis of civil society is, however, problematic due to the normative character of the concept. A review of the literature on civil society quickly reveals that the concept hardly refers to a given observable state but rather to a utopian ideal. In order to solve the problem of empirically analyzing a normative concept, the dissertation distinguishes two dimensions of civil society: (1) a structural dimension, and (2) a cultural dimension. Whereas the former points to the observable features of civil society, i.e. voluntary organizations of social life between state and market, the latter refers to the moral qualities on which civil society is built. This distinction allows us to observe the actual state of civil society in a given country by focusing on both dimensions separately. While the structural dimension is determined by the number and plurality of non-governmental organizations, the cultural dimension is apparent in civic participation, the relationships between different groups of society and the type of relationship between self-organized forms of social life and the state. Active citizens who are able and willing to represent their interests, cross-cutting cleavages among groups of civil society, a relationship between associations based on cooperation, tolerance and trust, the existence of peaceful conflict-resolution mechanisms, the capacity for common action, and a relationship between self-organized social life and the state that is based on cooperation and mutual recognition are factors that originate in the cultural dimension of civil society.

The second chapter aims to determine civil society assistance in greater detail. Civil society assistance is defined as deliberate, direct and explicit involvement of external actors into domestic settings. Civil society assistance focuses exclusively on societal actors of the recipient state and is thus always transnational in character. While recipients are thus exclusively non-state actors, donors may be state or non-state actors. The chapter approaches civil society assistance from a donor perspective acknowledging the fact that civil society assistance is first and foremost an enterprise driven by external actors. The chapter thus highlights the objectives, concepts and strategies of external donors. It will be clear that donors do not support civil society as an end in itself but as a means to achieve other ends such as democracy or good governance. Civil society assistance is thus always intentional and interest-driven. Additionally, donors base their assistance on vague concepts of civil society and comprehend civil society assistance largely as NGO support. Thereby donors support NGOs with two major strategies. Donors firstly aim to strengthen the institutions of civil society and thus focus on the structure of civil society. So called 'institution building' is inspired by the assumption that associations and non-governmental organizations will automatically result in a vibrant civil society. Secondly, donors may apply a more fine-tuned approach and target a change in the behavioral and evaluative attitudes of recipients. This

strategy labeled 'capacity building' aims to 'make people democratic' and focuses on the orientations of actors. Moreover, it aspires to trigger processes of learning and cognitive change. Additionally, donors largely rely on project-specific support in their efforts to assist civil society. The chapter concludes that civil society assistance and the strategies donors apply often yield unintended and even negative effects. Having own interests at stake raises doubt about the credibility of the donor. This even more so, as civil society assistance is always selective and political. The selectivity of donors that equips some with resources, know-how and contacts abound and leaves others with nothing generates not seldom envy and resentment as well as fierce competition among NGOs. As a result, civil society assistance often weakens rather than strengthens ties inside civil society. Moreover, project-specific support nurtures opportunistic behavior of recipients. In view of the scarce financial resources available, only NGOs that flexibly adapt to altering donors' wants guarantee their financial existence. The intentional and selective character of civil society assistance thus may translate into nothing more than a supplementary stratum of donor-driven NGOs that fail to address their local constituencies. Additionally, by empowering certain domestic actors, donors intervene into the domestic power struggle. Civil society assistance is thus always political in nature, although donors try hard to appear nonpartisan and impartial. Civil society assistance thus risks being perceived as an illegitimate form of political intervention from without. Donors may be seen as unwelcome intruders, recipients as traitors and puppets of alien interests.

The fourth chapter is concerned with theory. The aim is to theoretically derive plausible answers to the question of the outcome of civil society assistance. In doing so, the theoretical considerations are not based on one encompassing or holistic theory. They rather make use of a range of theoretical insights from different disciplines, thus accepting the fact that the analysis investigates international factors impacting on domestic structures and hence lies at the edge of international relations theory and comparative science (Hartmann 1997). The research thus follows the suggestion of Fritz Scharpf (1997: 16):

"... we need to make greater investments in the theoretical quality of the working hypotheses we use. Moreover, since we also cannot deduce our working hypotheses from comprehensive theories, we need to combine more limited partial theories or well-understood "mechanisms" in modular explanations of complex cases".

Based on sociological assumptions that stress the importance of the cultural basis of civil society and of recipient responses, the chapter aims to identify the conditions under which change occurs. In other words, what makes it possible that civil society can travel in contexts that lack a "*civilizational competence*"? To answer this question the dissertation puts actors and their interactions in the center of analysis in line with actor-centered institutionalism developed by Fritz Scharpf and Renate Mayntz (Scharpf/Mayntz 1995, Scharpf 1997).

Emphasis is placed on how institutions are the result of social interaction. Although actors, their capabilities, orientations and interactions are affected by institutional settings, they do not determine, but only structure actors' choices and strategic options. Such a framework leaves room for actor choices that may result in institutional and cultural change and also acknowledges the possibility and importance of cognitive change, that is, of learning.

Following the insights of actor-centered institutionalism, two modes of external intervention will be identified and labeled 'empowerment' and 'learning'. External actors may first alter the capabilities of domestic actors, i.e. "*all action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects and to a certain degree*" (Scharpf 1997: 43). By providing finances, technical equipment but also important information and know-how, donors may increase the action resources of chosen domestic actors, thus altering domestic actor constellations. A change in political outcomes is the likely consequence. Secondly, external actors may impact upon the orientations, that is, the perceptions and preferences, of domestic actors. The work of Peter Haas (1992) on "*epistemic communities*" and Kathrin Sikkink (1993) on "*principled-issue networks*" reveal how this may happen and how a transfer of ideas and values into different cultural settings is possible. Transnational networks that are based on a core consensus of shared principles or common professional backgrounds have been identified as the main factor behind processes of cognitive convergence and cognitive change across national borders. Transnational networks of donors and recipients that are based on a core consensus are thus a promising mechanism when it comes to creating "*civilizational competence*", "*civic ethos*" or an "*appropriate spirit*" (Offe 2000a) among recipients. Whether new ideas find their way into domestic settings depends, however, on the action resources of the "learners" on the one hand and on the attractiveness of the new orientations to other players of the political game on the other hand. In brief, transnational "principled issue networks" on the one hand, and domestic actor constellations and interactions on the other determine the outcome of civil society assistance.

The fifth chapter describes the methodology and research design of the empirical analysis. The chapter exposes the rationale behind the selection of the two country cases under investigation, and determines what to observe and how. Five questions that guide the empirical analysis are identified: First, what types of non-governmental organizations receive foreign attention? Are main recipients of assistance identifiable? Second, are such "main recipients" self-sustainable in the long run? Third, do their constituencies and the population at large accept them as legitimate domestic actors? Fourth, do the main recipients of assistance contribute to the advancement of civil society on the structural or cultural dimension in the countries under investigation? In other words, can they be labeled "carriers

of civil society”? And finally and most importantly, to what extent does foreign support assist the main recipients in fulfilling their role as carriers of civil society?

The sixth chapter describes the four main donors of civil society assistance identified above and their major programs and activities of civil society assistance in Central and Eastern Europe. The seventh and eight chapters finally conduct the two case studies. In order to verify or falsify the hypothesis that civil society assistance promotes and strengthens civil society via the mechanisms empowerment and learning, this study has investigated civil society assistance to Poland and Slovakia throughout the 1990s. Both case studies proceed in the following steps. First, the analysis identifies the cultural legacies and preconditions of civil society in each case. Second, the state of civil society roughly ten years after transition will be portrayed. In doing so, the analysis highlights the distinction between the “structural” and the “cultural” dimension of civil society and makes use of the indicators identified in the first chapter.¹³ The third section then gives an overview of the history of civil society assistance in each country throughout the 1990s. Finally each case study focuses on the output and outcome of external assistance to civil society. Special emphasis will be placed here on major recipients, their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness in advancing the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society. The role of these “main recipients” in advancing a relationship between civil society and the state, in acting as intermediaries of assistance and in building networks and horizontal links among various civil society groups is of particular importance. The study thus aims to clarify the extent to which civil society assistance supports non-governmental organizations that act as carriers of civil society. However, the analysis does not stop here. The relationship between donors and recipients also requires clarification. Thus, the extent to which major recipients benefited from external assistance will be assessed. The final chapter will summarize the major results, and draw implications for further efforts to support civil society from abroad.

13 The identified indicators are: (1) number of NGOs and associations, (2) thematic distribution of NGOs, (3) regional distribution of NGOs, (4) civic participation and volunteerism, (5) relationship between civil society and state, (6) horizontal relationships between NGOs.

1.4 Research

The study relies on four different sources of information. First, the analysis makes use of the extensive secondary literature on civil society development in Poland and Slovakia and studies focusing on NGO campaigns and civil society achievements in both countries. Second, databases of NGOs such as the KLON/JAWOR database in Poland, and the SAIA database in Slovakia were a valuable source of information as well as several surveys on the NGO sector in both countries. The study highly benefits from a survey conducted among Polish and Slovak NGOs in the context of a research project that focused on “*democracy promotion and protection in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*” (DPP).¹⁴ The survey in which 72 Polish and 93 Slovak non-governmental organizations participated and which took place in 2002/03 inquires into characteristics of NGOs in Poland and Slovakia and in their relationships with foreign donors (see appendix 8). In addition, materials of donors and recipients proved to be valuable sources of information on donor and recipients’ strategies, objectives, underlying concepts and activities. Last but not least, the study relies heavily on qualitative expert interviews conducted by the author in both countries under investigation. In order to get a broad as possible picture, experts have been chosen from four different groups: (1) representatives of donor organizations in the home country (if possible) and especially in the recipient country; (2) representatives of recipient organizations; (3) local scholars working on civil society in their country; (4) politicians and representatives of NGOs in the country under investigation (see appendix 9).

14 The project was a combined effort of Professor Claus Offe at the Humboldt-University, Berlin and Professor Philippe C. Schmitter at the European University Institute in Florence and their respective research staff conducted in 1999-2002. It was inspired by the question whether democratization from the outside was at all feasible and aimed to clarify the actual outcome of external involvement in processes of democratization. A part of the project focused on external activities to support civil society assistance.

2 The Concept of Civil Society

The concept of civil society requires clarification. As will be clear in the following, definitions of civil society usually do not provide clear characteristics or indicators. Instead they define civil society negatively and say what it is not or normatively and highlight its beneficial influences on society and state. Civil society always was and still is a normative concept. Its aim is less to describe an actual state, but to point to a utopian ideal or the way reality should be. In consequence, the concept has rightly been criticized for escaping any analytical and empirical verification (Hann 2000, Beyme 2000). Any study on civil society, however, needs to close the gap between reality and ideal. The analysis thus faces the dilemma of observing and describing what actually is without diluting the normative concept of civil society.

The following chapter aims to solve this dilemma and investigates the concept of civil society. It explores the role of civil society in sustaining and stabilizing democracy and democratization and aims to identify indicators for research. The roots of civil society in post-communist societies will additionally be highlighted. The chapter proceeds in three steps. It starts with a brief summary of contemporary understandings of civil society. A review of various approaches to civil society helps to comprehend what civil society is and what it does. Second, the chapter proposes a working definition of civil society and tackles the tricky question how the normative concept of civil society can be studied empirically. In doing so, the chapter differentiates between a 'structural' and a 'cultural' dimension of civil society. This distinction makes clear that civil society consists on the one hand of formally established non-governmental organizations, associations and groups, but requires on the other hand a respective cultural basis, a civil ethos or "*Sittlichkeit*" without which the concept remains hollow and fails to live up to its normative ideal. The chapter argues that the differentiation into a structural and cultural dimension allows us to study the development of civil society in different cultural settings and to pinpoint indicators for research. Finally, the chapter explores the preconditions of civil society in post-communist settings.

2.1 Contemporary Understandings of Civil Society

The concept of civil society understood as a realm distinct of the state developed in the 18th and 19th century. Previously the terms civil and political society were used as synonyms in relation to the classical concept of Aristotele's *politiké koinonia* or *societas civilis* in which the public realm of equal citizens was at the same time the realm of politics and the state. As a result, the term civil society was less determined by the distinction between society and the state than by the distinction between the public and the private. In the 18th century political thinkers such as Ferguson, Tocqueville, Paine, Locke or Hegel raised the question of the

relationship between civil society and political authority anew and differentiated between civil society and the state.¹⁵ The concept of civil society was then grounded in concerns with problems inherent in complex societies based on modern economic production on the one hand and the dangers inherent in state despotism on the other.¹⁶

Starting in the end of the 19th far into the 20th century, the concept of civil society was nearly forgotten. However, it celebrated a glorious renaissance in the last 20 years. “*A strange coalition between Eastern-European ‘dissidents’ and left-wing oriented intellectuals of the West*” (Hann 2000: 87) revitalized and renewed the concept. Eastern dissidents such as Adam Michnik, Vaclav Havel, György Konrad or Elemer Hankiss (re-) discovered the concept of civil society as a realm independent of the state, implying a dualism between the people and the repressive authoritarian state. One should note that the renewed concept of civil society in Central and Eastern Europe had – in the words of Alexander Smolnar – “*never (...) much to do with the grand theoretical debates that one may trace across two centuries in the works of Locke, Adam Smith, Hegel, Tocqueville, Marx ...*” (Smolnar 1996: 24). Instead civil society was defined in opposition to the communist system, it was understood as one unitary agent determined by autonomy and solidarity. Civil society was regarded as ‘the reality as it should be’ connected with the strong conviction of a lost normality associated with the West.¹⁷ Civil society thus described a utopian state, namely the utopia of a society free of communist rule. Furthermore, the renewed concept lost the fears and risks attached to it in the 18th century by Hegel and later Marx.¹⁸ The new authors were less concerned with the dangers and risks of a commercialized, bourgeois society; social conflict, self-interest, corruption were no issues; they were instead concerned with the dangers of unlimited state power just like the naturalists and authors of the Scottish enlightenment. The negative connotations of the term ‘*bürgerliche Gesellschaft*’ described by Hegel and Marx vanished.¹⁹

15 See Keane (1988) for a detailed description of how this distinction developed.

16 For classical writers on civil society see: Arato / Cohen (1992); Keane (1988).

17 For a description of this “ethical model” of civil society see: Ogrodzinski (1995).

18 For Hegel civil society is not a natural condition of freedom but rather a historically produced sphere of ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) positioned between household and state. However, civil society cannot remain civil unless it is ordered politically by a supreme public authority, by the law, the police and by corporations which remedy injustices inherent in a ‘system of needs’ and which synthesizes particular interests (see e.g. Keane 1988).

19 This fact becomes obvious in the German language due to the new usage of the term ‘*Zivilgesellschaft*’ instead of ‘*Bürgerliche Gesellschaft*’. While the former is associated with *citoyen*, a citizen that strives for the common good, the latter focuses on the *bourgeois*, who strives for his economic well-being.

The West (re-)imported the concept of civil society from the East. While in the East the concept was re-vitalized in response to the totalitarian state, for the West the concept was highly welcomed as a response to a growing disillusionment with the state. Firstly, it was adopted by leftist intellectuals who saw the concept as a socio-democratic answer to the controversies of the Keynesian Welfare-State and as a *“plausible surrogate for the illusionary visions of revolution of the new left”* (Arato 1990: 110; translation by the author). Civil society – and a theory thereof - seemed to be a way to overcome theoretical debates between pluralists, liberals and communitarians, as Arato / Cohen (1992) stated in the introduction to their book. Soon the concept was used by scholars and politicians of different theoretical and political backgrounds. However, the concept did not develop as one theory encompassing different approaches (as Arato/Cohen presumed). The term civil society is instead associated with various meanings and based on divergent assumptions.

The following section outlines various contemporary understandings of the term. It will be evident that the visions of civil society described below are all based on different understandings of the “self”, the state, state-society relationships and democracy. Some approaches apply a broad definition of the term. Accordingly, civil society is regarded as a realm outside the state that incorporates a wide range of organized entities. By contrast, others define civil society narrowly and point to segments of society that act as carriers of civil society (Kocka 2000:22). What all concepts have in common, however, is that they describe a normative ideal, i.e. they portray, albeit not explicitly, how reality should be. Moreover, this reality as it should be is more often than not a democratic state. However, the mechanisms by which civil society is assumed to strengthen democracy are rather diverse.

2.1.1 Liberal Approaches - Civil Society as a Realm Outside the State

Traditionally civil society is a truly liberal concept aiming to guarantee the freedom of the individual. The major driving force behind the concept was the aim to fight despotism. The concept of civil society is hence established as the opposite of despotism, as *“a space in which social groups could exist and move – something which exemplified and would ensure softer, more tolerable conditions of existence”* (Hall 1995:1). As a bastion of free citizens against despotic rule, the concept is in this view inevitably rooted in individualism (ibid: 15). Without a “modular man”, an individual neither caged by kings nor kin-ship who *“takes his own promises and commitments seriously”*... and *“can combine into specific-purpose, ad hoc limited association without binding himself by some blood ritual”* (Gellner 1995: 41p), and without *“civil qualities” “engendering a sense of obligation to (...) anonymous members of the same civil society”* (Shils 1997: 71) a civil society is not feasible.

Such a perspective defines civil society broadly. It does not regard a small segment of society which acts as the main carrier of ethical life as most suitable in bringing about the merits of civil society. Civil society is instead seen as a realm independent of the state, including all the spheres of society juxtaposed to the state. Civil society thus encompasses the inseparable roles of the individual as a private family member, an economically active bourgeois and political citizen (Arato / Cohen 1992: 219).

From a classical rights-oriented liberal perspective in line with John Locke, civil society is seen as the sphere of individual citizens doing their business freely and independently of state interventions. Civil society is a sphere in which the rights of the individual to private life, freedom and property is protected from state arbitrariness. The free individuals transfer parts of their rights to the government in order to ensure the security of life, property and freedom. However, only those parts necessary to guarantee this security and to make peaceful co-existence possible are transferred. The role of government is consequently reduced to a guarantor of peace and stability, upholding the social order approved by majority.²⁰ Civil society is consequently the sphere of all societal life apart from the state. It is neither in opposition to nor in control of the state, nor does it complement it. It simply stands outside a minimal state. In fact, neither control nor opposition to the state is necessary, as civil society determines the boundaries of governmental rule. In this sense

“Civil society is the governor which regulates both the economy and the government although both are, to some degree, autonomous” (Shils 1997: 74).

From this standpoint, civil society and the market economy cannot be divided. Individual rights to privacy, the public sphere (free speech and association), and equality before the law are to be protected, and governmental rule is restricted to limited spheres.

A slightly different view, albeit grounded in individualism and a broad definition of civil society, goes one step further. Civil society is more than a sphere outside the state that is protected from governmental rule. It also acts as a countervailing force, which balances and subsequently controls state power. In this perspective, a civil society counterbalancing and controlling the state is essential to complement democratic state institutions, ensure the functioning of democratic rules and regulations, and prevent the centralization of state powers.

The interpretation of civil society as a countervailing power is based on Tocqueville and Montesquieu, both liberal thinkers concerned with the dangers of despotism. Legitimate rule based on checks and balances as evident in Montesquieu's division of powers was regarded

as the effective mechanism to counter despotism. Tocqueville was also concerned with the dangers inherent in an egalitarian society and feared “democratic despotism”. In his view, the equality and the rule of the many was undermining the achievements of cultural life and endangering the freedom of the individual. His solution entails the reinforcement of liberal institutions as e.g. local self-government, free press, and independent associations in order to balance the power of the state. Subsequently, civil society is understood as the organization of strong and autonomous groups that balance the state.²¹ Such a view is evident in the following definition:

“Civil society is that set of diverse non-governmental institutions, which is strong enough to counterbalance the state, and, whilst not preventing the state from fulfilling its role of keeper of the peace and arbitrator between major interests can nevertheless prevent the state from dominating and atomizing the rest of society” (Gellner 1995: 32).

Civil society is consequently a strong force able to counterbalance and to control the state without preventing it from fulfilling its necessary tasks.

2.1.2 The Pluralist Approach - Civil Society and the Plurality of Organized Collective Interests

A different viewpoint stresses the importance of the plurality of civil society organizations and associations as the building block for modern democracy. Similarly to Hegel, who in his *Philosophy of Rights* assigned corporations the important task of mediating between civil society and the powers of the state, major importance is given to organizations and associations that act as an intermediary sphere between society and state and mediate the plurality of interests to the state (Streek 1987: 472). Such a viewpoint applies an all-embracing understanding of civil society including particular and economic interests.

The basic element that links society and state is not the individual citizen and his/her interests but large organizations and organized collective interests. These organizations mediate citizen’s interest to the state and thus ensure accountable government. One must note, however, that this holds only if certain assumptions apply: (1) individual citizens in their position as organizational members equally determine the politics of their organization, and (2) the various organizations enjoy equal opportunities to influence decision making

20 For more on the works of John Locke, see: Braun/Heine/Opolka (1990: 136pp), Schmidt (2000: 66pp).

21 For more on the works of works of Montesquieu and Tocqueville, see: Hall (1995: 7pp), Naßmacher (1997: 297pp, 317pp), Braun/Heine/Opolka (1990: 154), Schmidt (2000).

processes, and that the various interests of society are equally represented and accounted for by political power holders.

Critics point out that neither assumption is supportable. Large organizations are seldom run by their individual (often inactive) members, rather by small and powerful committees. Moreover, the degree of organizational representation as well as the capacity for collective action varies strongly in different sectors. Depending on the size of the organization and the availability of resources, some find it easier to organize effectively than others.²²

Pluralist approaches additionally point to the capacity of an organized civil society to peacefully resolve conflicts by mediating various interests. Social group conflict that runs along the line of major cleavages has the potential of disintegrating society in a way that makes democracy an uncertain goal. This is especially the case if different cleavages mix and accumulate:

“Where a number of historic cleavages intermix and create the basis for ideological politics, democracy will be unstable and weak, for by definition such politics does not include the concept of tolerance” (Lipset 1981: 74).

However, a society that is organized in a way that crosscuts major historical cleavages stabilizes a democratic system, if individuals are members of different associations, and espoused to cross-pressures:

“The available evidence suggests that the chances for stable democracy are enhanced to the extent that groups and individuals have a number of crosscutting, politically relevant affiliations. To the degree that a significant proportion of the population is pulled among conflicting forces, its members have an interest in reducing the intensity of political conflict” (ibid: 77p.).

Multiple membership in various organizations thus results in a readiness for compromise and the integration of interests. A plurality of civil society organizations is therefore regarded as a guarantor of peaceful conflict-resolution.

2.1.3 Critical Democracy Theory - Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s the concept of civil society was revitalized as *“the primary locus for the potential expansion of democracy under ‘really existing’ liberal-democratic regimes”* (Arato/Cohen 1992:viii). The “democratic question” was raised again and civil society as a means to self-organization and self-government was seen

22 See e.g. Olson (1968), Offe (1972).

as the solution to problems inherent in contemporary democratic systems endangered by neo-corporatist arrangements cast by influential interest groups.

Civil society was hence potentially a way of achieving “*more democracy*” (Rödel / Frankenberger / Dubiel 1989) and “*deliberative democracy*” (Habermas 1996). Based on the discourse ethics developed by Habermas and applying the theory of communicative action, in this view the critical potential of civil society is rooted in its capacity to create autonomous forms of discourse and to facilitate the institutionalization of discourses.

Civil society is thus the sphere in which citizens can debate freely and independently of the state and other authorities. In other words, it connects private citizens with a public sphere “*dominated by mass media and large agencies, observed by market and opinion research, and inundated by the public relations work, propaganda, and advertising of political parties and groups*” (Habermas 1996: 367). This ability is of utmost importance as the public sphere is regarded as the major element linking the private segments of society and state:

“In complex societies, the public sphere consists of an intermediary structure between the political system, on the one hand, and the private sectors of the lifeworld and functional systems, on the other” (ibid: 373).

Civil society enables citizens to contribute and shape the discourse taking place in the political public sphere and gain public influence on the political process. It therefore has the potential to legitimize democratic decision making, to enhance the acceptance of democratic procedures and to contribute to deliberate, i.e. publicly debated and legitimized decision-making. Moreover, actors of civil society are concerned with revitalizing and enlarging civil society and the public sphere.

Civil society therefore obtains a radical democratic and emancipatory potential. However, this is relatively limited. Only if the gained influence passes through the filters of the institutionalized procedures of democratic opinion and will formation and is channeled through parliamentary debates into legitimate lawmaking, public influence is transformed into what Habermas calls “*communicative power*” (ibid: 371). The public sphere and civil society consequently only have radical democratic potential within and with the constitutionally institutionalized decision-making process, in other words, within the democratic state.

The concept of civil society put forward by writers such as Arato/Cohen and Habermas differs greatly from the traditional Hegelian model of a *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, pictured as a ‘system of needs’, or more specifically as a market system with social labor and commodity exchange. Civil society is understood as a third sphere distinct from political and economic society and independent of both: state and market. It is private in content and public in

character and consists of the public spheres of societal communication and voluntary association.²³

"Civil society is composed of those more or less spontaneously emergent associations, organizations, and movements that, attuned to how societal problems resonate in the private life spheres, distill and transmit such reactions in amplified form to the public sphere. The core of civil society comprises a network of associations that institutionalises problem-solving discourses on questions of general interest inside the framework of organized public spheres" (Habermas 1996: 367).

Social movements and citizens initiatives are regarded as *"the dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies"* (Arato/Cohen 1992: 492), for the main reason that they *"are capable of influencing policy and molding political culture without entry into the field of power politics and without necessarily endangering liberal or democratic institutions"* (ibid: xviii). In contrast to formalized institutions of the state and large mass organizations, social movements and citizens' initiatives by intellectuals, concerned citizens, radical professionals, and self-proclaimed "advocates" have the *"advantage of greater sensitivity in detecting and identifying new problem situations"* (Habermas 1996: 381). They have the capacity to mobilize the public by effectively and dramatically presenting new issues, while relying in part on sensational actions, mass protests, and persistent campaigning.

2.1.4 Civil Society and Social Capital

The work of Alexis deTocqueville points to a further aspect of civil society: The capacity of civil society to act as a 'school of democracy'. In this sense, a variety of voluntary and free associations form, habituate and enshrine in their members civil qualities such as tolerance, trust and the willingness to compromise, subsequently creating a political-participatory potential that immunizes society against illegitimate interventions. Civil society organizations thus stimulate the civil qualities necessary to prevent despotic rule. They consist of citizens capable and willing to stand up for their rights and to participate in democratic politics. As a result, voluntary organizations stabilize a democratic order and subsequently build the heart of a functioning democracy. Following this perspective, civil society socializes its members by developing civil qualities inevitable for democracy.²⁴

The most famous contemporary scholar, who falls back on and modifies this basic idea is Robert Putnam. He sees "social capital" as the key to making democracy work (Putnam 1993). Social capital is thereby defined as follows:

²³ See Habermas (1996: 366, Cohen/Arato (1992: 410p).

²⁴ See Croissant / Lauth / Merkel (2000: 12), Gabriel et al (2002: 20pp).

“Social capital (...) refers to features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam 1993: 167).

Social capital and its elements social trust, norms of generalized reciprocity and horizontal networks of civic activity contribute to economic as well as institutional success by facilitating coordinated actions and spontaneous cooperation for mutual benefit. Social capital is thus the basic glue that holds society together.

Social networks and networks of civic commitment are conceived as an essential element of social capital as they play a major role in creating both mutual trust and norms of generalized reciprocity. Networks of civic commitment have this powerful effect for various reasons:

“Networks of civic commitment increase the potential costs to a defector in any individual transaction (...), (...) foster robust norms of reciprocity (...), (...) facilitate communication and improve the flow of information about trustworthiness of individuals (...) (and) (...) embody past success at collaboration”... (ibid: 173p).

Social networks, voluntary associations and organizations are the important elements that bring about a stable democracy. However, not all associations are equally equipped in facilitating social cooperation. Only organizations that are horizontally structured are capable to achieve that goal. Horizontally ordered groups such as sport clubs, cooperatives, mutual aid society or cultural associations are best suited to positively contribute to good governance. In summary, civil society consists of small, non-hierarchical self-organized entities, which ensure personal contact. Only then can inter-personal trust and stable social norms and values develop. In the words of Putnam: *“Good government in Italy is a by-product of singing groups and soccer clubs, not prayer”* (ibid: 176).

Putnam’s analysis, however, provides a bitter pill for countries that lack deep traditions of civic life and cannot look back to a history marked by a flourishing community life, guilds, neighborhood associations, tower societies or other forms of civic commitment. The only advice left to them is *“get a history”* (Pridham 1994). Pointing to the persistency and astonishing constancy of traditions of civic involvement even in times of extensive social change (1993: 148pp), Putnam leaves countries with the “wrong” history little hope for a stable democratic order.

2.1.5 Communitarian Approaches - Civil Society and Small Communities

Communitarians stress a further function of civil society: the ability of civil society to create identity, solidarity and an encompassing interest.

Communitarianism evolved from the criticism of liberalism. As a result, communitarians can not be comprehended as a coherent school, rather as a group of diverse critics of liberalism.

The main argument common to all states that a liberal society undermines the very conditions on which it relies and consequently cannot unfold its functions. The critic circles around the perception of individuals seen as “*unencumbered selves*” (Sandel 1984) or ‘atomized individuals’. Humans are instead social beings whose identity is formed in communities. Without an interest oriented at the common good and without a (republican) civic virtue, civic commitment, solidarity and an encompassing interest, the very basis on which individuals and individual rights rely will be undermined.²⁵

The communitarian literature on civil society is nurtured by the fear that associational life in the “advanced” capitalist and social democratic countries is at risk (see e.g. Sandel 1984; Walzer 1995). The steady attenuation of everyday cooperation and civic friendship as well as networks through which civility is produced and reproduced have been neglected. Only social networks and communities have the capacity to build a social character and a civic virtue inevitable for collective life and democracy by re-producing codex of behavior. Not universal values postulated in a Kantian tradition, rather traditions of protest and reform are decisive. Communitarians thus stress the importance of small communities and networks on identity and on social life.

Civil society is seen as the autonomous sphere on which communities and a collective identity can take shape. Walzer (1995) comprehends civil society as the re-vitalization of social networks and as a society with collective identity which is oriented at the public good and at an encompassing interest. Civil society incorporates on the one hand institutions and organizations of societal self-organization, on the other hand, a political culture based on civic virtue.

2.1.6 The Third Sector Approach - Civil Society and Effectiveness

A further approach to civil society that is disconnected to classical accounts of civil society became prominent under the heading of the “Third Sector” and thus placed emphasis on the distinction of civil society organizations from the state and market. In contrast to critical democracy theory that stresses the participatory potential and political role of NGOs, the Third Sector approach originally underlines the efficiency of NGOs in providing services. Civil society and its organizations are in this sense more efficient than the state and the market in performing certain tasks. The research on the “third” or “nonprofit” sector thus originated from the “crisis of the state” and in particular the crisis of the welfare state (Anheier/Salamon 1999: 4) and points to the capacity of NGOs to compensate for state as well as market failure. Non-

25 See Reese-Schäfer (2001).

governmental organizations, so the argument goes, possess comparative advantages over the state and market. On the one hand, NGOs enjoy more public confidence and trust than the market. On the other hand, NGOs are seen as more flexible, innovative and cost-efficient than the state in providing services (see e.g. Brunnengräber/Walk 2000). Although the research on the Third Sector is grounded in concerns of the diminishing state capacity to fulfill social services, its scope widened in recent years due to the rise and growing importance of NGO activities in policy fields such as development, environment, minority issues and so forth. Attention shifts to the political and participatory role of NGOs and to the role of NGOs as carriers of civil society. This shift is evident in a new terminology that is increasingly applied: the term “non-governmental organization” is increasingly replaced by the term “civil society organizations” stressing the postulated civil society potential of NGOs. Third Sector organizations are thereby defined as follows: “*formally structured, independent, voluntary, self-organized and non-profit oriented non-governmental organizations*” (Piller 1999: 13, see also Anheier/Salamon 1999: 3/4).²⁶

Despite the shift of the Third Sector research from an exclusive focus on NGOs as savior of the Welfare state to the democratic potential of civil society organization one important feature of the literature prevails: efficiency. NGOs or CSOs are regarded as more efficient than state and market in providing services. It has been argued that the service function of civil society is responsible for its global attractiveness. Keane (1998:34p), for example, attributes the global spread and attractiveness of the concept to a disillusionment with state-centered concepts. Global markets, transnational relations penetrating state borders, and global problems shed doubt on the ability of the territorial nation-state to fulfill basic functions.

“The current ‘globalization’ of the language of civil society is overdetermined ... by the dysfunctions resulting from “the overreach of the state” (Chandhoke), and by the spreading conviction that only civil societies can do certain things, or perform certain functions best” (ibid.).

As a result “the NGO” is perceived as a strange amalgamation of an efficient “service deliverer” and a politically active “advocacy group” that contributes to stable democracy by minimizing state activity on the one hand and by increasing citizen participation on the other.

²⁶ See the literature on the Third Sector: e.g. Klein (1997), Anheier et al (2000), Brunnengräber / Walk (2000), Anheier /Salamon (1999).

2.1.7 Summary

It was made clear that the concept of civil society has traveled far through time and space thus acquired various connotations and different meanings. One similarity of various approaches can be identified however. The concept of civil society is and has always been normative and refers to a democratic ideal. The outlined visions of civil society all point to the importance of a vibrant civil society for a stable, legitimate and efficient democratic system.

The mechanisms that allow for the democratic contribution of civil society are, however, poles apart. Reduced to bare bones, the various virtues of civil society can be summarized under labels that refer to the major beneficial influence of civil society on democracy: In this way, seven major functions of civil society can be identified: (1) the protective function (the ability to create a space independent of and protected from the state); (2) the control function (the ability to build a countervailing power, inhibiting the centralization of state powers); (3) the coordination and mediation function (the ability to represent various interests of society, act as an intermediary between state and the individual and provide conflict resolution mechanisms); (4) the communicative function (the ability to communicate people's concerns to the public sphere and reflexively stabilize and widen civil society and the public sphere); (5) the socialization function (the ability to "teach" democratic behavior and to mobilize society), (6) the solidarity function (the ability to build identity and solidarity), and (7) the service function (the ability to fulfill certain tasks more efficiently than the state and the market).

It is not the purpose of this study to examine, verify or falsify these democratic virtues of civil society.²⁷ For this work the connection between civil society and democracy is only of importance in this regard as it is responsible for the prominence of the concept among scholars and practitioners alike. Without the widely believed positive effects of civil society on democracy, external actors would hardly aim to strengthen civil society from the outside. Civil society assistance would not exist and arouse our interest.

Before I embark upon the problem of defining and operationalizing the normative concept of civil society, one caveat is in order. One should restrain from aggregating the democratic

27 One should note that the positive correlation between civil society and democracy has been challenged recently (see e.g. Ekiert/Kubik 1999; Lauth/Merkel 1997, Hann 2000). Critics point to a potential "dark side" or "uncivil" sides of civil society (e.g. Lauth/Merkel 1997: 28p). We may, however, conclude with Howard (2003: 44), who points out: *"But in the end, while they (the critics of a strong positive relationship between civil society and democracy) might dispute the relative emphasis placed on civil society when compared to other factors, few would actually deny its importance in establishing and sustaining a vibrant and healthy democratic system. And fewer still, if any, would suggest that a weaker civil society would actually be more beneficial for a democracy"*.

virtues of civil society regardless of the theoretical contemplation on which each beneficial influence is based. Abstracting the democratic functions of civil society from the underlying understandings of civil society and thus neglecting that these interpretations are based on diverse assumptions of the self, society and the state, leaves the concept of civil society open to arbitrariness. One may doubt whether civil society can fulfill all functions simultaneously. Being involved as a representative of particular interests in the political decision making process impedes the ability to act as a 'watch-dog' of state decisions. A civil society organization is therefore unlikely to simultaneously play the role of a countervailing power and an intermediary. An uncritical accumulation of the different functions is thus not possible (Lauth/Merkel 1997: 29).

2.2 Studying Civil Society

In the following I aim to solve the puzzle how the normative concept of civil society can be studied empirically. In this regard, three main problems are at stake: First, a definition of civil society is needed that is open to empirical research, on the one hand, and preserves the normative orientation of the concept on the other hand. As made clear above, the concept of civil society points to a utopian ideal how society should be. Most accounts stress the beneficial effects of civil society on democracy. However, they fail to identify clear indicators for research. Second, one may raise doubt whether the concept of civil society is at all applicable in transforming societies and newly established democracies. Critics point to the origins of civil society as a purely Western concept that does not travel easily in other cultural and historical contexts (see e.g. Hann 2000). Not only has the concept been developed in Western Europe, civil society in the West also grew over a long period of time, in a historic process that is inevitably connected to the establishment of a bourgeois middle class, and an economy based on commodity production in the 18th and 19th century. For all these reasons, one needs to pose the question whether civil society can be transferred into other contexts. Third, an empirical analysis of civil society requires observable indicators.

This section argues that these problems can be solved if we disconnect the organizations of civil society from the cultural basis of civil society and study both separately. To differentiate between what I call the 'structural dimension' and the 'cultural dimension' of civil society is promising in two aspects. First, a distinction between the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society allows us to pinpoint different stages of civil society development, and thus to focus on civil society in transforming societies. This method thus reconciles empirical and normative claims, and enables us to describe the actual in relation to the ideal. Second, concentrating on both dimensions separately facilitates the search for adequate indicators of research. Before I proceed to propose a dynamic model of civil society

development and identify appropriate indicators of research, in the following I clarify how civil society will be understood in this analysis.

2.2.1 Defining Civil Society

Every empirical research that focuses on civil society faces the problem of defining what civil society is and which entities and qualities characterize a vibrant civil society. As made clear above, this endeavor is problematic for two reasons. On the one hand, most accounts of civil society lack definitional clarity. On the other hand, civil society is taken as a means to achieve anything desirable. Due to the sharp contrast between the vague definition of the term and the idealistic image of civil society, the concept has been criticized for risking arbitrariness, and lacking empirical scrutiny. In the words of Keane (1998: 36):

“There are even signs that the meanings of the term “civil society” are multiplying to the point where, like a catchy advertising slogan, its risks imploding through overuse”.

In general, civil society refers to a sphere between the state and the individual and to formally organized forms of societal life. Most theorists agree that civil society consists of freely generated, voluntary (unforced), autonomous (independent), self-organized (self-constituted, self-mobilized), formally institutionalized (through laws and subjective rights) spheres of social life. A further main definitional characteristic of civil society on which all modern definitions of civil society agree is negative: civil society is not the state or independent of the state.²⁸

There is disagreement whether civil society incorporates the private or intimate sphere (as e.g. assumed by Walzer (1995) or Arato/Cohen (1992)) and the market (as e.g. postulated by Diamond (1994), Shils (1997)).

This study only focuses on formally established organizations that act publicly. As outlined above, the term civil society traditionally refers to the distinction between the private and the public sphere. The factor that characterizes a civil society is that citizens interact and trust

28 For example, Diamond (1994: 5) defines civil society as: *“the realm of organized social life that is voluntary, self-generating, (largely) self-supporting, autonomous from the state and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules.”* According to Arato/Cohen (1992: ix) civil society is *“... a sphere of social interaction between economy and state, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements, and forms of public communication. Modern Civil Society is created through forms of self-constitution and self-mobilization. It is institutionalized and generalized through laws, and especially subjective rights, that stabilize social differentiation...”*. Walzer (1995: 7) sees civil society as *“...the space of un-coerced human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest, and ideology – that fill this space”*. According to Howard (2003: 34) *“civil society refers to the realm of organizations, groups, and associations that are formally established, legally protected, autonomously run, and voluntarily joined by ordinary citizens”*.

others they do not know. Civil society is thus the realm where citizens leave their close circles of family and friends and interact not on the basis of sympathy or clan loyalty but in order to achieve a common interest or to advocate a common idea. For these reasons, the understanding of civil society applied in this study excludes the private and intimate sphere of the family and relational networks.

Furthermore, civil society as understood in this work is distinct from what has been called “*political society*” and “*economic society*” (see Linz/Stepan (1996); Merkel et al (2000), Howard (2003)). Whereas the former encompasses societal actors that participate in politics (e.g. leadership of political parties), the latter refers to economically oriented societal organizations such as firms or financial institutions. Following the line of argument of Habermas (1996) and Arato/Cohen (1992), civil society is the sphere where people organize not primarily in order to make a profit, as is the rationale of economic actors, or to achieve power, the driving force behind actors of the political society (although power and profit may be a side-effect). Instead citizens group together in order to jointly and autonomously solve their daily problems and press through their common interests without relying on the state or the market. Howard (2003: 35) further separates economic and political society on the one hand and civil society on the other by the distinction between the elite and mass level.

“In civil society, individual members can effect or prevent change by acting through their organization. In both economic society and political society, however, individual elites still have the power to control policies, even when they are not acting within, or on behalf of, an organization” (ibid).

In other words, civil society is the realm that enables citizens to participate in politics and to pursue their interests despite their lack of power and financial resources.²⁹

So far I have defined civil society as a sphere between the state and market that consists of freely established, voluntary, autonomous, self-organized, formally established associations, groups and non-governmental organizations. Although this definition corresponds with how most people (as e.g. donors, see chapter 3.4) comprehend civil society, it still does not suffice to fully grasp the notion of civil society. A definition that merely focuses on non-state associations and organizations fails to enshrine the normative assumptions of the concept. Critics point out that the mere existence of independent and voluntary associations and organizations does not suffice to stabilize a democratic system (e.g. Berman 1997). Organizations that fit the above definition may threaten or undermine a democratic system – terrorist, nationalist or racist organizations such as the ETA or the Ku Klux Klan are unlikely to contribute to more democracy. Additionally, society may organize along ethical or racial

²⁹ One should note that political, economic and civil society may overlap. See Howard (2003: 35pp).

lines. In such a case, civil society is not cross-cutting, but instead cements and even intensifies social conflict (Lauth/Merkel 1997: 28). Membership in various independent and cross-cutting organizations is therefore regarded as a major building block of civil society:

“Civil society must depend upon the ability to escape any particular cage; membership of autonomous groups needs to be both voluntary and overlapping if society is to become civil” (Hall 1995: 15).

If we define civil society by a mere focus on its organizations, neglecting the purpose of these organizations, their internal structure and membership, we have to take into account that civil society may reveal dark sides which undermine or hinder democratization.

In answering this criticism Gellner (1995: 32) points out that not every set of autonomous groups creates a civil society:

“Such (broad) definition would include under the notion of ‘civil society’ many forms of social order which in fact would not satisfy us, or those who have in recent years felt inspired by this slogan”.

Gellner’s answer points to a ‘modular man’, a free individual neither caged by kings nor by kinship groups. Others, such as Habermas, stress the importance of a liberal political cultural as a necessary basis of civil society:

“A robust civil society can develop only in the context of a liberal political culture and the corresponding patterns of socialization, and on the basis of an integral private sphere; it can blossom only in an already rationalized lifeworld. Otherwise, populist movements arise that blindly defend the frozen traditions of a lifeworld endangered by capitalist modernization” (Habermas 1996: 371)

Similarly, different writers point to an attached morality, a cultural, moral or ethical basis, an ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) (Hegel), a “*civic ethos*” (Offe 2000a), a “*civic culture*” (Almond/Verba 1963), or “*civilizational competence*” (Sztompka 1993) as inevitable characteristics of civil society.³⁰ Without the basis of appropriate moral qualities and patterns of behavior, civil society is not “civil” and fails to exert the beneficial influence on democracy outlined above. Civil society ensures coordinated action and peaceful conflict resolution under the condition of anonymity in complex societies. Complex societies are characterized by the fact that it is impossible for the citizens to know each other on a personal basis. This anonymity severely constrains collective action. How can I be sure that the other does not deceive me if I never have seen him before and cannot be sure of ever seeing him again? The answer points to the cultural basis of civil society that generates mutual trust and reciprocity. A *civic ethos* here does not consist of a common set of mutually shared values. Civil society is not a community of faith inspired by a common public good, a corporatist ideal, for which each individual is

30 See for example: Lauth/Merkel (1997:22); Hildermeier et al (2000: 7p).

willing to sacrifice him or herself. Instead it is a culture of a society of “modular man” who trust their fellow citizens not because they follow the same vision of the future but because one can trust that they do not damage one’s own vision of the future. The cultural basis of civil society thus consists first and foremost of a mutually shared understanding on what is wrong and what is right and the strong confidence that legal regulations are legitimate and binding and that (unknown) others equally comply with the same set of rules that ensure a “civilized” co-existence (see e.g. Offe 2000a). In this way, civil society generates reciprocal trust, respect and tolerance of others, merits without which peaceful conflict resolution is hardly possible.³¹ Besides the trust in others, civil society also relies on the trust in oneself, i.e. in one’s ability to bring about change or to inhibit changes that are not in one’s interest.

The inevitable consequence this contemplation suggests is that civil society consists of more than structural features, i.e. voluntary and independent associations and organizations of social life. It additionally requires a certain culture consisting of moral qualities such as tolerance and trust as well as a declared conviction that conflict can be solved in a peaceful manner and that citizens have the right and the might to criticize the state and to participate in politics if they see a necessity to do so. Moreover, civil society is in need of rule and law and a legitimate political system. Without the conviction that legal rules are binding and that political leaders are accountable to the same rules and respond to societal needs, actors of civil society soon lose the confidence that their actions will make a difference. The relationship between state and civil society is thus not one of confrontation and threat, rather reciprocal and interactive (Howard 2003: 38). Hall (1995: 16) describes this relationship as follows:

“The image of the state that suits civil society is that of eighteenth-century Britain in which state and society interacted continuously, with state capacity being increased by the ability to work through notables who accepted this because they trusted an institution – their institution – that they could control. The expression that catches this notion best is that applied by Samuels (...) a ‘politics of reciprocal consent’”.

In summary, civil society as understood in this analysis is a sphere of organized social life between the state and market. It is composed of freely created, voluntary, autonomous, self-organized, formally established associations, groups and non-governmental organizations,

31 One should note that the cultural basis of civil society can be understood in two ways. Following a Kantian interpretation morality is seen as a universal obligation. Morality is determined by a state of nature and describes reality as it should be. As already pointed out, this perception is contrasted by the Hegelian concept of *Sittlichkeit*. Here morality is the achievement of a historical development. Morality and civil behavior do not exist in a state of nature; rather they are the result of education and the process of social interchange. The concept of civil society thereby points to the importance of associations in developing this ethical life. This analysis will apply the second understanding of the term. The cultural basis of civil society is understood as *Sittlichkeit* which is the result of the historical development a society has undergone. Rather than the universal claim of a Kantian ‘*Sollen*’, this second perspective allows for different development paths in various societies.

and based on a certain culture, a civic ethos, i.e. moral qualities and patterns of behavior without which it fails to exert its beneficial influences on democracy. Finally, civil society needs a legitimate and legal order to flourish.

Civil society thus needs what is assumed to generate: a civic ethic and moral qualities such as tolerance and trust, on the one hand, and a democratic order and stable democratic institutions on the other. This reciprocity is the very reason why the concept of civil society is criticized for lacking empirical scrutiny. In the words of Hall (1995: 2), one can conclude:

“Civil society is complicated, most notably in being at one and the same time a social value and a set of social institutions.”

2.2.2 A Dynamic Model of Civil Society

With the definition of civil society derived above in mind, we now may raise the question: how can the originally Western concept of civil society develop in different cultural settings? If a democratic order as well as an appropriate cultural basis is a prerequisite for a vibrant civil society, how can we expect civil society to develop in contexts that lack these conditions? Furthermore, the institutions and moral qualities of civil society have been developed in the West over a long period of time and not for instrumental reasons – i.e. means to stabilize a democratic and capitalist system - but for their own sake as a value in itself (Offe 2000a: 92). Lauth/Merkel (1997: 16) rightly point out that the protagonists of civil society who point to the democratic virtues of civil society as a means of stabilizing new democracies obliterate the fact that theoretical approaches to civil society concentrate on established democracies. In transforming societies, where democratic institutions as well as institutions of civil society are weak, civil society does not contribute to democracy per se, but the beneficial effects of civil society on democracy vary. For all these reasons, civil society is – according to its critics - unlikely to take root in other historical and cultural settings. Contradicting this view, Keane for example (1998) points to the prominence of the concept in other cultures and proclaims the adoptability of the concept. Schmitter (1997: 251) argues:

“While the historical origins are unequivocally rooted in Western Europe, the norms and practices of civil society are relevant to the consolidation of democracy in all cultural and geographic areas of the world...”

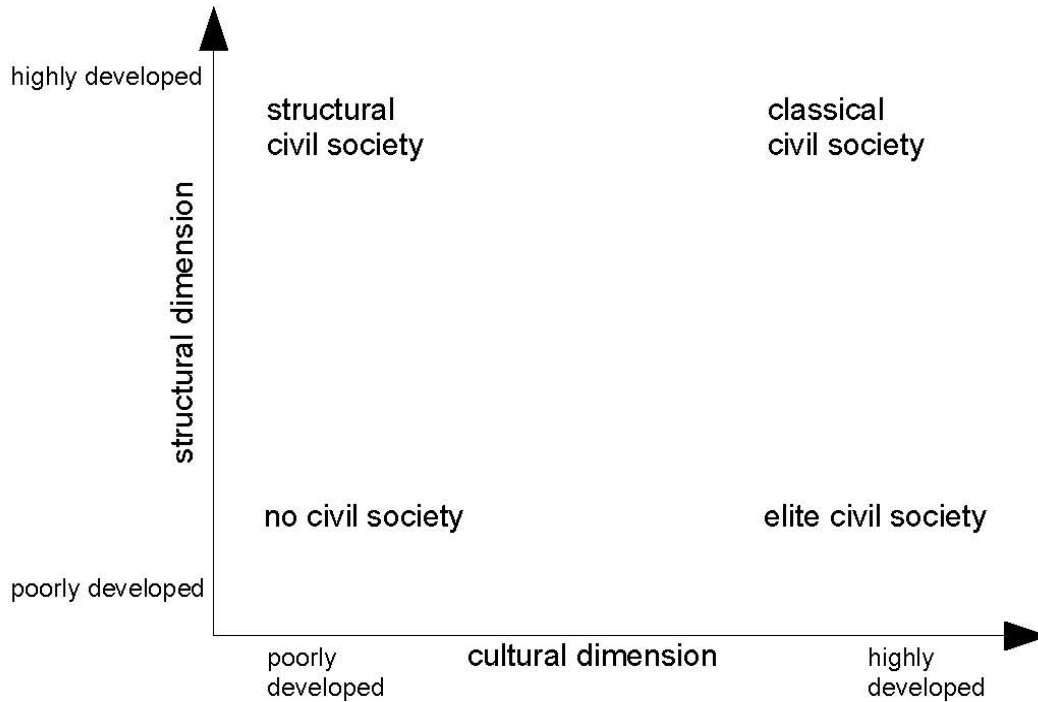
The question arises, however, how civil society originates in contexts that are unfavorable to its development. How can the above cited norms and practices of civil society that are relevant to the consolidation of democracy develop, if neither citizens with an “appropriate spirit” nor binding democratic regulations are in place? How do we solve the puzzle that civil society needs what it is assumed to generate?

The solution of Croissant/Lauth/Merkel (2000) points to different types of civil society with a varying impact on democratization. They identify five criteria which determine the degree to which civil society impedes or enhances democratization.³² Depending on these five criteria civil society is either “*ambivalent*”, i.e. less beneficial to democracy, or “*reflexive*”, meaning that it contributes to the consolidation of democracy. Kocka (2000: 15) makes the point that in the 18th century civil society was seen as a process of continuing civilization. Civil society described the utopian vision of a future society (ibid: 16). Following both arguments, this study proposes a dynamic model of civil society, which conceives civil society as a process. On the one hand civil society is an (unattainable) utopian ideal. On the other hand it relates to the process of civil society development. In this regard civil society is not a fixed and unchangeable state of society, but may take various forms which are more or less ‘civil’. These forms are best described by the state of the two dimensions of civil society: the structural and cultural dimension of civil society. It is plausible that in transforming societies and new (and even old) democracies the two dimensions of civil society are not equally well developed. Four ideal types of civil society development are thus conceivable (see table 1).³³

32 The five criteria read as follows: (1) civil society can or cannot be organized around societal cleavages and is hence more or less likely to deepen social conflict and to undermine democratic rule. (2) The relationship between actors of civil society is more or less determined by hierarchical power relationships. (3) Civil society is more or less affected by particular interests. (4) The internal structure of civil society organizations is more or less characterized by democratic procedures in contrast to clientelism. (5) Civil society is more or less representative of society as a whole.

33 One should note that in reality the applied distinction is not as clear cut as proposed here. The structural and cultural dimensions of civil society are connected. On the one hand, a fully inclusive and representative structure is not thinkable without an appropriate cultural basis of tolerance and trust and a belief in the necessity and feasibility of participation. On the other hand an appropriate civic spirit cannot develop outside organizations of civil society.

Table 1 Ideal Types of Civil Society Development



The unlikely first case determines a lack of non-state associations and organizations as well as a lack of the moral qualities and civic spirit of civil society.

Secondly, civil society in a given country may consist of various associations and organizations, while its citizens lack the moral qualities and patterns of behavior that typify a vibrant civil society. In this case, an elaborated structural dimension of civil society contrasts with a poor cultural dimension of civil society. Croissant et al (2000: 37) speak in this regard of an ambivalent society, i.e. organizations of civil society are based on particular interests, clientelism or ethnic or national bonds. This type of 'uncivil' society cements national or ethical or other societal cleavages and is highly conflict-ridden. In the context of this study, a further case of a structural civil society is of importance. Organizations of civil society may be detached from society and local demands. In this case, non-state organizations and associations have no local constituencies and are not driven by indigenous concerns. They are not the result of the self-organization of society, but have been formed to satisfy the interests of other actors. On the one hand, these may be political or economic elites that use non-governmental organizations as a means to get power or to make profit – in this regard we speak of GONGOs (governmental oriented NGOs). On the other hand, external actors, namely foreign donor organizations, use NGOs in order to implement their programs (see in detail chapter 3). Such DONGOs, thus donor-oriented NGOs or GONGOs, are like a

supplementary social stratum or façade of civil society and cannot develop the virtues of civil society described above.

In the third case, organizations of civil society reveal the above mentioned "civic ethos". Those are few in number though. In this case, which I label as elite civil society, only few citizens are organized and only a limited number of rather homogenous groups based on a set of shared values and norms exist. An elite civil society is based on solidarity and trust between its members. Social diversity is downplayed. Civil society is regarded as a unitary agent in order to achieve a high degree of solidarity and identity needed to preserve the (largely informal) organizations in spite of lacking (formal) rights. The circles of Central and Eastern European dissidents and illegal protest movements that opposed communist regimes before 1989 are a case in point (see Ogrodzinski 1995). The small number of (informal) groups and organizations here is the result of an authoritarian state which does not grant free citizen rights and suppresses the development of free spheres independent of the state. Nonetheless, throughout the communist period partly legal, partly illegal citizen initiatives existed that were outside the control of the communist state. These "*small circles of freedom*" acted as if the free organization of society were possible, and aimed to "*be constantly and incessantly visible in public life*" (Michnik 1985 cit. in Matynia 2001: 921). Their actions were based on a moral concept of society as the sphere of citizens living in "truth" and "dignity". Values within society were contrasted with the ambiguities of the Communist regime thus praising the former and de-legitimizing the latter.³⁴

Finally, an elaborated structural and cultural dimension describes the last ideal type of civil society development, what has been called a "*classical*" (Ogrodzinski 1995) or "*reflexive*" (Croissant et al 2000) civil society. Here the connection with democratization is appropriate as civil society fully contributes to more democracy. However, this ideal is to be comprehended as a utopian stage which can hardly be observed in any country, neither in the East nor the West.

The proposed dynamic model of civil society which conceptualizes civil society as a process to a future ideal and not as a fixed state allows to us to study civil society empirically, without losing the normative orientation of the concept. Civil society always contributes to democracy. However, civil society is the concept that describes the ideal we aim to achieve while the state of associational life may be elite-oriented or structural.

34 One should note that an elite civil society may not only exist in authoritarian states. If the relationship with the state is one of close cooperation rather than conflict, an under-structured civil society is equally possible. Here small and well organized segments of society maintain regular contact and numerous connections and neo-corporatist arrangements with the state. Intransparency, corruption, nepotism and a lack of representation are likely risks.

2.2.3 Indicators for Research

The following section tackles the question how to analyze the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society empirically. What observable indicators describe the two dimensions of civil society? While the observation of the structural features of civil society, i.e. voluntary and autonomous associations and organizations, does not seem very problematic, the empirical description of a “civic ethos” poses a challenge.

As understood in this analysis, the structural component of civil society encompasses any institutionalized form of societal life that is freely created, formally established, voluntary, autonomous, self-organized and is neither the state nor market. The structural dimension of civil society thus coincides with what has recently been labeled the “non-governmental sector”, the “Third Sector” or the “nonprofit sector”. The Third Sector, and thus the structural dimension of civil society, is commonly described by using the number of organizations and their distribution according to major fields of activity as indicators.³⁵ Studies that concentrate on civil society in CEE often additionally include the registration date of NGOs in the analysis in order to demonstrate the development and the growth of non-governmental civil activity in these countries.³⁶ Additionally, the regional distribution of NGOs is important in transition states. More often than not, NGOs firstly form in the capital and in large cities. An equal regional distribution of NGOs is thus a sign of a more advanced civil society. Howard (2003: 52pp) further points to the importance of organizational membership in describing civil society. He makes clear that the exclusive focus upon registered organizations neglects the fact that many of those organizations may simply exist on paper but in fact have ended their activities. Additionally, many organizations often have a small membership, a phenomenon that is especially striking in post-communist states. The number of members often barely exceeds the minimum number of members required for registration (usually three to seven members) (ibid). In sum, the more people are freely and voluntarily organized or participate in and contribute to institutionalized forms of social life and the more organizations exist and the more pluralistic they are, the more developed the structure of civil society will be. The indicators for the structural dimension of civil society are therefore size, inclusiveness and plurality, which are evident in the absolute number of organizations, in organizational membership, in the variety of fields of activity, and in the regional distribution of organizations.

35 Several empirical studies on civil society or the ‘non-profit sector’ make use of quantitative data on the number, distribution or registration date of NGOs and associations. See e.g. Anheier/Salamon (1999), Jenkins (1999), Hankiss (1990), Ekiert/Kubik (1999) or the country studies in *Civicus* (1997).

36 See e.g. Ekiert/Kubik (1999), Miszlietvitz/Jensen (1998), see also chapters 7.2.1. and 8.2.1. in this analysis.

An exclusive focus on non-governmental organizations and the structural dimension of civil society assumes, however, that any NGO is fruitful to democracy – regardless of its internal structure or mission. Critics question the claim that NGOs are “*more democratic and better*” (Schmidt / Take 1997) than other segments of society and point to the lacking empirical basis of this assumption (e.g. Beyme 2000, Hann 2000). No evidence exists that suggests that NGOs act per se as carriers of civil society.

As pointed out above, civil society consists of more than non-governmental organizations. It additionally requires a civic ethos in order for its virtues to manifest themselves. The cultural dimension of civil society, however, is not easily open to empirical design. This study restrains from using quantitative data on political attitudes and perceptions of the population, a method applied by scholars investigating in political culture.³⁷ Instead I will focus on behavior not attitudes, as the cultural dimension of civil society is evident in moral qualities as well as patterns of behavior. Three main aspects are of relevance in this regard: (1) civic participation and volunteerism; (2) the type of horizontal relationships between NGOs; and (3) the type of relationship between self-organized forms of social life and political leaders and state authorities.

Civic participation and volunteerism go one step further than simple membership, as both describe the active involvement of citizens in associational life. The willingness of citizens to participate in and to contribute to non-governmental organizations is a valuable indicator to measure the degree to which people trust in the usefulness and efficiency of NGOs in bringing about desired changes. If I am not convinced that my actions can make a difference and that NGOs have the capacity to influence politics and to enforce my interests, I am hardly willing to dedicate my time and strength to non-governmental organizations. Civic participation, volunteerism and trust in NGOs thus explain the active citizenry on which civil society relies. Moreover, one should note that organizational membership can be a misleading indicator in CEE. People often prefer to contribute to NGOs without being formal members. This fact is grounded in the thoroughly discredited image of associations that goes back to communist times, when membership in certain organizations was compulsory (see section 2.3. below).

As we saw above, the cultural dimension of civil society ensures mutual trust and facilitates collective action and the mediation of conflicting interests in complex societies. In the words of Hall (1995: 6):

37 See e.g. Almond /Verba (1965).

“Civil society is thus a complex balance of consensus and conflict, the valuation of as much difference as is compatible with the bare minimum of consensus necessary for settled existence.”

As a consequence, the type of relationships among the organizations of civil society serves as an indicator of a ‘civil’ society. The question is whether cooperative ties among NGOs exist, whether NGOs are capable of common action and whether the self-organization of society overcomes or cements societal cleavages. If the relationship between NGOs is characterized by growing tension, animosity, envy and distrust and if neither cross-cutting membership nor cooperative networks or umbrella organizations exist and if mechanisms that ensure peaceful conflict resolution and compromise are lacking, non-governmental organizations are hardly based on a civic ethos described above.

Finally, the relationship between actors of civil society and state actors expose the cultural dimension of civil society. As already indicated, mutual trust would not be possible without trust in rules and institutions. The relationship between society and the state is therefore an important aspect of the concept of civil society. Without the state as guarantor of certain liberties, free and voluntary self-organization of society is not possible. A vibrant civil society requires more than the mere existence of liberal rights, though. A responsive government and politicians who believe in the importance of civic participation and who value civil society for its own sake are additionally required. In the words of Claus Offe (2000a: 94):

“...what is needed (for democratic consolidation) is a kind of civic ethos ... which ... leads sufficiently large parts of the political community to take collective concerns into consideration and to develop some measure of ‘positive external preferences’”.

In the same vein, a vibrant civil society is evident in the strong conviction of leaders of non-governmental organizations that political decision-makers are not acting on their own behalf but in response to societal concerns and that they are accountable to democratic institutions.

“Democracy works best where civil society is in a constructive and mutually supportive relationship with the state, and where citizens take their civic responsibilities seriously” (Bryant/Mokrzycki 1995: 26).

Indicators for such a constructive and mutually supportive relationship are on the one hand the information, consultation or even inclusion of NGO actors in political decision-making. If NGOs are neither informed nor consulted in legislative processes that concern their field of activity, we can hardly assume that they are accepted by state bureaucracy as representatives of society. Moreover, the willingness on the side of state actors to provide a fruitful legal environment for NGOs and to fund public benefit activities of NGOs are indicators of the type of relationship between NGOs and state. On the other hand, NGO actors should trust in democratic institutions and accept state actors as legitimate actors that are accountable to societal interests. Table 2 summarizes the indicators of research.

Table 2 Civil Society: Indicators for Research

Dimension of civil society	Parameter	Indicators for Research
Structural Dimension	Quantity	Number of civil society organizations
	Plurality	Regional distribution of NGOs Distribution according to area of activity
	Inclusiveness	Membership
Cultural Dimension	Civic participation	Volunteerism Trust in NGOs
	Horizontal relationship among NGOs	Networks, cooperative ties, umbrella organizations Common action, campaigns
	Vertical relationship between NGO actors and state actors	Consultation / Information or Inclusion of NGO actors in decision making processes Willingness on behalf of state actors to provide a fruitful legal environment for NGOs Public funding opportunities for NGOs NGO actors trust in democratic order and accept state actors as legitimate

2.2.4 Summary

The aim of this section was to clarify what civil society is and how it can be studied. The main problem in studying civil society lies in the sharp contrast between a vague definition of the term, which mainly points to the organizations of civil society, and the virtues civil society is widely assumed to represent. More often than not, civil society is described less by observable characteristics than by the beneficial influences on democracy which theorists attribute to civil society. It became clear that the concept of civil society describes the utopian ideal of a future state of society and is thus not easily open to empirical scrutiny.

This section argued that the puzzle to empirically analyze a normative concept can be solved by focusing separately on two dimensions of civil society: On the one hand, civil society understood as a sphere of organized social life between the state and market is composed of freely created, voluntary, autonomous, self-organized, formally established associations, groups and non-governmental organizations. This “structural dimension” of civil society thus corresponds with what has been called the “Third Sector” or the “NGO sector”. On the other hand, civil society is based on a certain culture, a civic ethos, i.e. moral qualities and patterns of behavior. Without this “cultural dimension”, civil society fails to exert its beneficial influences on democracy.

The differentiation of the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society has two main advantages. First, it allows us to describe in greater detail the various images of associational life in transforming societies, and relates them to the utopian ideal of civil society. Civil society is thus understood as a process rather than a fixed state of society. Depending on the development of the two dimensions, different states of organized social life can be identified with varying effects on democracy. A structural civil society characterized by a magnitude of non-governmental organizations and a lacking civic ethos may deepen societal conflict as membership may not be cross-cutting. A structural civil society may also be detached from society serving not interests of local constituencies but of external or political actors. An elite civil society characterized by a highly developed cultural but poorly developed structural dimension either points to a small circle of opponents in conflict with an (authoritarian) state or to neo-corporatists arrangements. Finally, a classical civil society describes the (unreachable) utopian ideal of a society that continuously contributes to more democracy (see table 1, page 39). Second, the distinction between the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society allows us to identify indicators of research more clearly. The number of NGOs, the thematic and regional distribution of NGOs and organizational membership determine the structural dimension of civil society. The cultural dimension of civil society is evident in (1) civic participation and volunteerism, in (2) the type of horizontal

relations between civil society organizations observable in existing networks and umbrella organizations and the capacity for common action, and in (3) the vertical relationship between organizations of civil society and the state, observable in existing animosities on both sides, in the information, consultation or inclusion of NGO actors in political decision making processes, in the willingness on side of state actors to provide a fruitful legal environment for NGOs, and in public funding opportunities for NGOs (see table 2, page 44).

The dynamic model of civil society suggests that the outcome of civil society assistance depends on the cultural and structural preconditions of civil society in the recipient country. Depending on whether the starting point is no civil society, a structural, or an elite civil society, the outcome of civil society assistance will be different. In other words, the domestic context, and the historic and cultural preconditions of civil society in the respective country are decisive. The following will investigate the preconditions of civil society in the post-communist phase.

2.3 Civil Society in Post-Communism

The beginning of the 1990s celebrated the glorious victory of civil society over the communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Mass protests and opposition movements in the East peacefully brought the end of 40 years of communism and they did this in the name of civil society (see e.g. Ekiert/Kubik 1999). Figures such as Václav Havel in Czechoslovakia, Jacek Kuron and Adam Michnik in Poland or János Kis in Hungary employed the concept of civil society to mark the sharp contrast between the people on the one hand and the hated government on the other. Civil society, so has been argued, was the realm of citizens “*living in truth*” (Havel), who finally overcame their authoritarian governments.

Several years later, this euphoria was followed by disillusionment. Aleksander Smolnar (1996: 33) points out:

“The ideology of the moral civil society placed its hopes in self-organization, self-help, and citizens’ activities. These hopes stemmed from the belief that “totalitarian” restraints had bound potent social forces which were yearning to operate freely.... however, levels of autonomous social activity have been disappointing.”

Howard (2003) finds out that a strong civil society measured in participation in voluntary organizations is observable in none of the post-communist states in Eastern Europe. Instead his study concludes that with the exception of labour unions, membership in non-governmental organizations in post-communist countries is significantly lower than in post-authoritarian countries and in older democracies (ibid: 63pp). The weakness of civil society in all of Central and Eastern Europe suggests that an existing democratic structure and the right to freely organize and join organizations do not suffice to create a vibrant civil society. What

is needed is an active citizenry that is not only willing to organize but also convinced that organized forms of social life can bring about desired changes.

The weakness of civil society in CEE is largely attributed to the legacies of the previous regime. The cultural heritages of the communist past left their strain in political traditions, attitudes and behavioral patterns apparent in post-communist societies and are widely believed to inhibit the upspring of self-organized social activity.³⁸ The experiences under communism and the on-going reinterpretation of those experiences (Howard 2003), the effectiveness of the communist regimes in destroying or greatly weakening traditions and moral norms of civil society (Smolnar 1996: 33p), direct indoctrination, totalitarian control and defensive patterns developed by the citizenry against indoctrination and control (Sztompka 1993: 89) have been named as factors behind the weakness of civil society in post-communism.

Piotr Sztompka (1993: 89) even argues that real socialism not only hinders the appearance of what he calls “*civilizational competence*”, that is, the cultural basis on which civil society relies, but also results in the reverse, in “*civilizational incompetence*”. Four main “socialist legacies” discussed below are seen as obstructive to civil society development: (1) the image of social homogeneity and a resulting lack of interest differentiation and representation, (2) a thoroughly discredited image of associations, (3) citizens’ passiveness tied with exceeding claims toward the state as protector and care-taker, and (4) a deep state-society divide.

Socialist societies are marked by social homogenization and the image thereof. The monocentric concept of the state and society engraved in the dictum “dictatorship of the proletariat” stresses the monopoly of political leadership on the one hand and social homogenization on the other. The socialist system seeks the control of society by the state, praises social homogenization, and blocks social differentiation. The official ideology and practice blurs group interests, the planned economy paralyzes entrepreneurship, and the repressive state apparatus preserves the image of a homogenized society³⁹:

“The omnipotent centralized state was in a real fact the main source of all good and evil, thus all social groups... were in a similar position of submission vis a vis the communist state. This was widely known, and it brought about a tendency to perceive the society as homogeneous....” (Frentzel-Zagorska 1993: 167).

38 See for a discussion of the obscuring effects of socialist legacies on civil society development and democratization among others: Howard (2003), Schmolnar (1996), Sztompka (1993), Lauth / Merkel (1997), Crawford/Lijphart (1995), Schöpflin (1993: 256pp), Kurzewska/Bojar (1995: 187pp), Wesolowski (1995), Ost (1993), Fagin (1998), Frentzel-Zagórska (1993: 165pp).

39 For a description of the socialist state system see: Fehr (1996: 50pp), Wedel (1992).

It has been argued that the inherited communist image of social homogeneity poses a threat to interest representation and to civil society development. Staniszkis (1991) point to the far-reaching consequences of constituting a polity and policies in the absence of clear interests, as has been the case in post-communist states after regime change. During transition no intermediary organizations exist, which legitimize the reform steps taken via the mechanisms of conflict mediation, communication and government control. What evolves are “*politics in a vacuum*” (Staniszkis 1991: 184), politicians that theoretically define non-existing group interests without knowing their constituencies nor their voters.⁴⁰ Moreover, there are the attitudinal legacies inherent to such a practice. Why should politicians who once used to define “the public good” invest in the development of interest groups that subsequently will interfere with policy formulation? The absence of certain social groups may thus hinder respective state policies that nurture the establishment of interest groups. Or, even worse, it may generate the feeling among politicians that they know best what is in the interest of the people, and that intermediary organizations are superfluous and unwanted competitors. What evolves is “*exclusionary corporatism*“, and new authorities that are convinced that “*society is not ripe for democracy*” (Staniszkis 1991: 21). Ost (1993) points to a further legacy of social homogeneity. In post-communist countries people are largely unaware of what is in their interest and what is not. The lack of interest organization and the lacking awareness thereof leave little room for social mobilization. Protest movements, mostly directed toward the state, are more common practice than effective interest mediation between conflicting groups.⁴¹ Furthermore, in communist societies social homogeneity is perceived and valued as a desirable state of society. Equality is thus largely perceived in economic rather than in political terms. A kind of “*negative egalitarianism*” (Schöpfling 1993: 271) prevails among the population who tends to distrust the representation of the interests of some against the public good of the many. For all these reasons, social homogeneity of post-communist states and especially the image thereof are seen as obstructive to the development of civil society based on the articulation, representation and mediation of pluralist interests.

Another factor that hampers collective action is the thoroughly discredited image of associations apparent in post-communist societies. Under communism the ‘freedom of association’ is replaced by an ‘obligation of association’. Civic organizations and foundations

40 In Poland this puzzle became evident in the words of the first candidate for the Minister of Industry, T. Syryjczyk during the hearings before the Sejm Commission in 1989: “*I represent subjects that do not yet exist*” (cit. in Staniszkis 1991: 184).

41 This phenomenon is for example studied by Ost for the case of workers protests in Poland after transition. Ost points out that the protests were exclusively directed toward the state and not toward management, despite the withdrawal of the state from firm management (1993: 460). Also a later study confirmed that more often than not, workers protested jointly with the management against the state revealing the malfunctioning of trade unions as workers representation (Ost/Weinstein 1999).

are forbidden or nationalized, and the organizations that do exist function under the control of and for the state. These “social organizations” are neither voluntary nor self-organized but quasi - state organizations, functioning as transmission-belt organizations to ensure the identification and socialization of their members with the state and the official state ideology (Matynia 2001: 920). Social activity and “social actions” are compulsory. Their major aim is not the articulation of individual interests or opinions but to render a service to the collectivity, a collectivity that is regarded as superior to the individual (Schöpflin 1993: 282). After the compulsive duty to join trade unions or youth organizations has been lifted, people choose to use their new freedom negatively and not to associate at all. Citizen participation is thus widely regarded as an unnecessary and useless effort (Fagin 1988).

“Society is still convinced that new forms of civil activity are not any different from the previous pattern of “social actions” which were usually quite unnecessary and ineffective... and which were actually enforced and given their ideology by the state” (Kurczewska / Bojar 1995: 188).

The communist patronage stage is widely seen as a further source of cultural legacies destructive for civic activities. A patronage state has been defined as follows:

“In exchange for the promise of personal provision and security, the patronage state demands (the) surrender of the right to choose and to self-determine” (Baumann 1993: 139).⁴²

Under communism the people thus are free from solving the small daily problems associated with satisfying basic needs. It is the duty of the state to do so. More than that, the state sees itself as best suited to take care for its subjects. In this sense and quite in contrast to the relationship between citizens and state in liberal societies, it is the state that defines the needs of the citizens. The price for the guaranteed safety, need provision, and ‘freedom from choice’, is high: the subjects have to give up basic rights, most importantly, the right to self-determination, and the right to decide over one’s own fate.

The consequences of such an arrangement are twofold. First, the exchange of guaranteed state supplies for the abandonment of the right of self-determination results in passive subjects with extensive demands toward the state.

“The state was expected to play a near-impossible role. Both initiator and arbitrator, guardian of social welfare and guarantor of freedom” (Schöpflin 1993: 280).

Guaranteeing the satisfaction of basic needs, the patronage state creates citizens that confront the state with extensive demands, which the young democracies are unable to fulfill in face of tight economic budgets. Frustration with the state, who does not meet the high

expectations of the people, is thus a consequence that the new governments also feel. Moreover, the resulting passivity and incapability on behalf of the citizens to take care of themselves contradicts the notions of self-organization and social activity and thus obstructs the re-emergence of civil society.

Second, the patron who fails to render the guaranteed services risks losing the legitimacy on which his rule is based. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman (1993: 139):

“...the patron cannot shake off his responsibility for the misfortune of his clients. Frustration is immediately re-forged into a grievance which ‘naturally’ hits back at the patron and his policy as obvious causes of suffering.”

For example by the 1970s in Poland as a result of the deep economic crisis, it became clear that the communist states largely failed to bear the responsibility of the patronage state. This was especially evident in comparison to the developments of the West (Di Palma 1991).⁴³ The increasingly felt illegitimacy of the socialist system contradicted the demanded surrender of basic rights which left no space for free articulation in the public sphere. In consequence, people withdrew from official organizations and returned to the sphere of the family and private life (Matynia 2001: 920). Michnik described this process as a *“life in hiding”* or as an *“inner migration”* (cit in Frantz 2000: 163). The evolving gap between the public life that was felt as living an *“official lie”* and the private life on which the aspirations were focused has been best described by Stefan Nowak at the beginning of the 1970s as a *“social vacuum”* between the sphere of the family and the nation.⁴⁴ The discrepancy between *“us”*, the collective of private and personal ties, and *“us”*, the nation, in contrast to *“them”*, the illegitimate political system and the politicians as its representatives, manifested itself in a deep distrust of the state that survived *“real socialism”*. In the words of Zygmunt Bauman:

42 This exchange of protection for the abandonment of rights has also been called a *“new social contract”* (Liehm cit in Matynia 2001: 919), ignoring the fact that one party to the contract, the people, had no real choice whether to sign the contract or not.

43 According to Di Palma (1991) the increasing technological and economic superiority of the West demolished the communist myth of the cognitive superiority of *“real socialism”* and thus contributed to the loss of legitimacy of the communist patronage state.

44 In a survey Nowak discovered that the Polish people, alienated from the political system of *“real socialism”*, identified either with their private life and the primary groups of family and friends or with the nation as a whole. Other identities – be it class, regional or occupational identities were non-existent, a fact that resulted in a *“social vacuum”* between the sphere of the family and the nation (cit. in Frenzel-Zagórska 1993: 167).

“According to every ‘surface’ observation as well as ‘in-depth’ survey of political attitudes, the notorious ‘us’ and ‘them’ posture which many considered as the most pernicious socio-psychological product of the patronage state, survived virtually unscathed one of the most profound political shifts in recent history” (1993: 149).⁴⁵

In summary, the cultural legacies of communism do not give much hope for the re-emergence of civil society in post-communist states. Communism - the monocentric concept of state and society, the image of social homogeneity, and the patronage state - seems to leave behind passive and alienated citizens who deeply distrust associations as much as state institutions, and who are incapable of identifying their interests and unwilling to articulate and represent them. One has to note, however, that *“no absolutely perfect totalitarian system has ever existed”* (Kolakowski cit. in Klein 2001: 40). Communist regimes in CEE revealed different shades of “totalitariness”, experienced liberalization periods and were faced with different dissident and oppositional movements. It is left to the case studies of Poland and Slovakia to portray these differences (see chapter 7.1. and 8.1.).

2.4 Conclusion and Implications for Research

Civil society is a concept with various meanings and connotations. It may include the family and relational ties, the market and economic activity, or contain merely formal organizations that operate outside state and market. Some stress the importance of civil society as a realm free of state intervention, others underline the role of civil society as an intermediary between citizens and the state. Regardless of how civil society is understood, it always has a positive connotation. The opinion that civil society is beneficial to democracy is widely shared by scholars and practitioners alike. More often than not, the term does not describe the actual state of society, but points to a utopian ideal how society should be.

Civil society is understood in this analysis as a sphere of organized social life between the state and market. It is composed of freely generated, voluntary, autonomous, self-organized, formally established associations, groups and non-governmental organizations, and based on a certain culture, a civic ethos, that is, moral qualities and patterns of behavior without which it fails to generate its beneficial influences on democracy. Finally, civil society needs a legitimate and legal order to flourish. The concept of civil society thus contains a structural and a cultural dimension. While the structural dimension points to the organizations of civil

⁴⁵ See also Schöpflin (1993: 267): *“... the relationship between the individual and the state was badly distorted in this way. Not surprisingly, the state came to be regarded as remote and abstract, beyond the will and control of the individual, and the institutions of the state as not much more than facades. The elimination of communist systems did not, in itself, change this”*. According to Schöpflin this distrust resulted in weak institutions due to a continuing belief of the people in persons and not in institutions (ibid: 268). Not the office a person holds, but the personal relationship counts.

society, one could also speak of the “NGO sector” or “Third Sector”, the cultural dimension stresses the importance of an appropriate culture, a “*civic ethos*” (Offe 2000a) or “*civilizational competence*” (Sztompka 1993) that ensures a peaceful coexistence among societal groups, tolerance and trust, and a reciprocal and interactive relationship with the state.

The theoretical distinction between the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society has methodological advantages. It allows us to study the connection between associational life and democracy more clearly. Studies of civil society often focus primarily on the organizations of civil society. Counting of organizations, however, reveals little about the stabilizing effect of civil society on democracy. Without an elaborated cultural dimension, a structural civil society may be conflict ridden or detached from societal interests. Similarly, organizations of civil society which are few in number and encompass only a few citizens may be based on moral qualities and civil patterns of behavior. The limitation to a small organized elite, however, does not conform to the idea of a democratic and representative civil society. Depending on the development of the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society, different types of associational life are thus conceivable with varying effects on democracy. In this way, civil society can be analyzed in transforming societies where the pre-conditions for civil society, i.e. its cultural basis and a democratic order, are not yet in place.

What implications do the considerations above have for the subsequent analysis?

The identified indicators of research enable us to analyze the effects of civil society assistance more clearly. Civil society assistance contributes to more civil society if it (1) increases the number and types of non-governmental organizations, (2) contributes to cooperative ties and networks of non-governmental organizations, and (3) facilitates the cooperation and communication between civil society and the state. Civil society assistance is thus successful if it is conducive to the development of the structural and/or the cultural dimension of civil society. The question arises, however, whether civil society assistance will be successful in promoting both dimensions of civil society simultaneously. One may expect that the effects are more likely to be on the structural than the cultural dimension. Building institutions of civil society and thus contributing to a greater number of NGOs appears to be an easy endeavor that can be achieved in a relative short period of time. The allocation of funds that support NGO activities is often sufficient to stir NGO development, especially in a society with a shortage of goods. We thus may expect civil society assistance to result in a strong Third Sector in recipient countries, a sector characterized by well equipped and professional organizations that may even be heard by political actors depending on the openness of the ruling elite. The alternation of moral qualities and patterns of behavior, however, is a more complicated endeavor. It was made clear above that the cultural

preconditions for civil society in post-communist states are rather unfavorable. Analysts name passive and alienated citizens as a major legacy of communist rule that severely hampers the upspring of civil society. They are neither willing to nor capable of organizing and articulating their interests. They deeply distrust state authorities and exclusively rely on personal links. Nonetheless, they still accept state decisions as something given, regardless whether good or bad. This “*civilizational incompetence*” of post-communist societies needs to be overcome by civil society assistance and replaced with moral qualities and patterns of behavior identified above as necessities for a vibrant civil society. Changing the ways people think and behave is, however, a tricky task. One can assume that it is only to be achieved in a long period of time if at all and may even require change in generations. One may thus expect civil society assistance to simply result into what has been labeled “structural civil society” above and in the development of a NGO sector that remains detached from local constituencies and is mainly concerned with its own interests. It is up to the case studies to reveal whether this expectation holds true and to what extent civil society assistance has been successful in contributing to the development of the cultural dimension of civil society.

3 Civil Society Assistance: Actors, Objectives, Concepts and Strategies

This chapter investigates civil society assistance. It will further specify how civil society assistance is understood in this analysis and what kind of activities are associated with civil society assistance. It will be clear that civil society assistance is first and foremost driven by external actors, often referred to as donors. Since donors are the driving force behind civil society assistance, they are the main focus of this chapter.

The section tackles the following questions, in particular: who and what type of 'donating agency' engages in civil society assistance, for what reasons, and with what expectations? What approaches do donors choose in order to assist civil society in other countries? The chapter thus focuses on donors, their objectives, concepts and strategies. Finally, the chapter discusses the extent to which the approaches actors use in their effort to nurture civil society abroad are suitable to trigger the development of civil society. It will be shown that the strategies applied often have unintended side effects that hinder rather than foster civil society development.

It should be noted that the following provides a theoretical approach to donors. A description of major donors active in CEE will be given at a later point of the dissertation (see chapter 6).

3.1 Defining Civil Society Assistance

The following defines civil society assistance more clearly. The section will show that civil society assistance is first and foremost driven by (external) actors. Secondly, civil society assistance refers to transnational relations. Thirdly, it aims to build democracy from the bottom-up. Finally, civil society assistance stands for a deliberate attempt to transfer a certain image, namely civil society, from one place to another.

Civil society assistance is actor driven, i.e. it refers to various endeavors of international actors that aim to support domestic societal actors. While the first group commonly entails donors, who grant aid, assistance and advice, the latter group refers to recipients who receive aid and assistance.⁴⁶

The relationships between donors and recipients are always transnational in character. This is shown by the following definition which describes transnational relations as:

“... regular interactions across national boundaries when at least one actor is a non-state agent or does not operate on behalf of a national government or an intergovernmental organization” (Risse-Kappen 1995: 3).⁴⁷

In other words, transnational relations may include state actors, but not exclusively though. As regards civil society assistance, recipients are per definition non-state actors, i.e. actors of civil society. Donors, in contrast, may be public or private, state or non-state actors.

This becomes more clear, when we consider the strategic options of democratic states who wish to foster democracy and civil society beyond their borders. We can identify two genuinely different approaches as to how to assist democracy and civil society by deliberate

46 Although this terminology is commonly applied in the literature dealing with international assistance, to which this study is no exception, it has several shortcomings. Above all, the wording tells us nothing about the organizational structure, the legal status or any other characteristics of donors or recipients. Moreover, it neglects that on both sides, donors as well as recipients, we are confronted with different types of actors driven by various motivations. Third, the major distinction between donors and recipients implies an asymmetric relationship between the two, ignoring the leverage recipients possess. In some countries, a large inflow of donors eager to spend their funds encounter only a few recipient organizations. In this situation we have the paradox that it is not the recipients who compete for scarce resources. Rather, donors compete for scarce recipients of aid. Moreover, the distinction between donors and recipients is often not as clear-cut as the terminology suggests. Often we observe intermediary organizations that are donors and recipients at the same time (see in greater detail chapter 6.2.).

47 One should note that transnational relations are a burgeoning phenomenon that is increasingly shaping international relations. Sub-national actors, be it non-governmental organizations, or separate entities of the governmental apparatus, form an important part of the international environment. Associations, foundations, trade unions, and enterprises but also ministries, counties, municipalities, or parties are increasingly involved in the crucial issues of world politics. Their activities are of international relevance and have to be taken into account by other international actors such as states. Examples of international activities of sub-national actors include transnational co-operation and networks between trade unions but also between other interest groups or parties; partnerships between cities and counties as well as internationally active NGOs which launch international campaigns. The rise of internationally active non-governmental actors is best illustrated by the fact that their number increased from 134 in 1905 to 2470 in 1972 and to more than 4600 by 1990 (Russett/Starr 1996: 68). As a result, the system of states (*Staatenwelt*) dominating the 19th century has been classified a ‘system of societies’ (*Gesellschaftswelt*) (Czempiel 1995: 419). See for research on transnational relations: Risse-Kappen (1995).

acts of intervention from the outside, commonly referred to as top-down and bottom-up approaches to democracy assistance.⁴⁸

Firstly, democratic states may choose to target state actors, and put pressure on the government of the respective state to liberalize and to install democratic institutions and a respective state policy that triggers the self-organization of societal interest from the top-down. In the absence of a global supreme authority and binding and enforceable international rights and rules, coercion and conditionality have been identified as the major ways to apply pressure on other states (see Whitehead 1996, Schmitter 1996). Coercion refers to cases where governments adopt respective policies in response to the threat of military force or negative sanctions such as barriers to trade in the case of non-compliance.⁴⁹ Conditionality, in contrast, relies on incentives and rewards rather than on sanctions and force. In the case of conditionality, political reforms are enforced in anticipation of promised merits and benefits in the form of financial resources such as loans, direct grants or development aid or membership in international organizations.⁵⁰

Secondly, rather than putting pressure on the government to liberalize, external state actors may aim to trigger democratization from the bottom-up and impact directly upon the society of authoritarian regimes or new democracies. According to the underlying assumption, a strong civil society will subsequently stand up for civic and human rights, demand respective political reforms, and insist on accountable government. A government that respects and protects civil society and that meets citizens' demands is thus not the origin but the consequence of a vibrant civil society. Accordingly, actors inside civil society are the major partners of external agents. Primarily non-governmental organizations of various backgrounds and concerned with different issues are the chief beneficiaries of aid. On the donor side, private and public organizations are active. State agencies, and especially

48 Considering various ways of democratically oriented external intervention, Czempiel (1995: 423pp) draws a similar distinction between direct and indirect strategies (*mittelbare und unmittelbare Strategien*) to promote democracy.

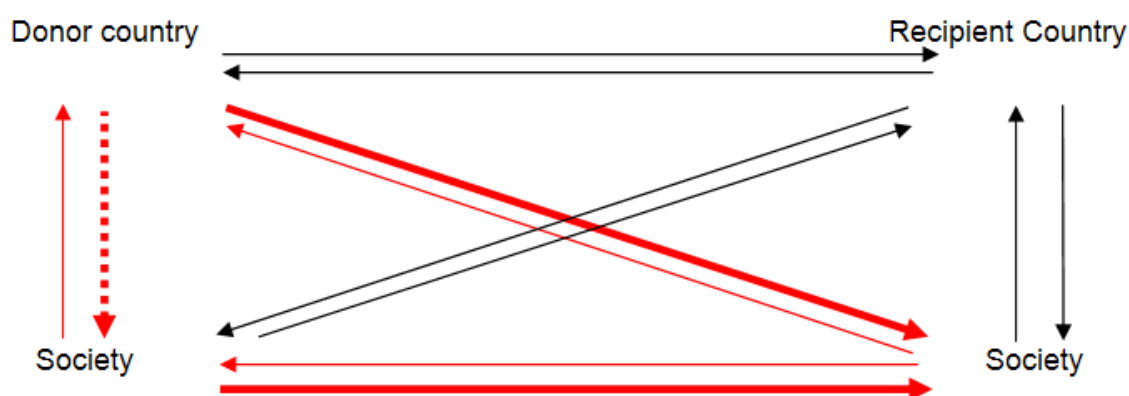
49 Coercion thus presupposes the existence of a dominant state, a hegemon, who possess sufficient power resources to enforce and uphold a normative order. The hegemonic power is thus capable of imposing a political structure or policy of his interest on other states, and to control their domestic political processes. Examples for imposition from the outside by means of coercion or control include the US involvement in West Germany after 1945, the endeavors of Great Britain to export the Westminster model to its colonies but also the efforts of the Soviet Union to built its satellite states in CEE after its own model (Whitehead 1996: 10). For the concept of a hegemonic power that enforces common international standards and rules on which an 'international society' is based, see Bull (1977).

50 One should note that political conditionality is in contrast to economic conditionality a relatively new phenomenon. Especially the IMF has a long practice to make aid conditional to economic stability measures. In contrast, political conditionality connects rewards to political conditions such as good governance, democratization or respect for human rights. For this reason, political conditionality has been called "2nd generation" conditionality (Stokke 1995).

national development aid agencies, run programs for civil society assistance. Along with that non-governmental actors are deliberately encouraged and funded in order to enter transnational partnerships and networks with the aim of supporting civil society in other countries.⁵¹ Finally, non-governmental actors without a public mandate and financing are active. Examples are philanthropic foundations as well as trade unions or charity organizations that aim to support and empower civil society actors abroad.

The major distinction between the top-down and the bottom-up approach lies in the type of transaction involved. While top-down forms of democratic assistance are restricted to multilateral and bilateral forms of international relations which take the state as the main addressee of assistance, bottom-up approaches to democratization explicitly make use of transnational relations and networks and directly focus upon civil society organizations and thus actors inside the domestic sphere of the recipient state. The latter option consequently targets domestic politics and directly intervenes into domestic power struggles.

The various forms of international relations are illustrated as follows. The red arrows indicate donor-recipient transactions.



Civil society assistance refers to the deliberate attempt to transfer formal and informal structures that proved valuable in the 'Western' world to another time and/or space. For this reason, the dissertation conceptualizes civil society assistance as a transfer, whereas an encompassing interpretation of the term 'transfer' is applied as put forward by Dolowitz/March (1991: 349p):

"... we identify seven objects of transfer: policy goals, structure and content; policy instruments or administrative techniques; institutions; ideology; ideas, attitudes and concepts; and negative lessons" (Dolowitz / March 1991: 350).

51 For example, the Phare and Tacis Democracy Program of the European Union includes on the one hand small grant schemes for NGOs in transformation states. The lion's share of funds is restricted to West-Eastern partnerships, or is administered by West-European NGOs (see chapter 6).

The notion of transfer has the advantage that it allows us to incorporate the international and the domestic sides of the transfer into the analysis. Transnational pressure does not automatically result in domestic reply. Risse-Kappen et al (1995: 4), for example, observe:

“Transnational relations do not seem to have the same effects across cases”.

Different countries respond differently to civil society assistance. Risse-Kappen et al. conclude that the impact of transnational relations depends on domestic as well as international factors.⁵² By the same token, research on foreign assistance to civil society in democratizing countries needs to incorporate the international as well as the domestic side into the analysis, interests of donors and recipients, the export and the import side of the transfer, external push and domestic pull.

Civil society assistance thus has to be distinguished from other images of transfer such as convergence or diffusion. While the former refers to the spread of ‘the one best system’ assuming that previously divergent societies evolve towards a common endpoint, while the less developed society takes the advanced society as a template, the latter stress the point that institutions are usually copies and that institution building often involves some measure of imitation (Jacoby 2000: 4pp). However, neither focuses on both sides of the transfer. More importantly from the point of this study, both neglect the involvement of actors and their interests in the process. If actors’ perspectives are introduced, it is commonly assumed that domestic actors voluntarily emulate foreign models, whereas the possibility of external intervention is neglected (Dolowitz/March 1996). In contrast, civil society assistance refers not to emulation (although this might be involved), but to external intervention into domestic settings.

In sum, civil society assistance is defined as the deliberate, direct and explicit involvement of external actors in domestic settings with the aim of transferring the Western concept of civil society as a means to build democracy from the bottom-up. Civil society assistance focuses exclusively on societal actors of the target state and is thus always transnational in character.

3.2 Objectives of Assistance: Civil Society - a Remedy to Various Illnesses

The following section investigates why external actors seek to support civil society beyond their borders.

⁵² This conclusion is in line with the findings of scholars working on the international dimension of democratization. See e.g. Kümmel (1998), Drake (1994) and Pridham (1994).

As already demonstrated in the previous chapter, the attractiveness of the concept of civil society frequently has to do with its impreciseness and the diversity of meanings. Thanks to this very diversity and impreciseness, the concept of civil society serves as a means to reach various objectives. This is not only a reason for its popularity in domestic politics, but also in development cooperation and collaboration with transformation states. In the following the essential goals of civil society support stated by donor organizations will be briefly illustrated. Four main goals of civil society assistance can be identified: (1) democracy, (2) good governance, (3) efficient aid implementation, (4) market economy and economic development.⁵³

The main reason for the increasing interest in promoting civil society is certainly the significance attached to civil society as a foundation for stable democratic development. Civil society functions as a counterweight to the state, prevents state despotism, increases citizen participation, strengthens the efficiency of the state by taking away some of its burden and thus leads to a greater input as well as output legitimacy of a democracy.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the transformation processes in the former Eastern block countries, which were carried in particular by the idea of a free civil society in Central and Eastern Europe, seem to confirm the democratic significance of the concept. There, in particular, the strengthening of civil society commitments is recognized as an important means of facilitating the difficult democratic transformation. However, in other parts of the world as well the external promotion of democracy and civil society is an explicit goal of foreign and developmental policies. The end of the Cold War brought back memories of Kant's old theory, which has yet to be falsified: Democracies do not fight wars against one another. The end of bipolarity at the beginning of the 1990s created the necessity for a new foreign policy orientation and an alternative to the previous policy of containment, which seemed to be the world-wide promotion of democracy.⁵⁵ The external support for and stabilization of democracy and civil society advanced to become a foreign policy objective and an important component of active peace and human rights policies.⁵⁶

“Viewed from this perspective, human rights and democracy are twin brothers. They originate from a common genesis. For this very reason, the existence or the establishment of civil society is a decisive factor for progress in the area of human

53 For an illustration of the various goals of civil society assistance see, among others: Jenkins (2001: 253), Robinson (1996: 6).

54 For the democratic significance of civil society, see Chapter 3.1; On output and input legitimacy, see Scharpf (1998).

55 See Russett (1993). It must be pointed out that this euphoria of the first years after the end of the Cold War, by which in particular the domestic debate in the US was characterized, soon gave way to disillusionment and at least American policy of democracy promotion with peaceful means ended on September 11th, 2001 at the latest.

56 See also: Merkel (1998).

*rights. Wherever a "critical mass" of the population wants to advance political change and promotes political participation, the means of state oppression to secure the outdated power structures are destined to fail in the long run. (...) Supporting civil society is one of the most important tasks of human rights policies. Strengthening it is in the very best interest of all states, because the equilibrium of societal interests attained by means of a functioning civil society is an important factor of stability.*⁵⁷

Furthermore, the promotion of civil society became part of a new development strategy, which recognizes the significance of political conditions for development. While a modernization approach, which emphasized the significance of economic development as a prerequisite for political stability and democracy, prevailed in the 1950s and 1960s, hopes were disappointed on a large scale by the 1980s at the latest due to increasingly impoverished regions, corrupt forms of government and predominantly authoritarian structures. The crisis of previous developmental policies led donors – and above all the World Bank - to believe that overall political conditions and ‘good governance’ are an indispensable prerequisite for development. In this respect the promotion of civil society groups is based on the view that these more efficient and above all more transparent services can come to play where state or market-based activities have failed or do not function sufficiently and/or assume a kind of public monitoring function to achieve greater accountability on behalf of the government. In the course of the 1990s, though, the concept of ‘good governance’, which was initially limited to administrative activities, was increasingly replaced by ‘democratic governance’. In many donor documents, the view prevails that a *“developed participatory and social democracy (can) be regarded (...) as a prerequisite for development”* (Windfuhr 1999: 2). Not only is the effectiveness of civil society emphasized here, but also its democratic potential.

Moreover, the promotion of civil society is also viewed as a means to improve developmental cooperation. State developmental policy, which had fallen into a crisis, discovered civil society organizations and NGOs and pinned their hopes on them (Nuscheler 1996: 498). Besides the economic benefits, the proximity of NGOs to their target group is seen as a particularly decisive advantage. Their closeness to the poor and discriminated is labeled by most donor organizations as an important advantage of the NGOs. NGOs are thus promoted as a mouthpiece and interest representation of the underprivileged (Robinson 1996: 7). The catchword for this in the jargon of developmental cooperation is “empowerment” - thus enabling disadvantaged societal groups, generally the poor, handicapped, and women. The capacity of civil society organizations to trigger sustainable development is regarded as another advantage of civil society promotion.

57 Joschka Fischer, German Foreign Minister, *“Menschenrechte und gesellschaftliche Transformationsprozesse”* (Human Rights and Social Transformation Processes); Fragments from a speech from March 2nd, 1999 in Jakarta.

“There is a general consensus that in order for any development effort to endure past the project period, the community must have the capacity to shape and continue the effort” (North-South Institute 1996: 8).

Finally, the development of free market economies as well as positive economic growth is also stated by donor organizations as a goal of civil society support. Institutions such as chambers of commerce or regional development agencies are supposed to provide the necessary infrastructure to support smaller and mid-sized businesses in particular. Civil society institutions – understood here as organizations independent of the state, but not necessarily non-profit organizations – are to accompany the free interplay of market forces, hinder and prevent state intervention into the free market and thus facilitate economic development. The main slogan here is ‘deregulation’, which is attributed great importance in supporting the transformation in post-communist states in which the market and states were equated with one another.

We should now keep in mind that the attractiveness of civil society and the reason why it seems so worthy of promoting primarily lies in the apparent capacity of civil society to reach several goals of the donors. Accordingly, civil society is reduced to a mere instrument, or a remedy for various diseases with which the main objectives of the donor organizations are to be reached. The following segment will elaborate on the civil society concepts on which the support programs are based. It will be shown that donors base their assistance on vague concepts and definitions of civil society that leave ample scope for interpretation.

3.3 Donor Concepts of Civil Society - One Term, Various Meanings

One must note that the various objectives and ambitious goals of donors of civil society assistance stand in contrast with the astonishing lack of concepts and vague definitions of civil society.

“Relatively little strategizing takes place among donors on what organizations within civil society need to be supported to what purpose” (Robinson 1996: 4).

This section argues that although donors do not explicitly propose a profound concept of civil society, they stress different roles of civil society depending on their own national backgrounds and experiences. Despite these slight differences in understanding, most definitions of civil society given by donors still remain vague and leave ample leeway to interpret what civil society is and which groups act as carriers of civil society on a case to case basis.

One can note that donors largely employ a broad definition of civil society as a space independent of the state, which includes a variety of different organizations:

“Civil society denotes a public space between the state and individual citizens where the latter develops autonomous, organized and collective activities (civic associations)” (OECD 1995 quoted in Robertson 1996: 4).

“Civil society can be defined as the social structure which occupies the political space between the family and the state” (DANIDA, 1995: Support for civil society, Copenhagen, Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

“...(civil society refers to)... the broad spectrum of societal organizations, that are located outside the state and governmental sector and whose motives are not primarily profit-seeking. It encompasses voluntary services, women’s groups, communities, chambers of commerce, cooperatives, religious and clan-based groups, cultural groups, sport clubs, academic and research institutes, consumers and so forth” (DFID 1999, cited in: FES 2001: 43 –own translation).

Quigley (2000) points out that despite this lack of conceptual clarity, donors’ understanding of civil society is subject to their own social and political experiences. Depending on the nation of origin and the organizational purpose or the organizational culture of the donor we can thus identify different understandings of civil society which highlight varying roles of civil society.⁵⁸

Comparing American and European donors, Quigley jumps to the conclusion that the different support programs are oriented towards the own national model.⁵⁹ According to him, American donors espouse an idealized image of civil society and stress the connection between civil society and democracy. Civil society corresponds with a large independent sector that is financially independent of the state, based on voluntary work, and composed of public-policy oriented NGOs that strive for the common good. This understanding is reflected in the definition of USAID (1996: 1):

“Civil society consists of non-state organizations that are engaged in or have the potential for championing adoption and consolidation of democratic reforms”.

According to USAID, so-called „*civic advocacy organizations*” frequently have this potential. These are a sub-group of civil society organizations which are most suited to generate public pressure for reform and to demand accountable government (Hansen 1996: 4). USAID basically considers a broad spectrum of organizations including “*labor federations, business and professional associations, human rights and prodemocratic groups, environmental organizations or policy think tanks*”.

58 See also: Fagin (1998).

59 This assessment is in line with the insight of Carothers (1997) regarding democracy assistance. Carothers identifies a strategy of ‘institutional-modeling’ as the main approach of democracy promotion and protection activities. Donors mainly attempt to sell ready-made solutions to recipients, often in the form of institutional templates modeling the democratic system of the donor country.

This spectrum is, however, quickly limited to organizations that “*advocate on behalf of the public, analyze policy issues, mobilize constituencies in support of policy dialog, serve as watchdogs to ensure accountability in government functions (and)... act as agents of reform in strengthening and broadening democratic governance*” (USAID 1996: 2). USAID stresses the ability of these organizations to generate the public push for political reform and to consolidate reform by holding the state accountable for what it does. In summary, civil society is understood as a (financially independent) sphere that countervails state power, with stress on the control- and socializing role of non-governmental organizations.

According to Quigley (2000: 4) European support programs have a different understanding of civil society. In terms of absolute numbers the NGO sector in Western Europe is smaller than in the USA. Moreover, various NGOs maintain close cooperative ties with the government. Public financial support is as much common as regular consultation and the adoption of public tasks by non-state actors. Interest representation is not the object of small lobby-groups that employ pressure on individual members of parliament, but is done by large associations that are closely connected with the political realm. Neo-corporatist arrangements are common practice. European donors thus often stress the role of civil society actors as intermediary and interest representative. This is evident in the following statement of the German political foundations:

“Civil society comprises the (political) sphere that is not directly controlled by the state, but formed by societal forces. It is the area of active citizen participation and interest representation between state and market. Besides the classical non-governmental organizations, trade unions, professional associations, women, human rights, farmers, environmental and other societal groups are part of civil society“ (Common statement of the German political foundations cited in: FES 2001: 29, own translation).”

Finally, we can identify an understanding of civil society that persists in the so-called “*development profession*” (Jenkins 2001: 250) that is close to international organizations and international NGOs. Here a narrow definition of civil society is visible, which is restricted to non-profit seeking, autonomous NGOs and which stresses the democratic and emancipatory importance of NGOs as well as NGOs’ efficiency (Windfuhr 1999: 2). The “*democratic and better*” NGO (Schmidt / Take 1997) that identifies politically relevant issues and initiates public debate, mostly by means of campaigning is at the same time a service provider that performs tasks more efficiently than the state. This connection between public policy oriented advocacy and efficient service provider is evident in the following definition of civil society proposed by the association of German NGOs.

“As their (the NGOs’) objectives are aimed neither at taking over power, sharing state power nor at profit making economic interests, they constitute their own realm known as civil society, which is clearly distinguishable from market and state interests.

In our view the orientation towards universal norms such as peace, justice, human rights, democracy and ecological sustainability should be constitutive for the affiliation to civil society The starting point for the activities of NGOs is the satisfaction of needs or the provision of services. This happens normally as a reaction to the state's inability to do so" (VENRO cited in FES 2001: 13f, translation by the author).

We can thus conclude that depending on their national or organizational background, donors maintain slightly different understandings of civil society without making them explicit though. None of the examples given above clearly state which actors are regarded as the main actors or carriers of civil society and thus entitled to assistance. Donors mostly point to *non-governmental organizations*, *civil society organizations*, *'civic advocacy organizations'* or *'public voluntary organizations'* without a clear definition of those and provide long lists of groups that may belong to civil society. There is a lack of criteria which allow us to identify actors most suitable to advance civil society development and concepts on which such criteria are based.

The impreciseness and vagueness of donors when it comes to the definition of civil society has been highly criticized. Jenkins (2001) makes the point that donors define civil society and identify actors of civil society depending on their interests and intentions.

"... donor thinking relies not on one wrong or inappropriate definition, but on an array of detailed specifications, any one of which can be invoked depending on which developmental objective it seeks to achieve" (ibid: 257).

In other words, depending on the main objective of the donor, assistance is granted to a human rights organization, an economic interest representation or chamber of commerce, a party-affiliated trade union or foundation, or a think tank that provides detailed research on domestic politics in English. Jenkins points to a *"definitional inconsistency"* of some donors. According to him, USAID is willing to widen its definition of civil society in a way that encompasses even *"first-tier associations"*, namely clan, tribe or ethnical groups if this helps to overthrow an authoritarian regime (ibid: 258). According to Jenkins, the World Bank also uses the concept of civil society as a subtle means of pursuing its interests.

"The Bank's enthusiastic support for civil society ... is nothing less than a backdoor attempt to transform African societies from the ground up by substituting a new understanding of individual political subjectivity – for it is only through such a novel basis for the ,self' that the accompanying features of an open political sphere and a ,neutral state' can perform the roles assigned to them in liberal political theory and neo-liberal economic policy" (Jenkins 2001: 251).

The described practice of interpreting civil society on a case to case basis and in a way that serves donors' interests best undermines the credibility of donors. If the programs and the underlying concept of civil society appear arbitrarily exchangeable, we may suspect donors to exploit the normative concept of civil society as a subtle means to intervene in the internal affairs of another country. Suspicion arises that donors do not aim to promote civil society

development, but that they deliberately pick recipients and support only a small segment of civil society that consists of selected actors who enforce donor interests.

3.4 Strategies of Civil Society Assistance

In face of vague definitions and absent concepts, one may ask how donors translate the vague and normative concept of civil society into concrete support measures.

Although donors fail to present clearly specified strategies, the growing literature on civil society assistance and democracy assistance identified three major approaches donors use to promote civil society:⁶⁰ Institution building, capacity building, and project-specific support.⁶¹ The following will briefly highlight these strategies. It will be shown that in their well-intended effort to promote civil society, donors yield unintended negative side-effects. Some even argue that:

“The grant game encourages donors as well as grant recipients to behave in ways that hinder rather than facilitate civic development” (Henderson 2002: 140p).

3.4.1 Institution-Building

Especially in the early years, civil society assistance largely involved institutional support. Financial and in-kind support to non-governmental organizations is widely regarded as an appropriate means to trigger civil society development. This practice is based on a moral image of NGOs as advocates of the poor, the suppressed and socially neglected who strive for the common good. NGOs are regarded as intrinsically motivated, and independent of political or economic interests. In such a view, the positive characteristics ascribed to NGOs, i.e. their watch-dog function, the ability to mobilize public support and to put issues on the political agenda as well as their ability to provide services more efficiently than the state and market recommends NGOs as the main carriers of civil society.⁶² The UN Secretary-General’s ‘*Agenda for Development*’ Report points out:

“A vigorous civil society is indispensable to creating lasting and successful development... Locally based NGOs, in particular, can serve as intermediaries and give people a voice and an opportunity to articulate their needs, preferences and vision

60 For literature on democracy assistance and civil society assistance see: Barkan (1997), Carothers (1996a, 1996b, 1997, 1999a, 1999b), Chandler (2004), Diamond (1997), Ekiert/Kubik (2000), Gyimah-Boadi (1999), Henderson (2002), Holmes (1999), Kearns (1999), Lasota (1999), McMahon (2004), Ottaway/Chung (1999), Quigley (1996, 1997, 2000), Regulska (1998), Wedel (1998).

61 See e.g. Quigley (1996: 109pp), McMahon (2004: 254p).

62 See for the positive effects attributed to NGOs and a criticism of the moral image of NGOs: Nuscheler (1996: 503p), see also section 2.1.3 and 2.1.6 in this analysis.

of a better society” (UN Secretary-General’s ‘Agenda for Development’ Report, p. 107 cited in Chandler 2004: 226).

According to donors, civil society is thus primarily the result of the activities of NGOs. The more NGOs are active in a recipient country, the more vibrant civil society will be. From this standpoint, civil society assistance largely translates into NGO support. The success of assistance can be measured by counting NGOs active in a country.⁶³

In their support to NGOs, donors apply what has been called a strategy of “*institutional-modeling*” (see Carothers 1997). Donors are highly influenced by their national background and experiences and tend to support Western-style organizations (Quigley 2000). In her analysis of assistance to women’s groups in CEE, McMahon (2004: 254) finds that donors quickly altered an initial reactive approach and became increasingly proactive. Instead of supporting existing institutions, donors increasingly encouraged the development of organizations that would not have formed otherwise, often by providing seed money.

The initial focus of donors on institution building had unintended negative side-effects. McMahon (2004: 263) points out that the incentive for activists in the region to establish a new organization was higher than the incentive to work for an already existing organization. As a result, several small organizations came into being with similar goals and objectives, and sometimes even the same membership. Instead of joining forces and thus gaining political power, these organizations preferred to remain separate organizations. A fact McMahon largely attributes to the existence of foreign funds. Moreover, in light of scarce funding opportunities, intense competition among groups with similar objectives arose. Institution building thus resulted in a rise of small and largely superfluous organizations and additionally hindered the development of cooperative ties among NGOs or the ability for collective action outlined above as characteristics of a vibrant civil society (chapter 2.2.3). In her study on NGO support in Russia, Henderson (2002) comes to a similar conclusion. Recipient organizations in Russia largely failed to develop links with other groups of society or even with like-minded organizations:

“Perhaps ... aid is best at fostering groups’ abilities to perform civil society’s external functions of advocacy and interest articulation, but it does relatively little to improve how these groups perform civil society’s internal functions of developing networks of communication and trust” (Henderson 2002: 164).

63 American donors, in particular, measure the success of assistance in the number and variety of domestic NGOs. See for example the “NGO Sustainability Index for Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia”, which USAID has been publishing on an annual basis since 1996. See also a magnitude of directories of NGOs active in different issue areas in Central and Eastern Europe that are almost exclusively funded by American donors.

3.4.2 Capacity Building

Besides financial and material support to organizations, donors invest in human resources and undertake what is called “capacity building” measures. Countless seminars, conferences or in-door training seminars have been carried out in CEE with the aim of teaching individuals and civil society activists what civil society is and how to run an NGO. While at the beginning seminars were largely run by foreign short-term consultation, the dissatisfaction with this practice quickly shifted the focus to “train the trainer” projects.⁶⁴ From 1993 onwards, donors qualified local trainers to carry out civic education and capacity-building measures.

Training and education measures are motivated by two different objectives. Firstly, professional staff is regarded as important for the building of strong organizations. Capacity building thus also serves the objective of institution-building. Secondly, capacity building has the objective of ‘raising awareness’ and triggering an understanding of the democratic role and merits of civil society. As a result, donors focus in their training efforts on the one hand on the transfer of basic techniques such as strategies for lobbying, campaigning or fund-raising. On the other hand, they aim to trigger a proper understanding of the role of NGOs. What exactly the ‘right’ role is, however, is largely determined by donors who often point to public-policy orientation and advocacy as major tasks of NGOs.⁶⁵ This practice has been criticized for ignoring domestic needs and experiences. Case studies on civil society assistance in different countries and issue areas suggest that the constant focus on advocacy and public policy orientation leads NGOs to ignore their constituencies and to refrain from building a support base. As a result, NGOs often fail to address the issues of interest for their constituencies. In his analysis of OSCE civil society assistance to Bosnia, Chandler (2004) points to a gap between supported organizations and the Bosnian people (ibid: 235). He explains this gap as follows:

“The unintended consequence of creating civil society NGOs which are reliant on external support has been that they are never forced to build their own base of popular support ... these NGOs ... have no need to engage in discussion or create broader links to society” (ibid: 236).

64 Central and Eastern European participants were frustrated with the fact that foreign consultations often revealed a shocking ignorance of domestic settings, experiences and needs. The short-term training measures have been identified as a fruitless enterprise with little effect. See Siegel / Yancey (1992).

65 As already mentioned (chapter 3.3.), USAID stresses the importance of “civic advocacy organizations”. The OSCE also stresses the importance of advocacy NGOs: “The goal of the NGO development work is to assist local NGOs to become self-sufficient, participatory, and actively involved in working on behalf of their communities. The kind of local NGO projects which most closely reach this aim.. are those which focus on advocacy and are willing to tackle actual political or social issues...” (OSCE Democratization Branch, Monthly Report, 1, p. 5, cited in Chandler 2004: 231).

McMahon (2004) comes to a similar conclusion in her analysis of Western aid to women groups in CEE.

“... this dependence on the international community has translated into a lack of accountability, if not interest, in grass-roots constituency building” (ibid: 262). (NGOs that receive Western assistance should) ... “... engage and involve their local communities, not just seek to advocate on their behalf” (ibid: 259).

According to her, women’s groups in CEE adopted the language and issues as well as the perception of gender equality based on American values and norms. In doing so they did not only fail to address their constituency, they also failed to develop their own ideas on equality and women’s rights in the post-communities context (ibid: 264).

Nonetheless the various training and education activities of donors were still effective on the personal level. McMahon comes to the conclusion that donors succeeded in triggering learning through capacity building measures:

“... Interviews with activists from the region ... suggest that (American NGOs) have been crucial to skill development for particular individuals” (ibid: 256p).

Similarly, in his study on democracy assistance in Romania, Carothers (1996a: 95pp) finds that the effect of political assistance ranges from modest to negligible. However, he illustrates what he calls “*subjective effects*”, i.e. “*psychological, moral, and emotional effects at the personal level*” (ibid: 95) that trigger recipient learning and increase recipients’ understanding of democratic participation.

Starting in the middle of the 1990s and in response to the criticism above, donors exceed the initial focus on training and education and increasingly aim to strengthen relationships within civil society and between civil society actors and other domestic actors. A research project on the matter conducted by the Canadian “North-South Institute” points out that strengthening the capacity of individual NGOs does not go far enough. If donors seek to strengthen the capacity of civil society as a whole, it is crucial to establish networks between the different organizations and to stipulate a dialogue among NGOs, governments, community groups, funding agencies and other actors (North-South Institute 1996). Capacity building thus includes a focus on networks and cross-cutting relationships and on the organizations’ ability to do their work in conjunction with other actors and forces. The aim is less on “*brick making*”, rather on “*brick laying*” (ibid: 12). Along the same lines, Carothers observes several years after his study on Romania:

“Aid providers still interpreted promoting the development of civil society in terms of supporting NGOs, but the range of ... NGO aid was expanded considerably ... Aid providers began to support centers for NGO training and development as NGO sectors grew rapidly” (1999b: 59).

Carothers continues by stating that donors encourage NGOs to invest in horizontal ties between civil society organizations as well as in vertical ties with governments and citizens. Donors increasingly push NGOs to develop productive partnerships with central and local governments, to seek to ameliorate the political and legal environment enabling civil society activities, to invest in NGO networks, and to develop more direct ties to the citizens on whose behalf they act (ibid: 60).

3.4.3 Project-specific Support

Finally, donors largely rely on the support for specific projects with a given time-frame and identifiable objectives. The preference of project-specific support in contrast to institutional support, which finances the running costs of a recipient organization,⁶⁶ has much to do with the accountability of donors for issued funds and their need for controlling mechanisms. Project-specific support, however, often has the negative side-effect that it breeds what it aims to avert, namely dependent recipients, the waste of resources, and opportunistic behavior.

Donors either spent the money of tax-payers or of private contributors. In either case, the public is wary that funds are not wasted or embezzled. Donors are thus on a constant watch. They need to demonstrate on the one hand that their activities do not breed corruption, while on the other hand they are under pressure to present observable results. In the eyes of donors, project-specific support has the advantage that it firstly aims to yield immediate results in a given period of time, and thus secondly satisfies the donor's need for controlling and evaluation. Financing a directory of NGOs is thus a safer enterprise for donors than support for workshops as in the former case the result is easily detected whereas the outcome of the latter activity is uncertain and not easily open to external inspection. Moreover, donors are aware of the fact that a trustworthy and suitable partner organization is not easily found in the post-communist context. In view of lacking finances, the incentive to establish a NGO for opportunistic reasons, i.e., in order to satisfy personal interests and motives, is high. Rather than supporting one single organization for a longer period of time and risking choosing an untrustworthy partner, donors prefer to support various projects of different organizations, thus minimizing the risk of corruption. In consequence, project-specific support satisfies donors' wish for control and supervision. Additionally, donors

⁶⁶ English-speaking donors usually differentiate between "project-grants" and "institutional grants". In Germany the different strategies are more commonly known under the headings of "partner-measures" (*Partnermaßnahmen*) or "regime-measures" (*Regimemaßnahmen*). Traditionally the KAS opts for the former, the FES for the latter approach (see chapter 6.1.3). In other words, the KAS prefers to work together with a small number of well-chosen partner organizations over a longer period of time, while the FES prefers to implement several project measures with different organizations.

believe that project-specific support is more appropriate to achieve their objectives than simply supporting an organization without a given purpose. In this way, donors can determine for which purposes recipients use their funds, and may choose projects they believe have the most impact on civil society development.

However, the tendency of donors to support primarily projects has negative side-effects. One may even argue that donors breed what they aim to prevent, thus opportunistic behavior. First and foremost, recipient organizations become overly dependent on project funds, a dependence that prevents local sensibility, stability, continuity and even sustainability. As international aid mainly supports specific projects, which further are required to be original, innovative and exemplary, recipients are forced to ensure their existence by implementing one project after the other. Each project, however, has different objectives, encompasses different activities, and often even involves different staff. After the project ends, financial resources are lacking to continue the established service or activity or whatever the project objective was. Project-specific support thus hinders continuity, stability and sustainability. Recipients cannot work for the achievement of their statutory objectives, nor can they develop an appropriate organizational structure. Instead they live with permanent alteration of staff, objectives and the constant need to pay for the running costs of established services. As one recipient in the region put it:

“Donors love to fund something original, innovative and unique. We (the recipients) need support to continue something proven and established” (interview with the author).

This tendency is intensified as civil society assistance is shaped by fashion and trends - a fact that is again a by-product of the good intentions of donors. Although the prevailing criticism of analysts tells otherwise, the fact remains that donors more often than not want to satisfy local demand. However, they tend to forget that other donors follow the same line of thought. Therefore if corruption in a recipient country is high, all donors launch anti-corruption programs. If a country is said to have a minority problem, all donors launch minority-programs. At the end of the day, more money is available to fund projects targeting the empowerment of ethnic minorities than NGOs focusing on minority issues. As a result, civil society assistance is seldom based on long-time strategic reflections. It instead follows short-term objectives. Recipient organizations thus face the challenge of adapting to new donor objectives and wants. The example of democracy project funding illustrates this point. Although donors do not make this explicit,⁶⁷ civil society assistance in an authoritarian state

67 An exception is USAID who differentiates between pre-transition, early transition, late transition and consolidation phase of democratization. According to USAID each phase requires different strategies of civil society assistance (USAID 1996: 3pp).

must be different than civil society assistance in a new democracy. While in the former case the prevailing interest is the weakening and displacement of existing institutions and ruling elites, in the latter case the predominant aim is to stabilize and consolidate existing institutions and ruling elites. In both cases civil society plays a different role (see Lauth/Merkel 1997). In the first case, civil society is a counterweight and often a counter-elite to the ruling regime. External support to NGOs aims to support this counter-elite, to protect it from governmental arbitrariness and repression and to guarantee the material existence of oppositional NGOs. A further objective of NGO support in this phase might be to mobilize the masses. In new democracies, it cannot be the aim to protect a counter-elite to the state. Instead NGOs provide citizens with the opportunity to participate in political decisions, to represent societal interests, and to control state behavior. It has been argued that the different objectives of civil society assistance in different phases of democratization counteract the development of civil society (Jenkins 2001). This is firstly evident in a personal discontinuity. As the prevailing objective of NGO support in an authoritarian regime is the enforcement of a counter-elite, it is hardly surprising that NGO activists change their job against a seat in parliament or government once democracy is in place. As a result, organizations of civil society are left behind without leadership and objectives. Moreover, they are confronted with rather different donors' wants and funding requirements. While up to now it was enough to be against the ruling regime, now donors ask them to be for something. Even worse, as donors often refrain from supporting particular interests, in order not to raise suspicions of taking sides,⁶⁸ support is largely limited to service provision. NGOs are thus forced to provide services, which are, however, not aimed to serve interests of local constituencies, but what donors believe is in the interest of local constituencies. As a result, NGOs often shrivel to mere donor project-implementation organizations.

For all these reasons and due to the high dependence on foreign funds, project-specific support leads to opportunistic behavior and prevents local sensibility. Rather than engaging in activities they regard as useful, recipients quickly learned that it is more fruitful to satisfy donors' wants than local needs. Ottaway/Chung (1999) claim that the lacking sensibility of donors to domestic needs leads to "top-down" civil society organizations, "*with programs and activities molded above all by what donors are willing to fund*" (ibid: 107). The strong requirements donors developed in fear of corruption and a waste of resources had mainly one effect: recipients developed sophisticated skills in proposal writing and fund-raising. As a result, donors more often than not fund not the project best suited to reach the outlined objectives, but the one with the best-written proposal. In the words of McMahon (2004: 262):

68 McMahon (2004: 260) makes the point that donors often restrain from funding political activities of recipients due to tax and legal requirements.

“The feverish efforts to keep their organization afloat and secure funding for the next year means that fund-raising and proposal writing are an organization’s main concern, while proposed activities and outreach must be secondary. Ironically, but not surprisingly, groups have to focus on keeping their organization going rather than undertaking programmes to help women or increase their domestic following”.

3.5 Conclusion: Problems of Civil Society Assistance

The aim of this chapter has been to approach the phenomenon of civil society assistance. Civil society assistance has been defined as the deliberate, direct and explicit involvement of external actors into domestic settings with the aim of nurturing and supporting civil society as a means to build democracy from the bottom-up. Civil society assistance focuses exclusively on the societal actors of the recipient state and is thus always transnational in character. While recipients are thus exclusively non-state actors, donors may be state or non-state actors.

It became clear that civil society assistance is not the product of an altruist donor guided by humanistic ideals, rather satisfies rational interests and follows an instrumental reasoning. Civil society assistance is thus a highly interest driven enterprise. The intention of donors is less to promote civil society as a good in itself, rather as an instrument to achieve other ends such as democracy, good governance, efficient aid implementation or market economy. This is very evident when one looks at the concepts and definitions of civil society underlying donors’ activities. Most definitions of civil society given by donors are precise in describing the lofty goals civil society is able to achieve, remain, however, vague in outlining basic characteristics of civil society. Donors thus maintain the possibility of interpreting what civil society is on a case to case basis. In doing so, donors largely rely on institutional support to NGOs in their efforts to promote civil society development. The definitional vagueness thus leaves ample scope when it comes to identifying the organizations belonging to civil society that will subsequently be the main beneficiaries of assistance. In other words, depending on the interest of donors either the one or the other organization receives aid. Donors thus always make a selection – a selection of eligible organizations, or of a trust-worthy partner with whom one aims to implement a project. It goes without saying that an interest-driven and selective approach to civil society assistance is perfectly legitimate in principle. Why should civil society assistance not serve both, recipients and donors? This being said, the intentional and selective character of civil society assistance is still problematic for several reasons.

If civil society assistance is selective, there is a high risk that donors support only fragments of civil society and not a pluralistic spectrum of a variety of organizations. This can have far-reaching consequences, as the provision of resources, contacts, information and know-how

strengthens the capability of selected groups, whereas others are left with little access to finances, training and know-how. It has been argued that in particular in the early stage of civil society development this imbalance determines the further development of associational life. Organizations that are the first to receive aid after political change gain a head start that can hardly be outrun by others.⁶⁹ By these means, civil society assistance alters domestic power structures and is thus highly political in nature. In his study on civil society assistance in development countries Windfuhr comes to the conclusion:

“In countries whose civil society is weak, external intervention influences the direction of the development and composition of civil society. The weaker civil society is, the higher the risk that new conflicts arise because certain groups and interests are selectively supported and privileged.” (Windfuhr 1999: 1, own translation).

Furthermore, the focus of donors on institutions and leading NGO activists often weakens rather than strengthens ties within civil society. The selectivity of donors that equips some with resources, know-how and abundant contacts and leaves others with nothing frequently creates envy and resentment as well as fierce competition among NGOs. The competition for scarce resources, as well as the fact that it is more rewarding for activists to establish a new organization than to work for an existing organization instead hinders the development of ties of cooperation and trust among NGOs that constitute a vibrant civil society (see chapter 2). Moreover, project-specific support nurtures opportunistic behavior of recipients. In view of the scarce financial resources available, only NGOs that flexibly adapt to altering donors' wants guarantee their financial existence. In the worst case, civil society assistance translates into nothing more than outsourcing development agencies that implement assistance projects from the donor to the recipient side. Such organizations fail to address their local constituencies. Furthermore, such organizations feel no need to address local demands, as they rely on foreign and not domestic actors in ensuring material well-being, reputation and political bargaining power. Analysts of civil society assistance thus critically put forward that recipients of external assistance are often detached from the local population. Some even point to a gap between the people and recipient organizations, i.e. the ones that pretend to represent society (Chandler 2004).

Additionally, one has to raise the question of sustainability. Doubts can be raised whether the selected NGOs are able to sustain themselves after Western assistance comes to an end, especially if they do not correspond with local needs. The evaluation of US-funded NGO support programs critically states:

69 Here both Wedel (1998) and Petrescu (2000) for Poland and Romania respectively, come to the conclusion that organizations which received developmental funds briefly after the fall of communism continue to have a decisive impact on the development of an NGO sector.

“When there is heavy emphasis on demonstrating a policy change or other large impact, inevitably there will be pressure to assist high-profile national organizations...The problem of working with national groups is that they tend already to be well funded by foreign donors and share the priorities of the foreign donor community. These organizations may depend on foreign funding for their survival and find it difficult to build an authentic constituent base of local support. Ironically, the emphasis on impact and results may push donors toward supporting organizations that are not sustainable in the long run” (USAID 1999: 20).

Finally, interest-driven civil society projects undermine the credibility of donors and arouse suspicions of external manipulation. As already stated, civil society assistance is always political in nature and directly intervenes into the internal affairs of a country by empowering one actor's group over another. As a result, civil society assistance may be perceived as a subtle form of political intervention from outside and rejected as an illegitimate interference in the internal affairs of a country. In consequence, the main recipients of aid are perceived as intruders and puppets of Western influence.

Bearing these problems in mind, the question arises whether an intentional and purposive intervention into the internal affairs of a country, even if it is classified as assistance, is at all capable of fostering civil society development? Is it not the case that the two problems inherent to civil society assistance, its selectivity and illegitimacy, render any attempt to nurture civil society development from the outside impossible? Are the critics of civil society assistance right who suggest that due to its intentional and selective character civil society assistance results in a mere supplementary structural feature of civil society - in westernized and highly professional NGOs with little domestic support?

This study aims to reveal that the anticipated failure is not a necessity. Not all analysts see civil society assistance critically. On the contrary, some even stress the advantage of civil society assistance in comparison to other forms of democracy assistance that target state institutions. Carothers sees civil society assistance as *“one step further”* that has the capacity of turning *“democratic forms into democratic substance”* (Carothers 1999a: 337). Quigley (1997: 106) stresses the ability of non-state actors and private foundations that function *“outside of state-to-state relations”*. According to him, their capacity to disburse resources more quickly and adapt programs more easily than public funders will have a positive effect on democratization. Moreover, donors are increasingly aware of the shortcomings of their selective approach and adapt their strategies to recipient needs. The emphasis on single organizations and institutions is supplemented by activities that aim to nurture ties inside society, i.e. between different NGOs but also between NGOs and local administration and the wider society. We thus face the paradox that the critical studies on civil society assistance cited above are opposed by several studies on civil society assistance that demonstrate that foreign aid played a major role in nurturing the rise of NGO activity in Central and Eastern

Europe and that capacity-building measures had an immense effect on the individual and personal level.⁷⁰ Donors also face the puzzle that their programs, projects and measures bear fruits in one country and have little impact in another. Civil society assistance, albeit instrumental and selective by character as we have now seen, thus may result in domestic changes that trigger civil society development. The question is not so much if but rather when, under which conditions, and in what contexts external assistance contributes to the development of civil society. The purpose of the following chapter is to approach these questions from a theoretical standpoint.

70 See e.g. McMahon (2004: 255pp), Ekiert / Kubik (2000), Carothers (1996a: 95pp).

4 Theoretical Framework: Civil Society Assistance as Externally Driven Intentional Institutional Transfer

The key question of this study is whether the originally Western concept of civil society can be transferred to other domestic settings. Is it at all feasible to stimulate, nurture and strengthen civil society from abroad? Is civil society not inevitably an indigenous product, enshrined in the historical and cultural roots of a nation? The question is thus how far can civil society “travel”. And if it can travel, how far does the fact that travel expenses are paid by external actors inhibit the chances of traveling? In brief, is a transfer of civil society feasible, and if yes, under what conditions and with what outcomes?

The following chapter theoretically approaches these questions and concerns. As pointed out in chapter 3, civil society assistance is understood as an externally driven intentional attempt to transfer a certain image, i.e. civil society, from one place to another. Civil society assistance thus refers to a transfer of formal and informal structures, namely civil society organizations on the one hand and civil values and norms on the other hand, that have proven valuable in the ‘Western’ world. The chapter starts with an overview of two basic approaches to civil society assistance that provide divergent answers to the question to what extent is an intentional transfer of civil society feasible. Following a more detailed description of a sociological understanding of institutions, I subsequently highlight the basic problems and dilemmas inherent to external efforts to assist civil society. Finally, conditions facilitating intentional transfer from without will be identified.

4.1 Two Distinct Approaches to Civil Society Assistance

In the few theoretical discussions of civil society assistance two distinct approaches to the questions above can be identified. The first is based on neo-liberal thinking and puts actors and their choices in the center of analysis. The second, however, follows a sociological line of thought and places greater emphasis on structures and cultures.⁷¹ According to the former approach, civil society assistance is seen as a promising device for promoting and stabilizing democratization processes. This assessment is based on the conviction that external actors

71 For a description of the two basic lines of thought see: Scharpf (1997: 20pp), Jacoby (2000: 3pp), Offe (1995: 201pp), Hall/Taylor (1996). Hall/Taylor label the two lines of thought the “*calculus*” and the “*cultural*” approach to human action. Based on the relationship between actors and structures, the definition of institutions and the explanation of change they distinguish among “*three new institutionalisms*”: “*historical institutionalism*”, “*rational choice institutionalism*”, and “*sociological institutionalism*” whereas “*historical institutionalism*” stands somewhat between the other two as it draws on the “*calculus*” and the “*cultural*” approach in an eclectic manner.

transfer missing links into transforming societies. In this perspective, external assistance and aid possess at least the potential to provide a valuable contribution to democratization. The sociological approach, in contrast, views civil society assistance as a donor driven and donor dominated transaction that either risks rejection or is followed by recipient opportunism and is in either case bound to fail. The two distinct approaches have also been labeled with the self-explaining terms of engineering versus gardening. The former stresses the point that institution building is regarded as a manageable enterprise, whereas the latter points to the importance of grown structures and the longevity of institutions.

Following a neo-liberal perspective, aid and assistance have been understood as a transmission belt that transplants missing links, in this case civil society into domestic contexts (Wedel 1998: 8). In this view, democratic change may be pictured as the reconstruction of an old house that is brought down and rebuilt on the same spot. Some of the old parts of the house that still function and live up to the expectations of the architect may be used again, but most of them are rebuilt differently, modernized and brought in line with a blueprint sketched out on the drawing table. Whether reconstruction will be a success, in the sense that it results in a stable and functional house, is foremost dependent on the skills of the architect, on good planning and on the quality of the blueprint. Democratic change is thus nothing more than a question of design. Institutional design determines the effectiveness and performance of institutions and since it is assumed that democracy consolidates when based on institutions capable to fulfill their major tasks, design subsequently is a decisive element in the successful completion of political change. As designs are usually copies (Offe 1995), democratization translates into nothing more than institutional modeling. Neo-liberal approaches to democratization thus regard the transfer of institutions, concepts or ideas as an effective mechanism for setting up proper institutions (Jacoby 2000: 3). If we return to our picture of the democratic house, civil society is seen as an important building block guaranteeing the stability of the new house. Today's designers emphasize functions of civil society that stabilize and supplement political institutions. Emphasis is given to the conflict resolution capacities of civil society and intermediary structures. Moreover, civil society organizations are taken as more efficient than state bodies in performing services.⁷² Along these lines, the establishment of a plurality of associations and non-governmental organizations, as civil society is largely understood, will automatically be followed by a stable and consolidated democracy. The major question of concern is thus not whether a transfer is feasible, but how it is best done. The "*question of strategy*" (Carothers 1997) stands in the forefront, hence the question "*how to devise effective*

72 The various democratic virtues of civil society are outlined in greater detail in chapter 2.1.

strategies to support a wide variety of democratization processes" (Santiso 2001: 1). It thus hardly comes as surprise that various studies on civil society assistance mainly provide an analysis of donors, their strategies, projects and programs.⁷³ Although the donor perspective is an important step in any analysis of political or economic assistance, the sole focus on projects and programs reduces assistance merely to the business of right strategies and best practices. Recipient interests and contexts are widely ignored.

By contrast, sociological or cultural approaches to civil society assistance stress the importance of domestic contexts and recipient responses. From this perspective, external assistance is regarded as a doomed effort that in the best case produces paper results or risks rejection and in the worst case results in nationalist backlashes and democratic reverse waves. Following a sociological interpretation, democratization is subject to path-dependency. Institutions are not rebuilt after a *tabula rasa*. Instead rules and norms are internalized by the people that live and act under them. Actors and their choices are seen as a unit of analysis with little significance as human action is highly influenced and determined by institutions. The approach proceeds from the assumption that "*behavior is not fully strategic but bounded by an individual's worldview*" (Hall/Taylor 1996: 955). Institutions thus do not only provide necessary information and determine actors' expectations about policy outcomes and the actions of others, they also provide moral templates and culturally defined "scripts" that do not only structure actions but also define the internal beliefs, cognitive maps and subsequently the preferences of actors (ibid, Scharpf 1997: 21). As a result, institutional change cannot be made by scratch following a previously created design. Institutions are instead resistant to change and when change occurs, it is a long process with an uncertain outcome. Hence, civil society is an indigenous product that does not only rely on formal institutions and associations but depends as well on a certain civic ethos or *Sittlichkeit*. Tolerance and trust that transcend beyond the circle of family and friends are inevitable values of civil society that make democracy endure in complex societies.⁷⁴ A culture based on such values cannot be transplanted from the outside, rather is the result of a long historical and cultural development. A sociological approach to civil society assistance thus conceives neither the concept of civil society assistance, nor the strategy of donors, nor the project management as decisive factors determining the effect of external assistance. How the assistance is perceived, accepted and adapted by the recipients is mainly decisive. Recipient responses determine the implementation and thus the actual outcome, in contrast to the output, of the assistance granted:

73 Examples of studies that largely focus on donors, in particular US-American donors, and on donor strategies are: Carothers (e.g. 1997, 1999a), Crawford (1996), Diamond (1997), Glenn (1999), Guilhot (2003), Hansen (1996), Jenkins (2001), Quigley (1997), Santiso (2001).

"However powerful external signals and levers may be, it is where and how they are received internally that proves decisive" (Pravda 2001: 15).

From this standpoint, external assistance to civil society remains without a lasting impact and results in the establishment of 'DONGOs' (donor driven NGOs), Quangos' (quasi-NGOs) or "GONGOs" (government organized NGOs). In other words, the supported NGOs are not independent but solely function as puppets either of donors or of the recipient state. Civil society assistance merely supports "*some favored cliques*" (Wedel 1998), who strive for the pursuit of their own wealth instead of the common good, and who orientate their actions towards donor promises instead of their constituencies' needs. What evolves is nothing more than a supplementary stratum of Western oriented NGOs detached from society and domestic worries. As a consequence, civil society assistance breeds recipient opportunism and hypocrisy. The lofty goals of donors are followed by meager results (Quigley 2000). On top of that, civil society assistance may also result in negative effects. The privileged status of the beneficiaries of aid evokes envy. Main recipients may be regarded as "*bridgeheads of alien influence*" (Abele / Offe 2002). The external activities are not always welcomed as needed assistance rather as an unwanted intrusion into their internal affairs. National backlashes are the likely consequence.

This study will follow neither the first nor the second line of argument as both reveal certain shortcomings that minimize their usefulness as an analytical framework for this study. The neo-liberal approach with its emphasis on the functions of a template on the one hand and the value of these functions for recipients on the other is inappropriate for grasping the peculiar character of different domestic responses to external pressures. The main question of concern of this line of thought is whether concepts and institutions are "fit" for transfer (Rose 1993: 98)⁷⁵ and thus why they travel, and not to what extent and with what outcomes. The focus is placed exclusively on the externally driven transfer taking place in a kind of 'institutional modeling'. Such accounts are thus restricted to an analysis of the export side of the transfer, leaving half of the picture aside. Divergent responses to seemingly similar pressures and varying outcomes are, however, the major puzzle for anyone interested in civil

74 See in detail on the concept of civil society: chapter 2.

75 Rose (1993) stresses the point that lesson drawing is not about the uniform spread of programs; it is about finding programs that can transfer. The transferability of a program is grounded in elements connected to the program and elements connected to the country (e.g. lacking resources) adopting it. Basically his argument follows the logic that due to dissimilarities of two settings certain conditions have to apply so that the program can be effective. However, he gives no satisfying classification as to how many dissimilarities prevent the transfer and how much similarity is necessary. Cases are also rejected when programs do not transfer despite similarities in context or transfer despite lacking effectiveness.

society assistance. Neo-liberal accounts of civil society assistance are for all these reasons not capable of explaining the complex and interactive processes of international pressures and domestic responses.

Moreover, empirical studies demonstrate that the actors involved in a transfer process are not guided by strategic calculations. In his study on policy transfer between the US and Britain, Wolman (1992) points out that the search for information about different political programs is not carried out in a structured and efficient way but takes place quite arbitrary (ibid: 31). The absence of an assessment of the effects of the program in the country of origin and the lacking awareness of the different conditions in the borrowing country prove that the effectiveness of the borrowed policy is not important for the borrowers (ibid: 35). The reason for the transfer lies in the fact that foreign concepts seem to be more easily accepted at home. In his study on the motives of states to utilize foreign experience Bennett (1991: 33) comes to similar conclusions. He names three different motives beside the search for effectiveness: (1) domestic actors use foreign evidence for reasons of agenda-setting; (2) to mollify political pressure; (3) to legitimate conclusions already reached. Radaelli (1997) also points to the need for legitimate decisions as the main explanatory variable in his study on the promotion of policy transfer in the EU by EU institutions. Finally, as shown above, approaches that ignore the cultural basis of civil society, underlying social norms and cultural values, fail to live up to the normative concept of civil society (see chapter 2.2).

For all these reasons a sociological approach to civil society assistance seems more apt to identify varying domestic outcomes of civil society assistance. The dissertation thus draws on a sociological understanding of institutions and on the importance given to recipient contexts. One must note, however, that a sociological approach to civil society assistance that primarily draws on rigid structures and cultures, but leaves no room for change renders any analysis of civil society assistance a pointless enterprise. The dissertation thus aims to identify conditions of change and challenges the hypothesis that external efforts to assist civil society development are bound to fail.

In line with actor-centered institutionalism this study stresses the role of actors and identifies more precisely the conditions under which change occurs. In other words, what circumstances and conditions facilitate the transfer of civil society? What makes it possible for civil society to travel? These questions are approached in the following steps. First, I describe the sociological understanding of institutions as well as the relationship between actors and structures as understood in sociological neo-institutionalism in greater detail, as the analytical framework developed in the remainder of this chapter draws on the basic assumptions of a sociological understanding of institutions. Secondly, implications for civil society assistance will be derived and the problems inherent in the transfer of concepts,

ideas and institutions from one place to another identified. Finally, I identify conditions that facilitate intentional transfer from abroad. In doing so, great emphasis will be placed on actors acting within institutional settings and on the possibility of learning.

4.2 A Sociological Understanding of Institutions

This study follows a sociological understanding of institutions that stresses the 'dual nature' of institutions (Offe 1995).⁷⁶ From this standpoint, institutions are more than a simple instrument established in order to serve certain functions, to cope with special problems and to extract the resources needed to accomplish stated objectives. Institutions evolve not only in order to create the most efficient structure to perform certain tasks, but also generate norms and principles about what ought to be done, what is to be regarded as normal and what behavior can be expected from others acting under the same institution. In other words, besides the formal regulations and rules ensuring effectiveness, institutions embody the normative principles of those who live in or under them (Offe 1995: 299). Through this, 'socializing function' institutions coordinate action, guide behavior and create purposes for action. Such norms are often not fixed in writing but are informal practices and common knowledge, which are lived and re-lived and slowly generated through habitual action and recognition. They incorporate on the one hand a normative basis from which the institution derives its legitimacy and on the other hand provide the institution's members with shared cognitive and normative orientations. Institutions thus consist of two components (Offe 1995): a formal feature unveiled in formal structures based on written rules and specialized roles, and an informal feature based on common practice, daily routines and a shared understanding. In result, the continuing existence of institutions further depends on their ability to perform two functions: to achieve internal socialization and external effectiveness.

The advantage of the outlined 'second nature' is obvious: it establishes order and provides orientation without an abundance of written regulations and rules. Moreover, by providing normative orientations, institutions generate support and loyalty as well as a sense of belonging. In doing so, they socialize and integrate their members. The inherent problematic is, however, also not difficult to depict. This self-enforcement of rules and routines results in rigidity and resistance to change. Institutions tend to be stable and persistent to change. This is due to a simple mechanism: Actors react to novelties while using old routines and adapting them to the new situation or better adapting the situation to the routines (March/Olson 1989: 34). Even after a radical change, longstanding norms and habits persist. The institutionalized

⁷⁶ The following is mainly based on: Eisen (1996), Goodin (1996), Hall/Taylor (1996), March/Olson (1989), Offe (1995 / 2000b).

rules and norms are internalized by the members of the institutions. As a result, institutions are 'given' in the sense that they are neither questioned nor aware. Institutions regulate action in a way the actors are unaware of. Hence, they also regulate the action that attempts to foster institutional change. In the words of March/Olson (1989): action follows the "*logic of appropriateness*" (March/Olson 1989). Action is not determined by hierarchical preferences of actors that pursue their own interests. Rather, actors chose actions that are most appropriate with regard to the situation they are in and the position or role they hold inside the institution (ibid.: 23). Action is constrained by institutions, rules, the membership, position and role of the individual in question. Hence, preferences of agents are determined by institutions, existing rules, and norms, as actors seek to achieve some kind of cognitive consistency and a reinforcement of already existing belief systems. According to the sociological understanding of the term, institutions are thus conceptualized in broad terms as the definition encompasses not only formal and written rules and regulations, but particularly stresses the informal rules, norms, and cultural standards that are inevitable parts of institutions.

4.3 Institutional Transfer – Doing What Cannot Be Done?

So what does this imply for the externally driven transfer of structures and norms, in this case, civil society assistance? Firstly, an actor who attempts to transfer institutions faces the same problem as one aiming to re-design institutions: The problem of making a habit of new things, of rationally creating the irrational, of doing what can not be done.

Institutions derive the support and loyalty of their members and their legitimacy from tradition, habits, convention, normative theories, or "*animating ideas*" (Goodin 1996: 26, Offe 1996: 215). The agency once involved in establishing institutions has long been forgotten. Legitimacy is derived from the fact that 'something has always been like that' or that 'something is proved to be good like that' and out of the fact that it is not man-made but stands above agency. An attached agency, in contrast, leads to the suspicion of particular individual interests, manipulation, enrichment or imperfection. According to classical political theory, this dilemma between agency and institutions is overcome by pointing to "*unmoved movers*", "*unruled rulers*" or a non-institutionalized designer of institutions from whose decisions institutions emerge. Examples are Machiavelli's Prince, Rousseau's legislator or the charismatic leader by Weber (Offe 2000b). The argument is that if a founder is involved, at least he or she is legitimate due to an apparent superiority and outstanding capacities and because s/he strives for the common good and not for his/her own personal interest. A

further example of this dilemma is founding legends which often are built around the origin of institutions.

The traditional and “*naturelike*” (Offe 1995: 207) character of institutions has far reaching consequences for civil society assistance. An institutional template coming from abroad, which is also being transplanted by an external agent, who follows his own interests can seriously inhibit the legitimacy of the institution and is likely to lead to outright rejection. Civil society assistance, like any political assistance aimed at transforming the political structure of a society, consequently always risks being perceived as illegitimate. This even more so, as civil society assistance is always interest-driven and selective, as pointed out in chapter three. For all these reasons, people doubt that external donors have altruistic motives and fear external manipulation. As a result they may refuse external assistance and advice.

Besides the problem of legitimacy actors involved in institutional transfer encounter a second dilemma. One has to note that transfer targets at a change in the two dimensions of institutions: the formal and the informal dimension; the hardware and the software component of institutions. The informal dimension of institutions, the underlying traditions, cognitive scripts or normative theories are, however, not easily altered in an intentional manner. In the words of Claus Offe (1995: 202):

“Institutions ... inculcate duties and generate outcomes. In order to generate the outcomes, they must rely on cognitive and moral resources which in their turn, however, are not to be created by administrative fiat. “There is no administrative production of meaning” (Habermas 1975, p. 70...). Consequently, whoever wishes to advocate, design, construct change, or criticize institutions will have to bear in mind this dualism and the inherent limits of potential control over meaning.”

One must thus remain alert of the fact that the formal rules of institutions are more easily transferred than the underlying principles, norms and rules. In many cases the transfer is therefore limited to the “hardware” or formal side of institutions: organizational patterns, formal rules and technical devices are provided. Such a partial transfer lacks, however, the underlying principles that determine actors’ expectations and behavior. The likely outcomes are therefore not effective institutions that operate in the same manner as in their place of origin. In his study on the screening process of the EU in CEE, Jacoby comes to the conclusion, that the transfer of Western-style institutions is a process that often produces unintended and unforeseeable effects (Jacoby 1998). Jacoby demonstrates that the EU screening process which monitors the adoption of the *aquis communautaire* by the EU accession states largely leads to increased organizational complexity and does not improve institutional functioning. Institutional transfer in this case thus only adds a supplemental layer of institutional complexity to preexisting practices. The major effect, at least in the eyes of the recipients, is not an increase in effectiveness, but a gain in international credibility.

An even more pessimistic scenario proceeds from the contention that transferred structures might well be incompatible with persistent normative and cognitive standards of former institutional settings. In this case, grown routines and informal structures will prevent easy adaptation to exogenous pressures. In the worst case, the rejection of the new structures will be the likely consequence. Such was the fear of many German analysts working on institutional transfer from West to East Germany after unification. It was widely assumed that the formal structures – the hardware of institutions – could be transferred, whereas the embeddedness of those formal structures into the socio-cultural environment which is indispensable for the proper functioning of institutions – the software so to speak – cannot be transferred and is a fixed variable (Eisen (1996: 7). The different socio-cultural basis in Eastern Germany invokes the risk of rejection (see e.g. Offe 1994: 46). Institutional transfer is thus always institutional hybridization and results in “*formal institutions with informal practices*” (Olson 1999).

The inevitable consequence this contemplation suggests is that the transfer of institutional patterns is a very uncertain and risky enterprise. The endeavors to transplant certain structures, procedures, rules, regulations and norms into different settings is bound to fail due to the rigidity of institutions on the one hand, and the illegitimacy of externally driven reform on the other. Activities of external actors aiming to transform and reform domestic structures that follow an externally operating institutional template, risk rejection and failure or will lead to ‘supplementary social stratum’ disconnected to society or other political or social institutions. A sociological understanding of institutions thus confirms our suspicion that civil society assistance is more likely to transfer the structural features of civil society, i.e. the NGO sector, while external actors inevitably fail to install a cultural dimension of civil society. Moreover the “*civilizational incompetence*” of CEE citizens will prevent the adaptation of necessary moral qualities and behavioral patterns that make a vibrant civil society (see chapter 2). In result, the organizations supported from abroad are not embedded in the domestic political and social structure, not aligned with their original constituencies and are perceived by the domestic population as ‘bridgeheads of alien influence’. In the words of Claus Offe:

“... the civic ‘spirit’ or ‘mental software’ that is needed to drive the hardware of the new institutions is less easily influenced by external interventions (than democratic institutions and economic resources)... The rise of a robust ‘civil society’ cannot be initiated from the outside” (Offe 2000a: 96).

Thus, if the contention holds true, should the author accept the fact that institutional transfer as well as civil society assistance is doomed to fail and abstain from a fruitless and redundant empirical analysis? Surely not. The aim of this study is to challenge this hypothesis. It does not intend to demonstrate that transfer is an easy enterprise resulting in

easily achieved success stories. Not at all - too many studies prove that transfer is a difficult process facing many drawbacks and obstacles. However, the study aims to challenge the hypothesis that transfer is inevitably bound to fail. It therefore aims to demonstrate that transfer is feasible if certain conditions apply.

To accomplish the task of identifying conditions for transfer the project faces the problem of incorporating external and internal factors into the analysis. On the one hand, the external 'push', i.e. the externally generated coercion and/or incentives aiming to transfer the missing 'civil' link to new democracies needs to be conceptualized. On the other hand, the question arises how this foreign transplant is perceived, accepted, adopted, internally adapted or maybe rejected. Civil society assistance will therefore be understood neither as an intrusion from outside nor as emulation from within, but rather as an import and an export business that can only be understood by taking the donor as well as the recipient side into account. Moreover, although it is acknowledged that actors do not always follow strategic calculations but are more often than not guided by a search for legitimate and appropriate solutions, it is still necessary to stress the importance of choice, political processes, the interaction of actors, and learning processes. Please allow me to elaborate.

4.4 Coercive Imposition versus Slavish Imitation: Conditions of Successful Gardening

The contention of sociological institutionalism that underlying informal rules and culturally-specific practices provide not only points of reference how to behave best, but also affect the very identities, self-images and preferences of actors has one major drawback. Sociological institutionalism easily explains why institutions continue to exist. It also offers strong explanations why reform efforts are no easy undertakings and also points to the major obstacles to democratic consolidation and explains why new democracies often consolidate with 'defects'. However, although sociological institutionalism produces elegant accounts of failures of institutional reform, the focus on legacies, cultural practices and cognitive maps leaves little room for successfully conducted institutional transformations. Sociological institutionalism hardly investigates in causes of institutional change and thus provides only limited insight into the conditions that facilitate the transfer of structures and norms. For a study interested in the outcomes of institutional transfer it is, however, necessary to identify more precisely the conditions under which change in formal as well as in informal rules takes place. Furthermore, major focus needs to be given to institutional change occurring as a consequence of intentional and externally driven transfer.

For this purpose, greater emphasis has to be placed on political processes, actors, their interactions and choices on the one hand, and on the possibility of learning and cognitive change on the other hand. To avoid the pitfalls of an exclusively structural focus on institutions, Jacoby (2000:4) points out that institutional contexts are not to be taken as fixed and static. Reflecting on the institutional transfer from West to East Germany, Eisen (1996) comes to a similar conclusion and calls for a dynamic model of institutionalism. He stresses the point that in contrast to the pessimistic academic anticipations the institutional structures of the West did consolidate in the East, albeit with unforeseen outcomes. Eisen concludes that the institutional 'software' is not a fixed variable but rather open to change due to processes of institutional learning and adaptation (ibid: 8). In contrast to Jacoby who stresses the importance of political struggle, actors and policies, Eisen refers to the possibility of cognitive change or cognitive convergence as a result of learning processes that are triggered by a clash between - in his wording - the cultural (software) and the structural (hardware) dimension of institutions and that are facilitated and carried by certain 'key actors'. The analytical framework guiding this study will draw on both insights. While actors, their orientations, capabilities and interactions stand in the center of analysis in the spirit of actor-centered institutionalism (Scharpf/Mayntz 1995), special attention is further called to the question when and how actors learn and to the question when learning results in political and institutional change.

In doing so, it is decisive for the purpose of this study to place special emphasis on interactions between external and internal actors. In other words, one needs to focus on the international as well as on the domestic side of the transfer. Not only is it important to determine how and to what extent external actors may intervene in domestic processes, on top of that, the analysis has to highlight how external pressures are perceived, accepted and adopted internally. In the remainder of this chapter I will draw up an analytical framework capable of achieving this goal. The argumentation is inspired by the concept of actor-centered institutionalism developed by Fritz Scharpf and Renate Mayntz (1995). Additionally, I will draw on approaches of learning and ideas that have gained prominence in international relations theory in order to cope with the peculiarities inherent to a study focusing on transactions between international and domestic actors.⁷⁷

⁷⁷ See for an overview of the literature on the role of ideas and learning in international relations: Schaber/Ulbert (1994), Keohane/ Goldstein (eds.) (1993), Haas (1992).

4.4.1 Actors and Interactions

In order to identify the conditions that make institutional transfer work, we must remain alert to the fact that institutions are man-made, or to be more specific, institutions are the result of the social interactions of a plurality of actors. In the words of Claus Offe (1995: 212):

“... social order can be re-negotiated by the agents who are institutionally provided with the license and mandate to do so”.

Change as a consequence of actor choices, their interactions and decisions is subsequently feasible. This remains true despite the fact that institutional change and reform is hampered because formal and especially informal rules, including social norms, conventions and expectations, determine actors' preferences and orientations and thus directly influence actors' behavior and *“structure the course of actions that a set of actors may choose”* (Scharpf 1997: 38). This being said, policy outcomes are still not determined by institutional rules under which relevant actors act, rather by the actors, their orientations and capabilities, actor constellations and modes of transaction (ibid: 43pp).

“In our framework ... the concept of the “institutional setting“ does not have the status of a theoretically defined set of variables that could be systematized and operationalized to serve as explanatory factors in empirical research. Rather, we use it as a shorthand term to describe the most important influences on those factors that in fact drive our explanations – namely, actors with their orientations and capabilities, actor constellations, and modes of interaction” (ibid: 39).

Such a framework thus puts actors into the center of analysis without proceeding from rational choice assumptions and without neglecting the importance of institutional settings. What is put forward is an interactive approach that stresses the interdependent nature of actors and structures, in which actors are taken as the starting point of analysis. Notwithstanding that the interactions among intentional actors are regarded as decisive, the point is stressed that interactions are structured by the characteristic of the institutional settings within which they occur (Scharpf 1997: 1).⁷⁸

According to actor-centered institutionalism, institutional settings function as a framework for action that structures the set of feasible strategies open to an actor by increasing the attractiveness of one particular strategy in comparison to another, and thus by decreasing the

78 At this point a caveat is in order. Mayntz/Scharpf developed an analytical framework capable of explaining policy outcomes that are the result of actors interacting in given institutional settings. Institutional settings are thus initially taken as fixed variables. The question arises, to what extent actor-centered institutionalism is thus able to explain institutional change. However, the very fact that actor constellations and interactions are conceived as independent variables, which are not determined by institutional settings allows for institutional change coming as a result of a change in actor constellations, actor capabilities or actor orientations. For this exact reason, the framework provides valuable insights for the objective of this study.

set of feasible strategic options to an institutionally defined subset. The final choice of strategy lies, however, in the responsibility and cognizance of the actors involved. In contrast to rational choice arguments, it is not assumed that actors have fixed preferences and are guided by a sole focus on their self interest. Rather, the orientations of actors, i.e. their perceptions and preferences, are structured by formal and informal rules and norms. Moreover, the preferences of composite actors are the result of institutional rules that constitute them as well as special cultural rules and expectations (ibid: 41).

Actors determine policy outcomes and thus political decisions that may alter institutional rules. However, individual actors are rarely the sole bearers of responsibility for decision making. More often than not, political outcomes and especially institutional reform programs are the result of the interactions of a variety of actors. If this is so, then policy outcomes that determine institutional rules cannot be comprehended as the strategic result of the preferences of one – or the strongest – actor. Rather, they are the unpredictable outcome of an interchange of various actors orientations as well as their capabilities and resulting action resources.

“...it is unlikely that any actor that is capable of unified action ... will be able to determine policy outcomes according to the actor’s own perceptions and preferences and through the use of the actor’s own capabilities. What is determinative, rather is the constellation among the plurality of actors that are involved in policy interactions” (ibid: 44).

The constellation of actors thereby refers to the players involved, their strategic options, the outcomes associated with strategy combinations, and the preferences of the players over these outcomes (ibid).

This point is even more salient if one is aware of the fact that the interaction between actors does not only determine the policy outcome but also impacts on the orientations, i.e. the perceptions and preferences, and subsequently the strategic choices of the actors involved in the political game. Actors are aware of the importance of interaction. In other words, they realize that a desired outcome is not only dependent on their action alone, but the final product of various individual actors. As a result, they aim to anticipate the actions and choices of others and take the anticipated strategies of other actors into account while determining their own strategy. The anticipation of the expected choices of others thus affects their own strategic choices. Consequently, actor preferences may change in accordance with available strategic options identified by an assessment of other players’ strategies and choices, their capabilities and the own capabilities in relation to others. In other words, actors’ orientations are not only determined by their basic self-interest, their normative role orientations and their identity but also by “*relational orientations*” that take shape in the interaction with others (Scharpf 1997: 84).

In sum, policy outcomes and institutional change are the result of actors and their interactions. Actors and their interactions are, however, influenced by institutional rules and regulations. The capabilities of actors depend on institutional rules such as rules granting veto rights. Actor's orientations are shaped by institutionally defined roles as well as social norms and culturally defined cognitive maps. The interaction of actors is usually also structured by institutional rules and different "*institutional modes*".⁷⁹

4.4.2 Two Modes of External Influence: Empowerment and Learning

What does this imply for the purpose of this study? Leaving the possibility aside that externally driven institutional transfer targets the policy environment or even the institutional setting in which actor interactions take place; one can primarily derive two ways by which change as a consequence of externally driven transfer may occur. External actors may firstly alter the capabilities of domestic actors, i.e. "*all action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects and to a certain degree*" (Scharpf 1997: 43). Secondly, external actors may impact upon the orientations, thus the perceptions and preferences, of domestic actors.

Empowerment

In the first case, external actors may intervene into domestic settings by strengthening one group of actor over others. In such a case, international assistance results in an increase in relative power resources and a high political status of domestic recipients of aid compared to their domestic opponents. The ways by which such an empowerment of certain domestic actor groups may take place are manifold (see chapt. 3.4.). The provision of financial and material resources is the most obvious means to support a given group. Money, but also technical equipment that is not at the disposal of major opponents can translate into decisive action resources. The recipient organization is – in the sense of the word – better equipped to master its tasks. Moreover, the financial benefits granted also maintain the material existence of the recipient and thus help the organization to survive; a fact which is especially important in authoritarian regimes. The provision of material goods may have an immense impact as shown by the example of the Serbian opposition which managed – thanks to the up-to-date computers donated to them - to count the votes of the presidential election much faster than the regime incumbents could.

79 Institutional modes are determined by the rules according to which the interaction takes place. Scharpf (1997: 46pp) differentiates between four different modes of interaction depending on the institutional rules regulating their use: "unilateral action", "negotiated agreement", "majority vote", "hierarchical vote".

Secondly, external actors may expand the capabilities of domestic actors by the provision of information, training and know-how especially if the information is not available to major opponents and can thus translate into a decisive advantage in the political struggle. Taking part in capacity-building measures, will probably increase the recipient's professionalism due to the knowledge, training, information and expertise they have received. This, in turn, may enable him or her to act more rapidly, self-assuredly and effectively than opponents, including those with incumbency resources. Finally, international connections can help to protect recipient organizations from government repression or – in new democracies – increase the recipient's standing vis-à-vis its own government. Depending on the reputation of the external actor and on whether the expertise of the donor is trusted and respected in a given field, domestic actors may indeed gain legitimacy through international contacts. For example, a rather small NGO representing women's rights in the Czech Republic is invited to regular committee meetings at the Ministry of Social Affairs. The NGO owes this special standard less to its actual lobbying power than to its connection to several international donors and to the interest of the government in sending positive signals to the European Union and European governments (interview Linau). What is decisive, however, is the esteem the external actor enjoys in the domestic setting. In Poland international contacts to US organizations may increase the standing of a civil society organization more than contacts to German or Russian organizations due to the high esteem of Americans in the country as compared to its large neighbors in East and West. The credibility, reputation and trustworthiness of the donor are thus at least as decisive as the content of the transfer when it comes to increasing action resources of chosen domestic partners. For all these reasons the assistance of external actors may translate into an increase of action resources of supported domestic actors. As a result, the external interference and support may lead - if not already the case - to an inclusion of the empowered domestic actor into the circle of decision makers. A further result of external support is a change in strategic options available to relevant actors. If the capabilities of one relevant actor increase, all players, including the actor in question, will alter their expectations of what strategies are available and of what the likely outcome of the political game will be. Subsequently, the range of available strategic options may alter as will the strategies they choose.

From a theoretical point of view, the first method with which external actors may influence domestic outcomes is relatively unproblematic. It is obvious that action resources are critical to any explanation of policy outcomes since, in their absence "*even the most enlightened perceptions and preferences will fail to make a practical difference*" (Scharpf 1997: 51). Similarly, it is obvious that a transfer of resources, information and know-how increases the capability of domestic actors to exert political influence. The second option, the possibility

that external actors impinge upon domestic processes by altering actor orientations, is however less apparent and palatable and requires a more extensive explanation, though.

Learning

As already pointed out, sociological institutionalism proceeds from the contention that actors' orientations are not primarily and solely determined by rational self-interests but are subject to the socially institutionalized environment of actors. Moreover, actor orientations are not only shaped by social norms but are further affected by culturally defined cognitive maps which form the worldview of actors. If this is so, then actor's perceptions and preferences tend to be relatively stable as a result of the unconscious character of cognitive mappings and rigid worldviews. This notion explains the continuity of institutions, especially if they are ineffective and are confronted with external adaptation pressures. On the other hand, it is oblivious to the ability of actors to learn and thus ignores the major driving force behind institutional change. Although actor orientations tend to be relatively stable, this study stresses the point that they are no fixed variables but may be altered through learning and socialization.

For the purpose of this study, the question thus has to be: how do citizens and activists of civil society organizations learn to take on their respective roles to create a vibrant civil society? How do they learn to participate in politics, trust their fellow citizens, tolerate and respect the actions and opinions of their political opponents, have trust in the liability of public institutions and rules, stand up for their rights and, in particular, how can they be convinced that they are not powerless subjects, rather self-reliant citizens that are able to initiate political change? Making activists of civil society organizations learn, however, is not enough. Those learning processes must also find their way in wider domestic settings. We thus have to additionally ask how to trigger learning processes of political decision-makers. How do politicians learn to accept participatory regulations that augment elections, to perceive civil society organizations not as illegitimate competitors, but as important intermediaries that channel public opinion and legitimate decisions, and when do they take actors of civil society as partners from whose participation decision-making profits? And finally the major question of concern is to what extent are external actors able to trigger such learning processes? And if they are, how do they do it?

In order to come close to an answer to the above questions, the dissertation will draw on the insights of learning theories developed to explain changes in international relations and foreign policy. In this regard, the work of Peter Haas on epistemic communities is of relevance. It proceeds from the assumption that learning and ideas, i.e. knowledge, values,

and strategic concepts, account for changes in state behavior in foreign policy and in patterns of international cooperation.

“We argue that control over knowledge and information is an important dimension of power and that the diffusion of new ideas and information can lead to new patterns of behavior and prove to be an important determinant of international policy coordination” (Haas 1992: 2p).

Ideas are thereby formulated and diffused by means of “*epistemic communities*”. Epistemic communities are (transnational) networks of knowledge-based experts which despite perhaps consisting of professionals from various backgrounds (1) share a set of normative and principled beliefs, (2) share causal beliefs; (3) share notions of validity, and (4) have a common policy enterprise (ibid: 33). The argument goes that international policy coordination today is characterized by an increasing complexity and uncertainty which requires special expertise, information and advice. Transnational expert-networks hence become salient not only for the formulation of new ideas but also for translating ideas and information into policies. The basic assumption behind the argument is that groups of experts share a common understanding and methodologies which make it possible to ‘construct reality’ despite different cultural and national backgrounds. Furthermore, experts are esteemed by decision-makers and their societies as legitimate carriers of knowledge. Based on the same assumption of the salience of a shared understanding in (relatively) small transnational groups, Kathryn Sikkink (1993) introduced the concept of ‘principled issue-networks’:

“These networks differ from other forms of transnational relations, such as epistemic communities or transnationally organized interests groups, in that they are driven primarily by shared values or principled ideas – ideas about what is right and wrong – rather than shared causal ideas or instrumental goals” (ibid: 412).

Her own example is networks of human rights issues which influenced state behavior in Latin America.

Learning processes are thus facilitated by the core consensus of a common professional background in the case of epistemic communities or a shared principle as in the case put forward by Sikkink.⁸⁰

We can thus conclude that a second mode of intervention by which donors may impact upon recipient organizations, is to trigger learning processes among recipients by engaging in transnational networks and partnerships. Such networks necessitate a common goal, task or “shared principle” as well as a certain continuity and form.

80 See also Keck/Sikkink (1998).

4.4.3 Conditions of 'Successful' Transfer

A common understanding, shared principles and values or another kind of “core consensus” in small networks are thus the main factors driving processes of cognitive convergence and cognitive change across national borders. Transnational networks, we can conclude, that are based on a “core consensus” constitute a promising mechanism when it comes to triggering a proper understanding and an “appropriate spirit” among activists of civil society. If this holds true, then the type of interaction on which donor and recipient relations are based will determine whether learning and a subsequent change of domestic actor’s perceptions and preferences will occur. If donors and recipients engage in transnational networks that are based on a “core consensus”, be it a common goal, principle, problem, a shared cultural, political or professional background or historical affinity, civil society assistance is more likely to lead to lasting results. However, if such a core consensus is missing, or if recipients have doubts about the genuineness of the motives of donors, distrust the donor or if the donor is not credible, the transfer is likely to fail.

A change in the orientations of domestic actors does not suffice as explanatory factor of institutional change, though. Coming back to the arguments of the actor-centered institutionalism, one has to accept that a further condition is necessary. New ideas and policy solutions but also newly established norms and contentions have to find their way into wider domestic settings. Haas refers to the well-known assertion that ‘knowledge is power’, and takes the legitimacy enjoyed by the experts as a guarantee that new ideas will find their way into domestic settings. Experts thus enjoy a “*cultural authority*” to introduce innovative ideas (DiMaggio / Powell 1991 cit. in Hall/Taylor 1996: 965p). However, as Risse-Kappen (1994) points out, “*ideas do not float freely*”. Rather, domestic settings select some ideas but not others. I therefore emphasize the already stated contention that no matter how elaborated and inspiring new ideas and orientations may be, if they are not based on action resources and political influence they will exert little impact. We thus have to come back to actor constellations and modes of interactions that determine the interactions of domestic decision-makers. Not only are recipients of assistance in need of action resources in order to implement new ideas and convictions, new ideas must also be in the range of appropriate policy options of other actors. Again in this regard existing domestic institutional settings are decisive.

To sum it up, external actors have two ways of impacting upon domestic transformation processes. While the first option focuses on a change in actor constellations, the second may result in institutional change due to an alteration of actors’ orientations. The availability of action resources to the ‘learners’, the attractiveness of the new orientations and subsequent

strategies and policy solutions to other players of the game, will determine whether new orientations find their way into domestic settings.

One can state a further point in conclusion. The type of transaction through which transfer takes place and the relationship between external and domestic actors is more decisive than both the strategy of external agents and the content of the transfer. Whether transfer works depends neither on the effectiveness and performance of the transferred structure nor on the strategy applied by the external donor with regards to how best to conduct civil society assistance. Rather, it is decisive who transfers, for what reasons and through what kind of interactions. This is in line with the findings of Wedel (1998) in her study on Western aid to Eastern Europe. She arrives at the conclusion that how aid happens determines success or failure. Donor-recipient relationship are decisive, but are complicated by a lack of understanding on the side of donors and by legacies of communist rules, such as a distrust of foreigners, powers of old elites, as well as the persistence of existing relationships and mentalities among the recipients (Wedel 1998: 6). For these very reasons transnational relations between non-governmental actors are more likely to lead to lasting results than the civil society assistance of governmental agencies. The superiority of non-governmental to governmental assistance is firstly grounded in the fact that private actors are perceived as being more trustworthy and credible than state actors. Secondly, as shown, transnational advocacy networks and coalitions as well as epistemic communities result in cognitive convergence and cognitive change and thus impact upon the cultural dimension that is of utmost importance for a vibrant civil society.

4.5 Conclusion: Working Hypothesis, Key Claims and Implications for Research

The purpose of this chapter was twofold. First, it intended to theoretically elaborate on the question driving the subsequent analysis: is it feasible to establish and support civil society from the outside? Second, based on theoretical accounts the aim was to develop an analytical framework capable of guiding empirical research.

Applying two major lines of social science thought, two distinct answers to the key question of this work - does civil society assistance contribute positively to political transformation processes - could be identified. Neo-liberal accounts emphasize that civil society assistance can be a valuable mechanism to support civil society and subsequently to stabilize democratization processes. This assessment proceeds from the conviction that civil society fulfills important functions that make democracy flourish. The major question of research is consequently not whether it can be done. The question is how it is done. Civil society

assistance is perceived as a manageable enterprise. If this is so, then the outcome of assistance solely depends on the skills of the manager, i.e. the donor, as well as the elaborateness of underlying concepts and on the proficiency of project management. The outcome of civil society is thus a mere question of donor strategy and design.

If a sociological approach to civil society assistance is applied, the answer to our question looks thoroughly different, though. As made clear in chapter two, civil society is more than a collection of various non-state organizations. In addition, the term civil society refers to certain values and norms, to a 'civic ethos' or *Sittlichkeit* without which the democratic functions ascribed to civil society cannot bear fruit. However, such a civic ethos is the result of a long historical and cultural development and as such not open to strategic planning. Civil society assistance is consequently bound to fail due to the fact that culturally and historically formed values and norms cannot be transferred from one place to another. Applying insights from sociological institutionalism that stress the dual nature of institutions two main problems inherent to civil society assistance understood as externally driven intentional transfer have been identified. First, civil society assistance risks being perceived as an illegitimate interference in internal affairs and as such will be rejected by recipients. Second, as formal rules – or in other words the hardware of institutions – are more easily transferred than underlying theories of use and cognitive scripts, continuing cognitive codes of conduct and standards of behavior will prevent formal structures from taking root. Transfer will therefore result in nothing more than in a supplementary stratum on existing practices. Coming back to civil society, the previous arguments suggest the hypothesis that civil society assistance will nurture recipient opportunism and hypocrisy and solely results in a supplementary stratum consisting of DONGOs (donor-driven NGOs) or GONGOs (governmental driven NGOs) that are not embedded in the domestic socio-political environment and may also be perceived by the domestic population as intruders and externally controlled puppets (see also chapter 2.5.).

This study follows neither the first nor the second line of thought. Neo-liberal approaches are rejected as inappropriate for the purpose of this study for three reasons. Firstly, they fail to account for divergent domestic responses to civil society assistance. Second, various studies on 'policy transfer' and 'policy borrowing' demonstrate that institutional transfer is hardly driven by rational reasoning and a search for effectiveness, but more often than not follows the search for appropriate and legitimate solutions and structures. Finally, approaches that stress the rationality of an actor's choices and the performance of institutions and concepts provide a too limited concept of civil society that is incapable of living up to the normative ideal inherent to the concept of civil society (see chapter 2.2.1). For these reasons the dissertation will be based on sociological and cultural explanations of human action and of

the interactions between actors and structures. The above mentioned hypothesis of sociologically inspired neo-institutionalism that civil society assistance is bound to fail and will lead to rejection or to nothing more than supplementary stratum, is challenged though. An overemphasis on structures and legacies overlooks the possibility of learning and change. Moreover, it is regarded as a fruitless approach for transformation countries searching for solutions to pressing problems as it leaves transformation societies with no other answer than: “get a history” (Pridham 1994).

In the spirit of actor-centered institutionalism developed by Fritz Scharpf and Renate Mayntz the overemphasis on domestic structures and cultures is replaced by a focus on actors and interactions. Emphasis is placed on the point that institutions are the result of social interaction. Although actors, their capabilities, orientations and interactions are affected by institutional settings, those do not determine but only structure actors’ choices and strategic options. Consequently, some leeway for action is plausible. Such a framework leaves room for actor choices that may result in institutional and cultural change, and also acknowledges the possibility and importance of cognitive change, thus learning. For the purpose of this study with its focus on the international as well as the domestic side of the transfer of civil society, it is necessary to incorporate external and internal actors and their interactions into the analysis.

Based on the assumptions of actor-centered institutionalism two basic modes of intervention available to external actors have been identified and labeled as “empowerment” and “learning”. First, external actors may concentrate on the capabilities of domestic actors and the endeavors of external actors may alter domestic actor constellations, while providing resources, information and know-how to certain groups of actors. A change in political outcomes is the likely consequence. Secondly, the cooperation with external actors may impact upon the orientations of a given actor group and trigger processes of learning and cognitive change. Transnational networks that are based on a core consensus of shared principles or common professional backgrounds have been pinpointed as forms of cognitive convergence. While empowerment is more likely to affect the structural dimension of civil society, learning processes and the alteration of actor orientations are more likely to affect the cultural dimension of civil society (see chapter 2.2).

Based on the preceding argumentation, the following working hypothesis will be drawn up for the study:

Civil society assistance may impact upon political and social transformation by two distinct mechanisms: (1) it raises the capabilities of civil society actors thus empowering those groups, (2) it alters the orientations of domestic actors by triggering learning processes.

Donors may empower civil society organizations and strengthen their standing in relation to the government. Additionally they trigger learning via the provision of information, legal and political advice, as well as technical know-how. Moreover, donors may increase the legitimacy and standing of civil society actors. This support may be of great value especially in repressed societies. Ekiert / Kubik (1998: 18pp) explain, for example, that the Solidarity opposition movement in Poland in the 1980s tremendously benefited from Western assistance in various ways. The rich and diverse Western contacts of the Solidarity movement did not only provide much needed foreign material assistance (according to Ekiert/Kubik (1998: 19) the CIA alone spent about eight million dollars in 1982-83 on assisting Solidarity) More importantly, the affiliation with several international organizations made it clear *“that the domestic legality and the international legitimacy were separate”*. According to Ekiert / Kubik (ibid), gestures of international recognition had *“... tremendous, though intangible, effect on boosting the movement’s moral and staying power”*. In addition, Western contacts facilitated the spread of ideas among Polish intellectuals thus *“contributing to the vibrancy of the underground cultural and political disputes”*.

After transition civil society organizations may equally benefit from external assistance. Donors may act as important political, social or legal experts in given policy fields, and offer expertise civil society organizations would not be able to obtain otherwise. Especially in Eastern and Central Europe there are abundant examples of how Western advice facilitated the establishment and reform of institutional structures. The German association of counties *“Der deutsche Landkreistag”* for example successfully assisted regional activists in Poland to found an association of councils and to press for a territorial restructuring of the country (Interview v. Hausen).

Moreover, it has been argued that donors can act as independent and objective monitors and moderators and trigger participatory processes. In her assessment of the activities of the Economic Development Institute (EDI) of the World Bank in support of non-governmental organizations, Coston (1998) demonstrates that donors can encourage cooperation and understanding between domestic groups. According to Coston, the learning and dialogue forums conducted by EDI, i.e., training seminars, conferences and study tours for representatives of NGOs and government that support policy reform, contributed to a cooperative relationship between civil society organizations and government representatives in various policy fields such as water management or decentralization of education.

These examples suggest that external assistance can make a difference. However, it is not clear when and how this happens. The attempt to initiate certain processes does not automatically translate into success. It might well lead to learning processes and to a change in the system but it might also fail to do so.

The arguments put forward in this chapter revealed that the impact of external assistance to civil society depends on two conditions, whereby the first is international, the second domestic in character. First, the type of interaction between the donor and recipient is decisive. Depending on the perceptions on both sides and depending on the existence of a “core consensus” between the donor and recipient, transfer is more likely to lead to lasting results. Donor-recipient interactions are thus crucial. Neither the elaborateness of the donor strategy nor the effectiveness of the transferred image is the main factor that decides on failure or success. Secondly, whether new ideas, norms and behaviors find their way into wider domestic settings depends on relevant actor constellations in the domestic realm. The availability of action resources on the side of the ‘learners’ is as important as the attractiveness of the new orientations and subsequent strategies and policy solutions to other players of the game.

As a result, the working hypothesis can be reformulated as follows:

Civil society assistance can contribute to the development of civil society and thus permits the concept of civil society to travel. Whether the transfer is stuck in a supplementary stratum of donor driven NGOs detached from society or whether it results in a vibrant civil society depends, however, on the type of transaction between donor and recipient on the one hand, and on domestic actor constellations and interactions on the other hand.

As stated in the introduction to this section, besides the aim of theoretically approaching the key question, a further objective of this chapter was to develop an analytical framework capable of guiding empirical research. So what implications for empirical research can be drawn?

First and foremost, one can conclude that major emphasis has to be placed on the actors involved in civil society assistance on both sides; on the donor as well as on the recipient side. The study needs to identify major donors and recipients, their objectives, interests, and strategies, as well as the underlying concepts guiding their actions. Secondly, the study will highlight the interactions between donors and recipients. Are they based on trust and a common understanding and resemble a partnership among equals or are they perceived as an asymmetric exchange between a superior donor and a dependent recipient? Thirdly, recipient contexts and domestic settings are of utmost importance. Domestic actor constellations and interactions that are of relevance for this study will be examined. These are, on the one hand, interactions between recipients of assistance and other civil society organizations. Does the better equipment and access to financial resources of recipients generate envy and distrust among organizations that do not possess these privileges? Or are recipient organizations able to act as carriers of civil society and succeed in transporting their

new ideas and values into wider domestic settings? On the other hand, the study will focus upon the interactions between recipients and domestic political decision-makers. As pointed out above (chapter 2.2.3), decision-making processes that aim to change the legal regulatory framework of non-governmental organizations are of special relevance in this regard. However, instead of contributing one more study comparing donors and their strategies, the study strives to focus on the outcome of civil society assistance, i.e. on recipients and their achievements rather than on the output of civil society assistance, i.e. on conferences, seminars and training conducted by donor organizations.

The following chapter will present the methodology guiding the empirical research in greater detail.

5 Methodology

The following section describes the methodology applied in order to systematically answer the research question above. Before I delve into the details and peculiarities of empirical research, it is necessary to illustrate the ultimate purpose the empirical analysis serves in the context of this research. Empirically and analytically inspired scientists draw conclusions by applying two distinct models of research: Either scholars value theoretically derived generalizations and use empirical analysis merely in order to test theoretically generated hypothesis, thus they apply the classical hypothetico-deductive model of research, or they utilize the variety of observable phenomena in social reality as a means of stimulating theoretical generalizations, i.e. they apply an analytical inductive approach to theory development. Although both methods are regarded as equally capable of bringing about worthwhile findings, this analysis utilizes empirical analysis in the former and not in the latter way. Instead of inducing theoretical generalizations from observable facts, the purpose is to show that the model theoretically derived above illustrates social reality in a useful manner. This will be done by conducting a comparative examination of two cases.

Having said this, the research to be conducted needs to be carefully defined in order to arrive at valid conclusions. This chapter dwells on four distinct methodological questions that require clarification. First, the chapter investigates the peculiarities of comparative research in the social sciences. Second, it exposes the rationale behind the selection of the two country cases under investigation. It will be shown that the cases are selected in a manner that allows us to hold one possible alternative explanation – the geo-strategic location of the target country – constant, whereas another alternative explanation – the cultural and historic disposition of civil society – may be rejected by applying a “most-different systems” design (Przeworski / Teune 1970). Third, one needs to address the question what exactly is observed. How can we identify observable indicators that are capable of determining the effects of civil society assistance and the “success” of civil society projects? What are the units of analysis, i.e. which donor and recipient organizations are the major objects under examination? And finally, the question arises what quantitative and qualitative means of measurement are employed in order to collect reliable information.

5.1 The Comparative Method and the Small N - Many Variables Problem

Although research may well follow other purposes⁸¹, the ideal in social science is to draw generalizable conclusions from the cases under investigation and thus to “*produce lawlike generalizations with empirical validity*” (Scharpf 1997: 19). In practice, though, it is difficult to make causal inferences in the social sciences. One major problematic inherent to social research lies in the magnitude of possible alternative explanations to observable outcomes. Why should the development of a vibrant civil society, the establishment of numerous and pluralistic organizations and institutions of civil society, civic activity and mechanisms of participatory rule be the result of international assistance and not the consequence of an existing cultural basis, historically grown “social capital” (Putnam 1993), or simply the result of political liberalization and the granting of equal political rights and civil freedoms? Moreover, if a change in civic attitudes and institutions can be observed, how can this be attributed to bottom-up strategies to assist civil society in face of a variety of other powerful international factors as e.g. the prospect of EU membership? Alternative explanations are hard to rule out.

One possible method of “*discovering empirical relationships among variables*” is the comparative method (Lijphart 1971: 683).⁸² The comparative method draws largely on John Stuart Mill’s presentation of canons of experimental inquiry in *A System of Logic: Ratiocinative and Inductive* (1843) that provides several research strategies that allow for generalizations in social science. Of particular relevance for comparative analysis are two of Mill’s strategies: the “*method of agreement*” and the “*indirect method of difference*” (Ragin 1987: 36). In simple terms, the basic logic behind the two methods is to discard alternative explanations by comparing the differences and similarities among cases. While the “method of agreement” aims to single out alternative explanations by identifying the one and only causal factor that all observed cases depicting the outcome under investigation have in common, the “indirect method of difference” highlights cases that neither reveal the cause nor the effect and thus rejects competing explanations through paired comparisons (ibid: 36pp). The major task for scientists is thus to find cases that ideally agree in only one of the possible explanatory variables.

81 Other purposes are e.g. portraying correlations; determining typologies, providing descriptive case studies or historical research. See e.g. Beyme (1988: 52), King et al (1994).

82 For the comparative method, see e.g.: Ragin (1987), Beyme (1988), Collier (1991); Przeworski / Teune (1970).

The comparative method, however, is plagued by the problem that we usually encounter various possible explanatory variables, but only a limited number of cases for research (Lijphart 1971: 685). This predicament has become known as the small N, many variables problem. It is thus often not feasible to reject all alternative explanations by comparing differences and similarities for the simple fact that not enough cases can be found and that the number of possible causes augments the number of observable cases.⁸³ This point is easily illustrated by the concrete case under investigation. The subsequent research encounters only a limited number of countries that undergo political transformation processes, that further receive significant Western aid to civil society, and whose investigation also does not exceed the resources available for this analysis. A selection of cases is thus inevitable and, as King et al (1994: 139) point out, in a comparative study faced with the small N, many variables problem, "*selection must be done in an intentional fashion, consistent with our research objectives and strategy*". The usual advice of experienced scholars on how to best select cases capable of minimizing the many variables, small numbers problem, and deriving generalizable results are as follows: (1) increase the number of cases as much as possible; (2) reduce the property space of the analysis, i.e. combine two or more variables that express an essentially similar underlying characteristic into a single variable; and (3) focus the comparative analysis on "comparable" cases, i.e. cases that are similar in a large number of important characteristics which one wants to treat as constants, but dissimilar as far as those variables are concerned which one wants to relate to each other (Lijphart 1971: 686p). While pointing to comparable cases Lijphart refers to what has been labeled a "*most similar systems*" design, at that time described as "*the currently predominant view among social scientists*" (Przeworski / Teune 1970: 32). The "*most-similar systems design*" focuses on cases that are as similar as possible in a wide range of variables, which differ, however, concerning the outcome under investigation and the key variable. Such a design controls for possible explanatory factors, as those are held constant, i.e. they are similar in the analyzed cases. The differences among the cases are thus left as possible causes for the phenomenon that is to be explained. To this extent, the method follows the logic of Mill's method of agreement that explains a constant outcome by another constant cause.

Przeworski / Teune (1970: 37p) state in criticism to the "most similar systems" design:

83 King et al (1994: 119) point out that a determinate research design requires at least one more observation than inferences. Applying the example of successful joint collaboration between countries in building a high-technology weapons system, they come to the conclusion that: "*With seven causal variables and only three observations, the research design cannot determine which of the hypotheses, if any, is correct*" (ibid: 120). The small N, many variables problem thus hampers causal inference.

“When the observed systems share characteristics X_1, X_2, \dots, X_k , the variations of the dependent variable Y (...) are associated with the variable X_{k+1} (according to the hypothesis) or the alternative variables X_{k+2}, \dots, X_n (alternative hypothesis)..... The original hypothesis is (thus) confirmed, although alternative hypotheses are not rejected.”

They criticize this design for two reasons. Firstly, they point out that the findings resulting from a “most-similar systems” design are only valid for cases that share the characteristics common to the selected “most similar” cases. Surely enough, the design follows the logic that the findings can be tested and confirmed in other, different, cases and thus aims to remove the controlled variables one-by-one. Yet, as Teune / Przeworski point out, if the findings are not confirmed, “... *we are back where we started*” (ibid: 38). Secondly, and more important for their subsequent conclusion, with a “*most similar systems*” design experimental variables cannot be singled out. Przeworski / Teune stress the point that no systems are so similar that they diverge only in one factor. Other characteristics in which the two (or more) cases under investigation differ (or further characteristics the scholar is not aware of) may account for the observed outcomes. In other words, the dependent phenomenon is “*overdetermined*” (ibid: 34). The “*most similar systems*” research design thus strengthens the confidence in the explanatory power of a hypothesis but only to a certain degree. If the resulting findings cannot be confirmed in cases diverging in one or more factors held constant by the “*most similar systems*” design, a relationship has been determined that seems dependent on another unknown variable.

For these reasons Przeworski / Teune propose another design that focuses not on “*most-similar*” but on “*most-different*” systems. The “*most different systems design*” aims to trace similar outcomes in a set of cases as diverse as possible. The underlying logic is that systemic explanations can be rejected if similar processes of change can be identified. Rather than positively identifying relevant systemic factors, the “*most different systems*” design thus “*centers on eliminating irrelevant systemic factors*” (ibid: 35). The point is that if a certain outcome is observed in very different cases, the factors in which the cases differ cannot be responsible for the observed outcome.

Although Przeworski / Teune present the two designs in opposition to each other, it has been argued that the two strategies may be fruitfully combined. Collier (1991: 17) proposes a strategy that starts with a sample of cases that are roughly matched along a number of variables, controlling for their influence. As a result though, the differences between the cases are highlighted. In the same manner, my work will also take a middle position and partly “control” for alternative explanations by keeping them constant and partly reject alternative explanations through a most-dissimilar systems design. In other words, the

dissertation will first follow the advice of Lijphart and focus on comparable cases and afterwards pursue Przeworski / Teune's strategy and highlight differences.

5.2 The Selection of Cases

The comparable set of cases for this study are the countries of Central and Eastern Europe which are located close to the European Union, have recently joined the European Union, and that all received civil society assistance from the West in the period between 1990-2000. Of course, we also witness transformation processes enhanced by Western donors including civil society assistance further to the East. However, those countries are so dissimilar regarding geo-strategic as well as cultural and historic conditions that a comparison would only have limited significance. Demonstrating that civil society in Poland is more stable and vibrant than that in Belarus hardly comes as a surprise. The stabilizing influence of the prospects of EU membership, which requires stable democratic institutions guaranteeing civic participation and free association on the one hand, and the cultural and historical traits ranking from early experiences with associative forms to an encompassing dissident movement on the other hand, are both strong explanatory factors that account for these differences. In the face of such obvious explanations, the large Western attention civil society organizations received in Poland that far exceeded the assistance granted to civil society organizations in Belarus will be regarded as a rather minor causal factor. The selection of cases is thus based on a design that is partly most similar and partly most different in order to deal with two prominent alternative explanations: the stabilizing influence of the European Union (EU) on the one hand, and pre-existing cultural and historical strands of civil society on the other hand. Whereas the first alternative explanation is held constant, the second is chosen in a way that it is most dissimilar.

For these reasons, the dissertation project focuses on civil society assistance in Poland and Slovakia. Being geographically close to the EU, the two countries Poland and Slovakia have been chosen because it is believed that the prospect of EU membership is an important factor, which should be held constant. The interest of the dissertation is not so much to assess the impact of possible EU membership – requiring vibrant civil societies and democratic conditions (Copenhagen Criteria) – on civil society in democratizing countries, but rather to analyze the mechanisms and outcome of civil society assistance in the form of financial and technical assistance directly granted to domestic actors. As the multilateral framework of transnational civil society activities is relatively similar in Poland and Slovakia due to a geographic closeness to the EU, its impact will be held constant. However, among the countries geographically close to the EU, Poland and Slovakia are the most dissimilar. As the largest country in CEE, Poland is culturally homogenous and has a firm national identity

and no major ethical or cultural cleavages. Slovakia, in contrast, is a small and ethnically heterogeneous country, characterized by late independence and a late and feeble national awakening. Poland is the country in the former communist block with the most encompassing dissident movement and a forerunner with regard to democratic reforms with no major drawbacks on its way to becoming a consolidated democracy. The Slovak lands, on the other hand, showed only weak traces of dissident culture during communism and were governed by a repressive communism system that left little room for experiments with liberalization. Furthermore, Slovakia faced an authoritarian reverse wave between 1994 and 1998.⁸⁴ One has to note, however, that both countries belong to the most Catholic countries in Europe and that both were at least partly part of the Habsburg Empire. Nonetheless, a comparison of both countries is capable of revealing the effects of foreign assistance in two different domestic settings that are additionally shaped by thoroughly different cultural and historical developments structuring civil society development. The project consequently aims to examine the extent to which two countries with quite different legacies shaping the revival of civil society reacted differently to civil society assistance.

Before I go on to outline how the processes of change in the two countries under investigation will be traced, a caveat is in order as to what the chosen design implies for the comparability of the resulting findings. In other words, if causality between civil society assistance and civil society development can be demonstrated in the two cases under investigation by methods described below, to what extent can the empirical findings claim validity beyond the two cases? As we learned from the discussion of the work of Przeworski / Teune, a most-similar system design cannot reject alternative explanations. Consequently, the resulting findings are only valid in cases that depict the same characteristics than the cases examined. For this study this implies that the findings on the impact of transnational influences on civil society are only valid for cases that depict multilateral and bilateral pressures impacting on the domestic system in a way similar to the EU integration process. In other words, the findings on the impact of transnational civil society assistance are only valid in countries exposed to similar international adaptation and integration pressures.

84 For a detailed analysis of the cultural preconditions of civil society in Poland and Slovakia see chapter 7.1. and chapter 8.1. respectively.

If we want to test to what extent the findings are valid beyond the range of countries facing a similar international environment, additional investigation, e.g. in the former Soviet Union, is necessary.⁸⁵ However, this conclusion does not hold for the other alternative variable: cultural and historical preconditions of civil society. If an impact of civil society assistance on civil society development is demonstrated for both cases under investigation, i.e. for cases that are most different concerning their cultural and historical legacies, the “cultural approach” that stresses the importance of institutional legacies, informal rules and culturally defined cognitive scripts can be rejected.

5.3 What to Observe

The aim of this section is to identify general questions to be asked in each case in order to allow for a “*structured, focused comparison*”, i.e. a comparison that focuses only on a specific aspect of a case, here civil society development, and that employs general questions to guide the data collection and analysis (George 1979: 61p).⁸⁶ In other words, the following will clarify what should be observed in each case. Additionally, the section specifies the objects of research. It reveals what type of recipient and donor organizations and actors will be investigated.

5.3.1 Leading Research Questions

The analytical framework and the derived working hypothesis outlined above suggest four major questions each case study should clarify: (1) What is to be transferred, or what is the content of civil society assistance? (2) What is the outcome of the assistance granted? (3) Does the outcome positively contribute to civil society development in the sense of the

⁸⁵ In this regard the author will settle for what King et al view as an “*indeterminate research design*” that is only to a limited extent capable of producing generalizations. A determinate research design capable of producing lawlike results is thus sacrificed for a more detailed insight into the unique particularities of civil society assistance in a smaller range of cases. In order to justify this “small N” selection I want to point to Satori’s suggestion that concepts that are applied to a broader range of cases can lead to conceptual “overstretch”. In other words, large N comparisons capable of causal inference deal more often than not with rather uninteresting research questions (cit. in Collier 1991: 14). Or in the words of Charles Tilly: “... *with the multiplication of cases and the standardization of categories for comparison the theoretical return declines more rapidly than the empirical return rises*” (1984: 144).

⁸⁶ The method of structured, focused comparison has been developed by George (1979) in order to combine contributions from historians and political scientists for the purpose of developing policy-relevant theory that is grounded in systematic examination of historical experience. George stresses the need to collect information in a systemized way along theoretically identified general questions in order to be able to compare cases in a systemized fashion. A special focus on deviant cases then allows for the cumulative development of theory (George 1979). The method builds the basis of what George and McKeown (1985) then call the congruence method (cit. in King et al 1994: 45).

concept of civil society outlined in chapter 2? And finally (4) is a “successful” transfer contingent on the applied donor strategy or on the interaction between donor and recipient or on the domestic setting characterized by domestic actors and their interactions? In other words, can we identify facilitating factors on which a positive outcome of civil society assistance depends?

The most troubling questions are without doubt the determination of the “outcome” of civil society assistance and, by the same token, the question how to measure “successful” transfer. The typical answer to the question how to define success is to determine whether stated objectives of the proponents of transfer have been achieved or not (Jacoby 2000: 11). Related to this work, one can thus state that if the major goals of donors engaging in civil society assistance are realized one can speak of ‘success stories’. However, as also Jacoby observed for his study on the transfer of institutions in post-war Germany and after German unification “*since the actors provide no clear and stable standards against which to measure outcomes, analysis cannot center on the question of success*” (ibid). By the same token, as has been shown in chapters 3.3. and 3.4., donors that engage in civil society assistance provide only limited accounts of their goals and aspirations. Donors usually define their goals rather vaguely and often quite unrealistically and point more to the functions civil society is assumed to deliver than to observable and clear indicators (Quigley 2000).⁸⁷ As a result, donor objectives cannot serve as points of reference. Moreover, an analysis that exclusively focuses on realized goals of donors is incapable of detecting unforeseen side - effects of the assistance granted. Those may, however, be more valuable for recipients and more capable of triggering domestic changes than the originally intended goals (Carothers 1996: 96). In response to this problematic, Jacoby avoids focusing on “success” and thus avoids struggling with the troublesome question what “success” might be. Instead he concentrates on the “*performance and persistence of transferred institutions*” (Jacoby 2000: 11). Performance refers to the benefits to the proponents of transfer, but also includes unintended consequences and outcomes. Persistence covers the rooting of institutions, their reproduction over time and the ways they gain legitimacy in the new society. Moreover, he regards effectiveness as decisive. It occurs,

“...when the transferred institution acquires a legal framework, when it performs in the new society in ways broadly consistent with the aims (promoting efficiency or justice) that led to the transfer attempt, and when it persists by being reproduced over time....”

⁸⁷ One simply needs to remember how representatives of German political foundations refer to the democratization of Poland as “*after we did this*” or to the changes in Slovakia as “*their biggest succes*” to understand this point (interview with the author).

In short, his measure of institutional transfer encompasses the outcomes of “*legality, performance, and persistence*” (ibid).

What does this method suggest for the subsequent analysis? Civil society assistance needs to be evaluated by assessing the performance, persistence and effectiveness of transferred structures. We thus need to clarify what structures are transferred by civil society assistance. Chapter 3.4.1. points out that donors more often than not are referring to NGOs if they talk of civil society. Civil society assistance is thus largely restricted to the support and assistance to local NGOs. We may thus conclude that the transferred structures of civil society assistance, are nothing more than supported non-governmental organizations, i.e. major beneficiaries of assistance.

Assessing civil society assistance thus translates into an assessment of major beneficiaries of aid. Who are they? What have their main activities and achievements been? Do they manage to sustain themselves once assistance comes to an end? In brief, the research needs to focus on recipients not on donors. Evaluating donor strategies, projects and activities is a task identified by many as a major goal of research⁸⁸. However, it accounts for nothing more than an assessment of the output rather than the outcome of assistance. The outcome of assistance is, in contrast, eminent in recipient organizations and especially in their activities and achievements. Moreover, a focus on recipients and their activities allows us to comprise the unintended outcomes and consequences of civil society assistance.

Incorporating the suggestions of Jacoby into this analysis and drawing on the findings of the previous chapters, the general questions guiding the two case studies thus will be:

1. Who are the major beneficiaries of civil society assistance? Are “main recipients” identifiable?

This question targets the content of transfer as well as the selectivity of external assistance to civil society (see chapter 3.4.1). Has civil society assistance been distributed equally over the population at large and over the various organizations in existence? Or did the external assistance favor a small segment of society and focus primarily on “*some favored cliques*” as has been critically put forward by some observers (Wedel 1998). And if this is the case, how can these *cliques* be characterized?

Main recipients are thereby defined as NGOs that

- are frequently supported by Western funds, that
- receive assistance from at least three of the donor organizations under investigation, and

- whose budget relies to at least 30% on foreign sources.

2. Do civil society organizations that received assistance still exist, and are they able to sustain themselves?

This question refers to the sustainability of organizations after external allocations come to an end.

3. To what extent are major beneficiaries of external assistance rooted in society?

The question is, whether major recipients of assistance are perceived by the domestic population and by the political elite as legitimate in the sense that they act and perform for the good of the people and the nation or whether they are perceived as “bridgeheads of foreign influence”. This question focuses on the legitimacy of the recipient organization. It allows us to clarify whether recipient organizations that greatly rely on foreign funds and that are internationally well connected are embedded in society or whether they are closer to Western organizations than to the people of their country.

4. Do major recipients of assistance perform and persist in a way that corresponds with the identified characteristics of civil society?

Do main recipients provide important services to other civil society organizations that help raise the quantity and plurality of civil society organizations? Do they facilitate the establishment of networks and horizontal ties among civil society organizations? Do they represent the interests of non-governmental organizations toward government? Do they raise public awareness of democratic rules and procedures and stipulate civic participation, and do they fulfill a watchdog function? In brief, do major recipients of civil society assistance fulfill the democratic functions attributed to civil society, and thus act as carriers of civil society?

In this regard, the analysis will examine the effectiveness of recipients in strengthening the two dimensions of civil society identified in chapter two: the structure of civil society embodied by the quantity and plurality of existing organizations, and the cultural dimension of civil society, portrayed on the one hand by the horizontal relationships among different groups of civil society, and on the other hand in the horizontal relationship with the state. The subsequent analysis thus aims to assess to what extent recipients live up to the normative ideal of civil society outlined in chapter two. This will be done firstly by focusing on the services main NGOs provide to local NGOs thus contributing to NGO development.

Secondly, the case studies will focus on examples of common action (e.g. campaigns) and on processes to establish an appropriate NGO legislation. While the former depicts the type of relationship among NGOs, the latter illuminates the relations between NGOs and state authorities (see chapter 2.2.3, table 2, p. 44).

5. How benefit recipients from external assistance?

Finally, the analysis will inquire to what extent civil society organizations in Poland and Slovakia benefit from external assistance in fulfilling their various tasks and in acting as carriers of civil society?

Recipient benefits in this regard may come in three different forms of assistance (see also chapter 4.4.2):

- material benefits, i.e. financial resources but also other “hard products” such as technical equipment;
- knowledge, i.e. the provision of information, techniques, concepts, models and ideas of technical and instrumental know-how;
- moral support i.e. international contacts, expressions of international solidarity and international recognition.

All three forms of assistance may translate into domestic bargaining power: Financial resources may raise the capabilities of recipients; knowledge and ideas may trigger learning providing the recipient with a wider range of strategic options; moral support may increase the internal integrity (belief in stated principles and goals) and the external standing (reputation in population, political acceptance) of recipient organizations. Whether this will be the case depends, however, on the given actor constellations in a domestic setting and on recipient perceptions (see chapter 4.4.1). In other words, the question is less what kinds of “goods“ have been transferred by the donors and more on whether the recipients valued the transferred merits.

Whereas the first two questions that focus on main recipients and their sustainability or “persistence” refer to the output of assistance granted, the questions on recipient’s legitimacy and on recipient’s effectiveness as carriers of civil society are inevitable in order to uncover the actual domestic outcome of civil society assistance. Only a focus upon the rooting of recipient organizations in society and a clarification of the consistency of recipient’s achievements and performance with the normative ideal underlying the concept of civil society allows us to reveal the effect of external assistance that will always be a combined result of external activities and domestic responses. Even if determining the outcome of civil society assistance is the most troubling task the case studies face, it is not the end of the

story. The analysis additionally needs to clarify which conditions facilitate a “successful transfer” in the above sense of the word. The question thus is whether recipients’ achievements can be plausibly attributed to donor programs and projects, to donor strategies, to the type of interaction between donor and recipients or to the attractiveness of transferred formal and informal structures to key domestic actors. The last research question aimed at determining the benefits of assistance for recipients therefore aims to illuminate whether the observed outcome is actually a result contingent on donors’ actions. In other words, it clarifies whether the outcome is a result of accident or skill.

The research questions will structure the analysis of the output and outcome of civil society assistance in the two case studies (see chapter 7.4. and 8.4. respectively).

5.3.2 Objects of Research

Summarizing the contemplation above it can be stated that recipients not donors are the major objects of this research. A comparative analysis of donors is not the purpose of the case studies, rather the aim is to analyze how recipients respond to civil society assistance in different contexts. Rather than focusing on a small number of donors and comparing their strategies, which is the prevalent practice in studies focusing on civil society assistance,⁸⁹ this analysis will center on a small number of recipients, so-called “main recipients” that may be and often are, supported by a wide range of different donor organizations. Having said this, we still cannot neglect the donor side. Firstly, pinpointing donor programs and activities is inevitable in order to determine to what recipients actually react. Secondly, the identification of “main recipients” is hardly possible without an analysis of donor programs and projects. Only an analysis of project lists will reveal which organizations heavily benefited from foreign funds.

A descriptive approach to donors, their programs and projects is thus necessary. Therefore the study aims to draw a broad picture of civil society assistance in both countries. It goes without saying that such an approach impedes a detailed analysis of each donor. It would exceed the scope of this work to focus in detail on every donor active in civil society assistance in both countries. In order to solve this dilemma, the analysis concentrates on four major donors that have been of special importance in the region and also serve as illustrative examples of different types of donors and donor practices. The chosen examples are the European Union as the largest supranational actor, the United States as the largest non-European national donor, and Germany as the largest European national donor active in

89 See e.g. Crawford (1996), Robinson (1996), Quigley (1997), Diamond (1997).

CEE. Finally, the Soros foundation provides an example of private commitment. In the same manner, in this study it is not possible to cover every single project that benefited non-governmental organizations in one way or another. More often than not, projects in a variety of issue areas, be it environmental protection, decentralization or support to small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs), are carried out by respective non-state actors such as environmental NGOs, foundations devoted to the goal of local democracy or economic think tanks. For a variety of reasons that have been outlined above (chapter 3.2.) donors are keen on relying on these actors while pursuing other purposes than civil society development. Sure enough, the mere fact that donors finance non-state actors to implement their projects builds up the capacity and institutional strength of the organization in question. In such cases civil society development is, however, not the stated objective of the donor but a (welcome) byproduct. Donors thus often support NGOs indirectly. Although the author is well aware of the effect this donor practice may have on civil society, it is impossible to investigate in a systematic fashion in such projects. Instead, only programs and projects are covered that are explicitly designed by donors with the goal of supporting civil society. In consequence, the study focuses automatically on projects that aim to support what has been called 'the Third Sector' (chapter 2.1.6.), as a summary of the major programs focusing on civil society assistance again proves that donors refer to NGOs when mentioning civil society (see also chapter 3.4.1. on this point).

On the side of recipients, the research concentrates on 'infrastructural organizations' that aim to strengthen civil society by providing necessary infrastructure and support. The main reason for this lies first in the heavy emphasis placed on those organizations by donors. As will be shown (see chapters 7.4.1. and 8.4.1), infrastructural organizations are among the main beneficiaries of external assistance and are thus to be seen as "main recipients". Secondly, the number of these major receivers of assistance is surprisingly small and thus does not exceed the scope of this analysis. And finally, infrastructural organizations are regarded as fruitful units of analysis as donors consider those organizations to be important catalysts of civil society development. The assistance to "infrastructural NGOs" is grounded in the belief that the services those organizations provide, ranking from lobbying the government to informing NGOs about funding possibilities to the provision of training, are the missing blocks needed for civil society development. These organizations are thus taken as intermediaries between donors and NGOs on the ground, and are regarded as multipliers of assistance.

Having outlined the major research questions and objects of research, one limitation is in place. A focus on recipients, their sustainability, legitimacy, activities and achievements may translate into a focus on success stories that neglect failures. The present study analyses the

output and outcome of civil society assistance, as can be observed in a particular timeframe, namely ten years after the start of foreign assistance. This approach implies that failures in assistance that happened at an earlier period in time are no longer observable. This research does not deal with wasted funds, examples of corruption, or ineffective donor activities. A critical assessment of donor strategies is the price to be paid for determining the effects of assistance in single domestic contexts.

5.4 Measurement Technique

Now that I have clarified the key questions that will guide the subsequent analysis and determined the main units of analysis, the question arises how I will measure recipients' benefits, their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness. The study will rely on different sources of information: available opinion polls, surveys on the NGO sector in Poland and Slovakia, in particular a survey on donor-recipient relationships conducted among Polish and Slovak NGOs, materials of donors and recipient organizations, expert interviews and secondary literature.

The case studies rely heavily on qualitative methods of measurement. However, this does not imply that quantitative methods of measurement are neglected. In line with the recommendation of King et al (1994: 44) "*when we are able to find valid quantitative measures of what we want to know, we should use them*", the study draws on statistical material when available. For example, surveys on Polish NGOs conducted by the Polish non-profit organization KLON/JAWOR in 1993, 1994/1995 and 1997 with the support of the Phare Civic Dialogue Program (BORDO 1998A) were a valuable source. Moreover, the database of KLON/JAWOR on NGOs in Poland was an important source. This database, which has been in existence since 1990, covers app. 20,000 NGOs operating in Poland. Further important data on Polish and the Slovak non-profit organizations is provided by the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project (see Anheier/Salamon 1999). This project investigates the non-profit sector in 22 countries in comparative perspective.

Moreover, the study highly benefits from a survey conducted among Polish and Slovak NGOs in the context of a research project that focused on "*democracy promotion and protection in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*" (DPP).⁹⁰ The

90 The project was a combined effort of Professor Claus Offe at the Humboldt-University, Berlin and Professor Philippe C. Schmitter at the European University Institute in Florence and their respective research staff conducted in 1999-2002. It was inspired by the question whether "democratization from without" was at all feasible and aimed to clarify the actual outcome of external involvement in processes of democratization. A part of the project focused on external activities to support civil society assistance.

survey in which 72 Polish and 93 Slovak non-governmental organizations participated and which took place in 2002/03 inquires into characteristics of NGOs in Poland and in their relationships with foreign donors. The survey covers three main areas:

- description of NGOs: location, year of foundation, number of employees, area of activity, level of activity, type of activity, budget (questions 1-9 in appendix 8, table 26),
- self-assessment of NGOs role and situation in country: relationship with other actors, importance of NGOs, main problems of NGOs (question 10-12 in *ibid*),
- relationship with foreign actors / donors: main donors, number of annually funded projects, benefits of cooperation, assessment of cooperation, main problems of cooperation) (questions 13-17 in *ibid*).

The main results and a brief interpretation thereof as well as methodological remarks are to be found in appendix 8. Throughout this analysis, the author will refer to this survey as “DPP survey”.

However, collecting quantitative data is only partly suitable to shed light on the key questions the case studies should answer. The specification of recipients’ benefits, their continuing existence and the degree to which recipients are accepted by the population are variables that are publicly available. It will be more difficult, however, to depict the effectiveness of specific recipient organizations in acting as carriers of civil society, especially as regards what has been called the “cultural dimension” of civil society. This is even more so, if the period under investigation is rather short at least in terms of cultural change. A horizontal relationship inside civil society that is based on tolerance and trust and that is capable of resolving major conflicts in society is as difficult to pinpoint as a change in the vertical relationship between civil society organizations and the state. These indicators are not easily open to empirical analysis. What is needed instead is a focus on unique processes and careful interpretation. One needs to invest in interpretative qualitative case studies, in short narratives that allow us to trace complex processes and produce “*understanding via richness, texture, and detail*” (McDonald 1996: 10 cit. in Bates et al 1998: 10).

As a result, the case studies will only partly rely on quantifiable indicators and in addition focus on the role recipients played in relevant decision-making processes, namely in legislative processes and public campaigns. The ability of recipients to act in concert as well as the feelings toward the state and the degree to which civil society organizations rely on external assistance, resources and advice is most evident in unique processes that have been identified as relevant for civil society development. These are in the first place public campaigns that demonstrate the ability and confidence of civil society activists to raise their voice and to strive for increasing citizen participation, and secondly, lobbying processes that

aim to enhance the legislative environment under which civil society organizations act. Unfortunately the author does not possess the resources and capacity, and in particular language skills, to engage in what Clifford Geertz (1973) calls "*thick description*". The analysis therefore makes use of the extensive secondary literature on civil society development in Poland and Slovakia and studies focusing on NGO campaigns and civil society achievements in both countries. In addition, materials of donors and recipients proved to be valuable sources of information on donor and recipients' strategies, objectives, underlying concepts and activities. And last but not least, the study relies heavily on qualitative expert interviews conducted by the author in both countries under investigation. In order to get a broad as possible picture, experts have been chosen from four different groups: (1) representatives of donor organizations in the home country (if possible) and especially in the recipient country; (2) representatives of recipient organizations; (3) local scholars working on civil society in their country; (4) politicians and representatives of NGOs in the country under investigation (see list of interview partners in appendix 9). A snowballing process has thereby identified valuable interview partners, i.e., all interview partners have been asked whether they can indicate further persons that may be of value for the research.

Before I analyze civil society assistance in Poland and Slovakia while applying the methodology outlined above, a brief description of the major donors under investigation will be given. As all four donors chosen as representative examples for this study are active in both countries they often have the same programs in both countries. For this reason, a summary of the major activities of our four donors in Central and Eastern Europe will serve to introduce the two case studies.

6 Donors in Focus: Major Donors and Donor - Recipient Interactions

It is the aim of the following chapter to briefly portray civil society assistance in CEE by describing major donors, and their civil society programs. In doing so, the chapter focuses on four exemplary donors for reasons given above (see section 5.3.2): The European Union, the United States, Germany and the network of Soros foundations. The first part of the chapter gives a descriptive overview of these four donors. Emphasis is placed on the programs and strategies of major donors to assist the democratic transformation of the CEE states in general and the activities to support civil society in particular. In a second step, the chapter additionally outlines the main types of donor-recipient relations and sketches the various networks and links between donors and recipients that channel civil society assistance.

6.1 Major Donors of Civil Society Assistance in Central and Eastern Europe

6.1.1 Civil Society Assistance as Part of an Integration Strategy – The European Union and its Phare Program

The most salient supranational actor involved in CEE is doubtlessly the EU. According to Pridham (1999) the EU applies a strategy of “*dual conditionality*” in Central and Eastern Europe. The first conditionality refers to the practice of the EU to attach membership in the EU to certain criteria, outlined at the summit in Copenhagen in 1993. From the early 1990s the European Union regards integration as the major strategy to achieve stability in the CEE states (Frantz 2000: 220). At the summit in Copenhagen, the EU worked out a catalogue of criteria that subsequently function as a “timetable to integration”, and gives the states seeking memberships a clear idea what they must do to their goal of accession. According to the Copenhagen criteria, the accession states have to meet three major conditions:

1. Stable institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and the protection of minorities,
2. The existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union,

3. The ability to meet the obligations of membership (adoption of the *acquis communautaire*) including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union (see e.g. Frantz 2000: 230).⁹¹

The first part of the “*dual conditionality*” thus underlines that integration requires not only economic but also democratic stability and thus aims to ensure the political motivation of the states seeking membership to democratically transform the political system. The second part of the “*dual conditionality*” refers to the practice to directly grant technical and financial assistance to the CEE states and is thus more important for this study. The EU does not leave the accession aspirants alone on their path towards membership but provides assistance via the Phare program. While the initial idea behind Phare was mere economic assistance to the newly emerging democracies, the program steadily evolved as a pre-accession instrument that aimed to keep the CEE states on a continual transformation path.

Originally Phare was implemented in 1989 as a form of economic aid to Poland and Hungary (as indicated by the full name “Poland Hungary Assistance for the Reconstruction of the Economy”) with the goal of supporting economic reforms and enhancing the private sector. It focused on measures in the area of agriculture, environment, restructuring of the economy, human resources (education and training), and other technical assistance. In the first year, the largest part of the funds (up to 50%) was dedicated to the restructuring of the economy.⁹² However, the program steadily expanded in terms of geography, content and objectives.⁹³ In the early years the program was truly demand-driven, i.e. the major share was subject to national programs negotiated between the recipient government and the Commission. Only up to 15% of the funds went into so-called ‘horizontal programs’, i.e., programs designed and administered by the Commission.⁹⁴ In 1993 after the Copenhagen summit new guidelines have been elaborated for the years 1993 - 1997. Afterwards, Phare incorporated a more performance oriented approach, as well as a more explicit conditionality.

91 For the criteria of membership outlined in Copenhagen and for the mechanisms installed by the European Union in order to monitor and assess the progresses of the accession states: see Bursis / Ochmann (1996).

92 See: Europäische Kommission (1990).

93 By the year 2000, PHARE included the 10 accession countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary) and three non-candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and FYROM). For an overview of the history of the program see: Europäische Kommission (2000).

94 Horizontal programs are complementary programs that supplement the national programs. In contrast to the national programs, horizontal programs are not subject to negotiations between the EU and the respective recipient government. Examples are: the ‘regional cooperation’ program, ‘multidisciplinary measures’, the PHARE Information Action, the PHARE Democracy Programme (1992), or the Partnership and Institution Building Program (1993).

Furthermore new European Agreement activities – focusing on European integration including institution building and administrative measures – were implemented. Infrastructural measures were also integrated to a large extent into the program decreasing the emphasis on economic restructuring. In 1997 the Phare Program was fully restructured into a pre-accession instrument. Phare is no longer demand-driven but accession-driven. The different measures should follow the priorities listed in the relevant Accession Partnerships.⁹⁵ Now 30% of the funds are attributed to institution building and 70% are left to investments. The major objectives are to focus on certain crucial needs for accession (institution building, technical assistance in the areas of adopting the *acquis*, public administration, advancement of economic and social coherence) and to train the candidate countries to manage the community funds, which will be available after accession.⁹⁶

I now turn to the question how the Phare program supported civil society in CEE. In the first years Phare did not include projects with a special focus on democracy and civil society. In 1991 it was simply stated that the Phare assistance contained a general commitment to recognize the value of non-governmental organizations while implementing Phare projects (European Commission 1991: 19). In some Phare sector programs, e.g. concerning SMEs, the environment, social and employment policy, key importance was given to the support of intermediary bodies. In other sector programs such as the local government support programs NGOs were increasingly chosen as responsible for implementing Phare programs (*ibid.*). In particular, in the context of Phare regional development programs, substantial activities have been undertaken by NGOs. For example in Poland the majority of projects in this area were implemented by non-state actors (European Commission 1997a: 53). Besides this indirect way of supporting actors of civil society, two further channels of assistance can be identified: (1) via special, so called “horizontal” programs, and (2) via the national programs.

95 In 1997, the “Accession Partnerships” was introduced by the Commission in order to streamline the pre-accession support. In contrast to the “Association Agreements” that previously regulated the relationship between the EU and the Candidate States (see Jacobson 1997: 8), the “Accession Partnerships” provide a clearly defined program to prepare for membership, involving commitments by the applicants to particular priorities and a calendar for carrying them out. The implementation of the “Accession partnerships” is steadily monitored. By connecting the PHARE funds to the “Accession Partnerships”, conditionality has been strengthened. PHARE funds can thus be restrained if the state in question fails to pursue a reform path agreed upon (for information on the accession partnerships consult the website of the European Commission: europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/ac_part_10_99/intro/index.htm).

96 For this reason after 2000 two new programs are introduced which supplement PHARE: SAPARD: a program focusing on agriculture and the development of rural areas (precursor to the EU agricultural funds); ISPA: focusing on transport, environment and infrastructure (precursor to cohesion funds). PHARE funds are allocated to economic and social coherence with a regional and training focus. In this sense PHARE functions as the precursor to the structural funds.

In 1992 a special Phare (and Tacis) Democracy Program was launched on initiative of the European Parliament in order to “*counter the fact that Western attention and assistance has been focused largely on the creation of market economies in the CEEC*” (European Commission 1997b: 2). The program aimed to support the establishment of political and civil institutions crucial for the achievement of political consensus and stability. Between 1992 and 1997 the program financed democratic initiatives worth of 56 Million ECU. The program supported three different types of projects:

1. ad hoc projects, designed and administered by the European Commission to meet a specific need (10% of the budget);
2. macro-projects up to 200,000 € which involve partnerships between NGOs in East and West (biannual competitions); only NGOs eligible; managed by European Human Rights Foundation since 1993 (70% of budget);
3. micro-projects up to 10,000 € approved in target countries; only NGOs eligible, managed by EU delegations that often delegated the task to local organizations (e.g. Cooperation Fund in Poland, Civil Society Development Foundation in Slovakia) (20 % of budget).

Although the Democracy Program was not exclusively designed as a civil society program, in practice its major objective was the support of actors of civil society, namely of NGOs. This is mainly the case because only NGOs were eligible to apply to the major share (90%) of the projects funded.⁹⁷ Moreover, the evaluation of the Phare Democracy program conducted in 1997 revealed that the major share of the realized projects fell into the category “development of NGOs” (46%), followed by the categories “awareness raising and education” (15%), “media” (19%), and “human rights” (10%) (European Commission 1997b: 35pp).⁹⁸ The Phare Democracy Program is, however, not the only program that has been designed in order to support civil society, NGOs and local structures. Other multi-country programs, namely the Phare NGO and LIEN program starting in 1992 and 1993 respectively and the Phare Partnership Program starting in 1992 provide support for civil society development (European Commission 1998b: 31). Here NGO and LIEN are “social” programs targeting specifically at NGOs, and supporting activities to promote integration of disadvantaged groups (unemployed, homeless, handicapped people, etc.) in the population.

97 See European Commission (1997b). For micro- and macro-projects only NGOs are eligible. Ad-hoc projects were mainly conducted by (Western) NGOs.

98 The democracy programme supported projects in eight areas of activity: (1) Parliamentary practice and procedures, (2) Transparency of public administration and public management; (3) Development of NGOs and representative structures; (4) Independent, pluralistic and responsible media; (5) Awareness building and civic education; (6) Promoting and monitoring human rights; (7) Civilian monitoring of security structures; (8) minority rights, equal opportunities and non-discrimination (European Commission 1997b: 4).

Socially active NGOs were the main beneficiaries of the 40 million ECU earmarked for LIEN (1993-1997) (ibid). The Phare Partnership program (41 Million ECU between 1993-1997) in contrast, focused primarily on support for local economic development, cooperation between the private sector, local government and civil society and aimed to trigger transnational European networks. NGOs, independent organizations and institutes were the main beneficiaries of the Partnership Program.

Moreover, civil society assistance is a frequent part of the national programs negotiated between the recipient governments and the Commission. In most of the CEE countries civil society development programs have been established that are subject to the Phare national program (as was the case for example in Bulgaria in 1996, the Civil Dialogue Program has fulfilled the same function in Poland since 1992 already). The objectives of Phare's civil society programs are *"to strengthen the capacity of leading institutions and to assist them in expanding the range of their activities, increasing their self-reliance and enhancing their participation in society and their support of NGOs"* (European Commission 1997a: 53). In brief, the programs focus on some leading NGOs who aim to advance civil society development. The funds are mainly distributed by specially founded quasi-independent funds such as e.g. the Cooperation Fund in Poland, or the Civil Society Development Foundations in Slovakia, Bulgaria or Romania.

In sum, one can distinguish between three different channels through which actors and organizations of civil society benefited from Phare money. Firstly, NGOs benefited indirectly from the assistance provided as they frequently implemented Phare projects in a variety of areas ranking from environment to decentralization. Secondly, certain horizontal programs, such as democracy, LIEN or the partnership program mainly focused on NGOs. Thirdly, some recipient states chose civil society development as one field of assistance of their national programs. These various distribution channels make it difficult to estimate how many funds went to the benefit of civil society. The evaluation of the Phare Partnership Program estimates that between 1992 and 1997 Phare programs in favor of civil society development (Democracy, Lien, Partnership, Civil Society Development Program) account for 157.7 million ECU in the years 1991-1991. This translates to 2% of the total Phare budget.

Table 3 Phare Programs in Favor of Civil Society Development 1991- 1997(MECU)

Program	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total	%
Partnership		10		11	10	10	41	26.0
Democracy	5	20	20	20	22	20	56	35.5
NGO/LIEN		5	5	10	10	10	40	24.4
Civil Society Dev.	4		6.2	0.5	2	8	20.7	13.2
TOTAL	9	25	21.2	1.5	33	38	157.7	100

Source: European Commission (1998b: 31).

6.1.2 Forerunners in the Promotion of Democracy: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED)

The USA can be viewed as a forerunner in the support to democratization. As early as 1983 the Reagan administration established the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a quasi-independent foundation with the explicit purpose of promoting and assisting democracy abroad. It has an independent bipartisan board of directors, but receives congressional funding (Diamond 1997: 315pp). However, while the early years of democracy promotion were highly influenced by bipolarity and the cold war, the new emphasis on the promotion of democracy as a goal in itself instead of an ideological weapon has evolved slowly since the middle of the 1980s. According to Carothers (1999a: 49) democracy promotion became a full-fledged, integral part of US foreign policy at the beginning of the 1990 in response to the new challenges in the East.

The new emphasis on foreign policy is portrayed by the announcement of the “Democratic Initiative” of the United States Agency for International Development in late 1990. While since its creation in 1961, the agency previously focused mainly on social and economic development, in 1990 the agency established the promotion of democracy as one of its central objectives (ibid). This reads in the Strategic Plan for 1997 as follows:

“Broad based participation and democratic processes are integral elements of sustainable development: they encourage individuals and societies to take responsibility for their own progress, ensure the protection of human rights and foster informed civic participation.... To achieve the broad goals of democracy, USAID supports programs that strengthen democratic practices and institutions, and ensure

the full participation of women and other groups lacking full access to the political system...” (USAID Strategic Plan 1997 cit. on website).

With this reorientation from a development policy that mainly focused upon economic development to one that emphasizes the importance of political restructuring, USAID was among the first development agencies to take this turn. From 1991 - 1999 only the expenditures for democracy projects from USAID increased nearly by four and went up from 165.2 Million US\$ to 637 million US\$ (Carothers 1999a: 49). USAID breaks down the strategic goal of “democratic transition” into five distinct areas: Rule of law; public administration; independent media; political and social process including electoral assistance and trade union assistance; and non-government organization development. In line with these objectives, the assistance also granted to CEE countries aims to support economic as well as political transformation. The US assistance to CEE countries is based on the Support For East European Democracy, or SEED Act, fashioned by the U.S. Congress in 1989 already. At that time, the Congress authorized \$1 billion for Central and Eastern European assistance. The law was seen as setting the foundations for a new Marshall Plan designed to revitalize post-Cold War Europe and aimed to provide for assistance to promote democracy and economic reforms throughout Central and Eastern Europe.⁹⁹

With regard to American civil society assistance, one has to note that in the early 1990s NGO development only played a minor role in overall democracy assistance. According to Carothers (1999: 59), American donors regarded civil society assistance simply as an “*initial dose*” that would soon roll back for the benefit of top-down programs. Major emphasis was instead placed on electoral assistance and institution building. However, this does not imply that civic initiatives and NGOs did not receive assistance. As Petrescu points out for the case of Romania, assistance to civil society came in fast and without bureaucratic hurdles. Most grants were made directly by the National Endowment of Democracy or by their grantee “Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe” (IDEE).

“These first small grants had a decisive impact. They helped establish the credibility of a few organizations, set them up as institutions and formed a group of “traditional recipients” of grants” (Petrescu 2000: 219).

However, the emphasis in the first years was on civic education, namely on voter education and thus indirectly served the purpose of setting up democratic elections. If other forms of civic initiatives were supported, the assistance was often the result of personal contacts of aid officers in the field and thus followed a trial and error strategy and not a thoroughly elaborated programmatic approach.

⁹⁹ See the USAID website on its activities in CEE and Eurasia: http://www.usaid.gov/locations/europe_eurasia/index.html. See also appendix 2, table 5.

However, in 1995 USAID stressed the importance of NGO development as an integral part of democracy assistance and firstly institutionalized an NGO support program: the “Democracy Network Project” (DemNet). DemNet aimed to strengthen public policy oriented NGOs and was concurrently implemented in the countries of CEE. Other NGO support programs farther East followed suit. What all NGO support programs had in common was that they provided small grants to chosen NGOs, emphasized the importance of a transparent grant making procedure, integrated training and technical assistance and used one American NGO per country in an intermediary implementation role. In each country the objectives of the grant schemes and the focus points varied depending on local needs and the agenda of the intermediary American NGO (that mostly opened an office with local staff in the respective country).¹⁰⁰ DemNet also included regional components that aimed to strengthen cross-border linkages. Moreover, a regional project in which the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) operated as an intermediary body concentrated on the NGO legal environment in the region. DemNet lasted three years and ended in most of the CEE states in 1998. USAID also made progress in conceptual terms. In 1996 it presented a study on strategic approaches for donor-supported civic advocacy programs that provided the ground for a programmatic strategy focusing upon advocacy groups (USAID 1996).

The quasi-independent National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is also active in the region. Its activities proved especially decisive at the beginning of transition due to its unbureaucratic and fast assistance. The NED identifies its mandate as:

“... promoting U.S. non-governmental participation in democratic institution building abroad... (including) strengthening democratic electoral processes in cooperation with indigenous democratic forces, fostering cooperation with those abroad dedicated to the cultural values, institutions and organizations of democratic pluralism; and encouraging the establishment and growth of democratic development in a manner consistent both with the broad concerns of U.S. national interests and with specific requirements of democratic groups in other countries” (NED, 1997 cit. in: Glenn 1999: 6).

The NED relies on four traditional “core” grantees or satellite organizations that receive two-thirds of its annual program funding. Two of these grantees are the two party institutes: the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), and the International Republican Institute (IRI). The other two, the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI) and the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) are affiliated with the U.S. labor federation and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce respectively. Due to this arrangement it comes as no surprise that the NED is mainly active in the areas political party assistance, trade union assistance, and assistance to associations and institutes aiming to support private enterprises. Although

100 For more on the USAID NGO support programs, their similarities, differences, failures and achievements: see USAID (1999).

it has its own budget, the NED occasionally acts as an intermediary for projects funded by USAID if the projects fall within its area of expertise.

6.1.3 The Enlargement of European Networks – The German Transform-Program and the German Political Foundations

In Germany concerns about “good governance” and “democracy promotion” increasingly also were incorporated into foreign and development policy. However, the new democratic face of development policy only gained prominence in the second part of the 1990s and thus at a later point than in other European countries.¹⁰¹

Unlike the USA, Germany chose not to operate exclusively via its traditional development agencies¹⁰², but launched a special program for the assistance of transformation states in response to the distinct character of the transformation processes in Eastern Europe: the Transform-Program. Established in 1993, the program integrated various single measures by the German government that had been assisting the transformation processes in CEE since the end of the Cold War.¹⁰³ By the end of 1997 1.6 bill. DM have been spent in 11 countries.¹⁰⁴ The Transform-Program provides technical assistance, mainly focusing on economic reform. The major part of the financial resources is devoted to fostering the business sector (46%), followed by education and training (12%) and the advancement of the financial sector (9%). Further areas of assistance are governmental and legal assistance in economic and European matters (8%), agriculture (7%), research (7%), the development of

101 While in 1997 the development ministry carefully stressed the importance of political conditions for the success of development measures and raised the question whether “*good governance is a precondition or outcome of developing aid*” (BMZ aktuell Nr. 076/Feb.97), in 1998 five criteria (human rights, citizenship participation, rule of law, social market economy, development-oriented policy) were identified and made conditional for aid (BMZ aktuell Nr. 090/April 1998). In this sense, aid either has to open up the room for reform discussions in the case of autocratic regimes – in brief promote democracy – or support and assist the reform process in the case of transition countries – in brief, protect democracy (ibid).

102 Usually the German ministry of development (*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung – BMZ*) relies on two core organization for the implementation of its political objectives: These are for technical assistance the *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) (Society for Technical Assistance) and for financial assistance the *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW) (Bank for Reconstruction).

103 The program includes assistance measures of various ministries and is coordinated by a consortium of the ministry of development, the foreign ministry and the ministry of economy, with the managerial support of the KfW (see BMWi 1998: pp. 23). The projects are conducted by organizations such as the GTZ, NGOs, associations, administrative bodies or, to a lesser degree, consultants.

104 The countries involved are: Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia (Byelorussia), Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and since 1998 Slovenia. For the Czech Republic and Estonia, the aid program will end by the end of 1998 due to their good economic performance. In Poland and Hungary the aid will be reduced. Bulgaria was part of the program until 1998. From 1999 onwards Bulgaria has been classified as a developing country and as such part of the developing aid policy of the ministry of development (BMZ). In this way technical and financial assistance can be given for a longer period of time (BMWi 1998: 22).

an effective administrative system (5%), and assistance in the area of labor and social policy (4%) (figures from 1998, see appendix 2, tables 1+2). The aim of the program is to establish the structural preconditions necessary for the establishment of democracy and a social market economy (BuWi 1998: 24). Since 1998 the program has stated that the facilitation of the integration of the candidate states into EU is a further major objective. The strategy of the program can be characterized as demand-driven, reactive and top-down. The program is designed to meet the different needs of the countries. Therefore country-specific programs are developed in cooperation with the respective countries (ibid: 21). Letting the business sector aside, the strategy follows a top-down approach as it concentrates on major institutions such as governmental agencies or the judiciary. This approach is based on the assumption that certain structural conditions are a prerequisite for economic (and political) development. Examples for this approach are several projects training civil servants, especially with respect to EU enlargement; and legal assistance concerning economic and European law.

German civil society assistance is mainly left to the German political foundations. The work of the political foundations in the Federal Republic goes back to 1947 when Social-Democratic politicians re-established the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation (FES). Other political groups in Germany soon followed this example: The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation (KAS) representing the Christian Democrats was established in 1956, the liberal Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation (FNS) in 1958 and the Bavarian Christian Social Union founded the Hans-Seidel-Foundation (HSS) in 1967. In the meantime the Green party and the PDS also have created political foundations: the Heinrich Böll Foundation (HBS) and the Rosa Luxembourg Foundation.

The German political foundations have a somewhat complicated status. On the one hand, they are formally independent, decide on their own strategy and budget, and are very eager to maintain this independence. On the other hand, they are financed exclusively by the state, i.e. by the ministry of development and foreign ministry with regard to their international activities. Moreover, they are also affiliated with their respective political parties despite being formally independent.

Mainly devoted to civic and political education - a task which the founders of the new German after-war democracy considered to be extremely important - the political foundations have been pursuing this goal since 1957 at the international level as well.¹⁰⁵ Since then they have

105 The German political foundations are therefore often regarded as the real forerunners of democracy assistance long before the promotion of democracy found its way in official foreign policy documents. They became especially prominent for the role they played in the Spanish and Portuguese democratization processes. See for the work of the German political foundations in Spain: Powell (1996: 306f).

become a constant cooperation partner of the German government in the area of development and foreign policy. This cooperation follows guidelines that were already established in 1973 (BMZ 1973). According to those guidelines, the activities of the foundation:

1. have to follow the structural-political approach of the BMZ and aim to foster long-term structures and conditions for development and – along the same lines – democracy (1973: 63). The German government emphasizes a structural approach and aims to establish long-term structures and institutions necessary for stable democracy and development. Main areas of interest are civic education and institution building.
2. The foundation activities are limited in the following respects: First, measures with a negative effect on the bilateral relations between Germany and the recipient country are not funded. Second, the foundations are not allowed to take sides in internal conflicts (ibid: 69).

In this sense the activities of the foundations conform with – or at least do not contradict German foreign policy. The German political foundations thus act as “unofficial” German representatives.¹⁰⁶ The special status of the political foundations is also eminent in the way they are financed. The foundations are mainly state-financed. Contrary to other NGOs they are only partly project-financed but also have a fixed quota at their disposal that is distributed between the foundations according to a special key.¹⁰⁷ This system allows the foundations to react quickly and independently to new developments in the recipient country and to satisfy new demand without having to master bureaucratic obstacles and follow long bureaucratic procedures. In the field offices, in particular, the foundations and their representatives enjoy therefore great freedom of action.

One should not forget, however, that the foundations are not so much in line with the government, rather with the different parties. The foundations are independent and – according to the German constitutional court – “*obey the necessary distance to the*

106 The conformity of the foundations’ objectives with official foreign policy is evident in such stated goals such as: “*presenting Germany’s role in the world*”; “*advancing European integration*” or “*the improvement of Czech – German relationship*”. Moreover, the political foundations often aim to spread German ‘achievements’ such as the social market-economy (KAS 1996: 11).

107 The KAS and FES receive 32.5% of the resources available, while the HSS and FNS receive 12.5% and the HBS only 10% of the resources (BMZ 1995:3; interview). The HBS was only included in this financing method in 1996. From then on, its share grew over the years at the expense of the other small foundations FNS and HSS. This process will come to an end in the year 2000 when all three small foundations will receive 11.66 % of the resources. This key will be changed again after the year 2000 when a PDS-oriented foundation will receive project-related financial resources. In 1999 the PDS foundation will receive 4 Million DM from the interior ministry for institutional support. From the year 2000 onwards it will be included in the finance splitting between the foundations in similar fashion as the HBS with steadily growing percentage.

respective parties" (BVerfg 1986:1, own translation). Nonetheless, close cooperation and personal contacts exist among foundations and their respective parties. Furthermore, the foundations and the parties are connected by the same political viewpoints and ideology. More than being 'German representatives' the foundations are therefore representatives of a special political spectrum and aim to transport certain key values, a fact that automatically translates into partial sponsorship. In other countries such as the US this practice is regarded as inadequate to nurture democracy. Faced with such critique, the foundations and the BMZ point to the fact that all foundations are active in the different countries and therefore ultimately offer political advice to the whole political spectrum.

As regards the special status of the German political foundations, their long tradition and experience in the area of civic and political education and in developing states, it is hardly surprising that political foundations have been the main actors of German democracy and civil society assistance in CEE. Between 1989 and 1994 the political foundations received a government allocation of 135 million DM in support of their activities in CEE. This corresponds to 0.09% of all official German aid given to the region (145 billion DM).

The goal of the political foundations in CEE can be described as fostering democracy and market economy by supporting and creating structural and civic conditions necessary for a stable democracy (BMZ 1995: 6pp). The promotion of democracy is, however, not the only objective of the political foundations. As already mentioned, foreign policy goals are also on the agenda as well as goals resulting from their political background such as 'support of Christian-democratic values, principles and institutions (KAS 1996:11) or to foster social dialogue (FES: homepage). Furthermore the foundations strive for a social market-economy, decentralization and federal structures and local self-government.

In new recipient countries like in Central and Eastern Europe, the German foundations seek to establish a network of contacts with the political elite in order to exercise long-term influence. This implies cooperation with the respective parties in the transition country that are close to their own background. Although the political foundations do not conduct direct party assistance through direct funding because German law forbids this, they do support their sister-parties indirectly by providing technical and organizational advice and a network of international contacts. The aim of the foundations is to establish one strong sister party that is able to play a decisive role in the political process.

In this sense attempts are often made to unite similar parties and e.g. bring together several social democratic parties.¹⁰⁸

In order to achieve these goals the foundations follow a strategy that can be described as moderately demand-driven and elite-focused with a heavy reliance on and freedom of action of the field offices.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, despite being politically partisan, the foundations comply with the strict rule not to polarize and not to get involved in internal conflicts of their partners, in line with the 'intervention proscription' outlined in the guidelines for the cooperation with the BMZ. In this sense, the foundations perceive themselves as a 'neutral instance' (KAS) or 'institution without interest' (FES) that 'provides platform for dialogue', aims to initiate public debate, and puts political issues on the agenda (Interview Weber). The programs are often designed quite vaguely with a time frame of several years. The KAS coordinates only one project per country, which states rather broad goals such as 'decentralization', 'social market economy' or 'rule of law'. The FES has several projects per country but those are also 'catch all projects' - able to integrate different measures such as 'social cooperation' or 'economic and social policy'. By these means, it is possible for the foundations to react quickly to new political issues and demands. This open and relatively unbureaucratic form of financing is symbolic of the institutionalized cooperation between the ministry and the foundations as well as the independence of the foundations.

The foundation's strategy differs as to whether to follow a 'partner-principal' or to conceptualize 'regime-measures'. The KAS opts for the former, while the FES for the later option. 'Partner-principal' implies that the work focuses on a limited number of long-term partners that are bound to the foundation by a partner contract. The main purpose is institution building. The partners receive financial support and implement measures on their own with the advice of the KAS. This strategy has the advantage that the organizational and personnel expenditures can be kept to a minimum. However, the approach heavily relies on the respective partner and the cooperation with the partner. A further problem is the question of sustainability. As the KAS is not supposed to create dependencies, the question whether sustainability can be achieved is decisive for a new partnership. Due to the limited resources

108 For example, such attempts at combining forces have been successful in Bulgaria where the representative of the FNS was able to persuade four liberal parties to integrate into one party (interview Thebaud). However, similar attempts undertaken by the FES in Bulgaria at a conference failed.

109 All foundations run field offices in Central and Eastern Europe depending on their financial resources. The 'small' foundations, namely the FNS, HBS and HSS, can only afford one office in the region. HBS has its office in Prague, the FNS in Budapest. The heads of the offices enjoy a great leeway of action. They design and conceptualize the different measures, search for and identify partners and keep contact to the respective sister-party. Consequently, the work of the foundations and the activities taken heavily depend on the single person on site.

of the partners such sustainability is, however, hard to achieve. 'Regime-measures', in contrast, are single measures conceptualized and implemented by the FES in cooperation with different, changing partner organizations. This strategy allows them to concentrate on different topics rather than partners. Regime-measures are especially useful in the uncertain transition phase in which the identification of adequate partners is difficult. Yet, in the area of trade union support the strategy of the FES is close to the 'partner principal' of institution building.

The main partners of the political foundations are usually universities, research institutes, associations, NGOs, trade unions or foundations. As parties cannot be funded, party-oriented organizations such as party foundations or educational centers are often supported. Unlike American donors, the European Union, or the Soros foundations, the German political foundations do not run grant schemes that follow specific guidelines and operate with tenders. They instead operate on the basis of informal requests as in the case with the FES or with long-term partner-contracts as in the case with the KAS.

Although the political foundations are similar in many respects, there are also important differences. These are highlighted in a brief portrait of each political foundation active in CEE (see appendix 1).

6.1.4 Private Actors – Efforts “From Below”

In the following I briefly highlight the variety of private actors involved in CEE, before concentrating on the major private donor active in CEE: the Soros foundations.

The Variety of Private Actors

One of the major particularities of civil society assistance to Central and Eastern Europe is the variety and magnitude of private commitment. This is even more so, as a majority of private actors operating in CEE are active for the first time in their history in the international scene (Quigley 1997). Moreover, the variety of private actors involved is also unique. One can identify three basic groups: Among the active organizations are international NGOs that operate on a global scale, such as amnesty international or transparency international. The latter in particular conducted several projects aiming to assist democratization and the development of civil society in CEE. Moreover, international NGOs engage in global networks that also embrace CEE NGOs. Secondly, several philanthropic foundations aim to support civil society in the region. Those foundations are inspired by humanistic ideals often combined with the wish to support former motherlands. The majority of them are US-based (examples are the Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Open Society Institute), but European Foundations are also active – mainly

represented by the European Foundation Center (EFC). The magnitude of such private commitment, as compared with the activities of quasi-national commitments, is illustrated by the following comparison: Between 1989 - 1994 the German political foundations spent a total of 53.2 million US\$ in the Visegrad countries. In contrast, the foundations of George Soros alone spent the amount of 62 million US\$ in the same period and area, not even including the support of the foundation and academic activities of the Central European University (CEU). US state-funded foundations (NED, German Marshall Fund) lay far behind such figures with 28.3 million US\$ (Quigley 1997: 122). Finally, national interest groups, associations and NGOs of donor countries are active in CEE and in partnerships with their CEE counterparts. In contrast to the first two types of actors that may be categorized as manifestations of an increasing internationalization, the activities of this group are to be seen in a European context and can be categorized as the expansion of European networks. The organizations either attempt to establish transnational coalitions with future allies in an enlarged Europe or minimize the anticipated risks of enlargement. Moreover, the respective governments often nurture such partnerships in their attempt to facilitate the European integration of CEE by enlarging existing European transnational networks (as demonstrated by the case of Germany above). For example, the German *Landkreistag* (association of regional districts) assisted associations active in decentralization in Poland in order to press through a territorial reform that introduces a district level. The territorial reform carried out in 1999 created a new territorial level in Poland that only has one counterpart in the EU – the German districts. Thus, by advancing the territorial reform in Poland, the German districts gained an ally in the European Council of Regions (interview v. Hausen). Other examples of associations which established transnational bonds are the German *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*, which is active in supporting non-partisan social welfare NGOs in Poland. Trade unions mainly support their counterparts in CEE to prevent social dumping in neighboring countries. What all those activities have in common is that they work less with grants and financial support but rely more on the transfer of know-how and technical assistance. Moreover, international assistance is not a core activity of the respective organizations but a minor additional task only carried out in CEE.

Unfortunately it augments the scope of this study to portray the variety of private commitment in CEE in the area of civil society assistance. Instead, the author restricts herself to covering the activities of the major private donor active in CEE: the network of the Open Society Fund, sponsored by George Soros.

Building Open Societies – The Open Society Institute and the Soros Foundation Network

The network of Soros foundations has been the most far-reaching and significant private commitment in CEE. Inspired by the writings of Karl Popper, the US financier George Soros established his first foundation, the Open Society Fund in New York in 1979 with the aim of advancing an open society based not only on democracy and the market economy but also on tolerance, the rule of law, historical truth, a thriving civil society and respect for minorities.¹¹⁰ The first Soros foundation in Central and Eastern Europe was established in 1984 in Hungary. The Soviet Union followed in 1987, Poland in 1988. During most of the 1990s, the Soros foundations network developed in nearly all post-communist states and increasingly expanded in other world regions, such as Africa, Asia and the Americas. Today the network of the foundations of the Hungarian émigré includes 29 national and 4 regional foundations and covers more than 50 countries all over the world, and according to the presentation on their website: “...lays the foundation for a truly global alliance for open society”.

The Soros foundation’s network in CEE includes the national Soros foundations and the Open Society Institute (OSI) in Budapest. The Soros foundations operate largely autonomously. The priorities and specific activities of each Soros foundation are determined by a local board of directors and staff in consultation with George Soros and OSI boards and advisors. As result, and in contrast to other donors operating in the region, the Soros network explicitly makes use of domestic human resources and local expertise. The nation-based approach of the foundation is further stressed by the fact that all national foundations operate as locally registered non-governmental organizations. Moreover, many foundations seek to attract funding from sources other than the Open Society Institute and are thus donors and recipients (or intermediary) at the same time. The Open Society Institute in Budapest provides administrative, financial, and technical assistance to the Soros foundations and also operates independent programs and initiatives, which address specific issues on a regional basis. Again the majority of the employed staff is from the region. As for their areas of activity, the Soros network focuses on efforts in civil society, education, media, public health, and human and women’s rights as well as social, legal, and economic reform. Since the end of the 1990s the Soros foundations have also been assisting the CEE countries that are candidates for EU membership in preparing for accession. In doing so, the foundations focus on membership criteria that are also central to the network’s mission such as the protection of the rights of Roma and other minorities, criminal justice reform, the reduction of corruption and strengthening civil society participation in policymaking. Several foundations also support

110 See for the history and activities of the Network of Soros foundations and the Open Society Institute in Budapest: Diamond (1997) and their homepage: www.soros.org.

programs to inform leaders about EU policies and to educate the public about the impact of European integration (Soros foundation network 2000: 16).

The activities and expenditures of the Soros foundation network grew significantly from 1994 (300 million US\$) to the peak years of 1998 (574.7 million US\$) and 1999 (560 million US\$). In 2000 the expenditures were slightly reduced to 494 million US\$ and are planned to remain at that level for the previous years (ibid: 9). Thereby approximately half of the expenditures are spent in favor of the national foundations. In 2000, the national foundations in the CEE accession states spent 58.6 million US\$ together.¹¹¹ The majority of funds have been devoted to grant making to non-governmental organizations. Other activities include training and educational measures.

Additionally, the Soros network supports “*the most influential institution of higher learning in the post-Communist world*” (Pridham 1994: 17), the Central European University located in Warsaw and Budapest. Between its founding in 1990 and 2002 nearly 5000 students from over 40 different countries graduated from the CEU. As a result, the CEU contributed not only to the advancement of higher education in the region while “*bringing together students and faculty from a diverse regional and international base in an open and liberal academic setting*” and “*preparing its graduates to serve as the region's next generation of leaders and scholars*” (CEU website), but it created a tight network of individuals and built the human resources from which the national foundations can profit.

6.2 The Network of Donor-Recipient Relationships

Knowing the major actors, the question arises how they relate to each other? Can we identify ‘national tribes’, i.e. governmental and non-governmental actors from the same country who cooperate in their endeavors to support civil society beyond their borders? Or are the donor-recipient relationships determined by a strict distinction between state and non-state actors leaving civil society assistance exclusively to non-governmental donors, invoking the vision of charitable bonds or brother activists inside a “global civil society”? Are there steady bonds between donors and “their” recipients, or are the transactions between donors and recipients in constant flux?

It will be evident in the following that civil society assistance is shaped by complex networks between several, legally different actors. These networks often follow national lines. Thus,

111 Own calculation based on the expenditures of the Soros foundation in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia given in the Soros Foundation Network Annual Report 2000.

governmental agencies mainly rely on national NGOs, foundations or consultancies to run their programs. Nonetheless, horizontal ties between organizations active in common issue-areas are constant practice. Especially if informal networks are included which serve mainly informative and consultative purposes, the various connections cut across national as well as legal lines. Thus a group of governmental and non-governmental actors with different national backgrounds, including donor and recipient organizations may be the major driving force behind a domestic campaign to strengthen the NGO sector.

In order to unfold the various relations between donors and recipients, it is useful to look at the practice of aid distribution of the four donors under investigation.

As already mentioned, civil society assistance in Germany is to a large extent left to the German political foundations. Additionally, the Transform Program provides funds that benefit NGOs and democratic stability. Recently, the German embassies have been giving direct grants to domestic recipients in certain countries. This is taking place, for example, with funds from the Stability Pact in the Balkan region. The support programs are administered by respective ministries, mainly the BMZ and the foreign ministry (Stability Pact) and their aligned organizations.¹¹² In certain issue areas specialized organizations have been founded to implement assistance to CEE.¹¹³ Additionally, existing associations and NGOs may directly apply for project money at different ministries. This brief summary demonstrates that the assistance market in Germany is highly determined by public administration and state-aligned institutes or agencies and by non-profit seeking non-governmental actors. Profit seeking consultancies do exist, but they are more the exception than the rule.

A quite different picture is found in the US. In contrast to German ministries, USAID delegates the management of its programs mainly to private and partly to non-profit sectors. The distribution of US civil society assistance funds is thus characterized by a high permeability between the private and the public sector. Most projects handled by USAID

112 In the case of the BMZ these are the *Gesellschaft für technische Zusammenarbeit* (GTZ) and the *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* (KfW), in the case of the foreign ministry e.g. the *Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen* or *Inwent* (formerly *Carl Duisberg Gesellschaft*).

113 Examples include the "Stiftung für wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und berufliche Qualifizierung" (SEQUA), an organization established in 1991 with the aim of mobilizing the know-how and commitments of economic organizations and firms in the area of international assistance. SEQUA is closely aligned with the German chambers of commerce and administers e.g. several projects supporting chambers of commerce and SMEs in CEE (see www.sequa.de). Another example is the "Deutsche Stiftung für internationale rechtliche Zusammenarbeit e.V." (German Foundation for International Legal Cooperation) (IRZ) that "supports partner states in reforming their legal system and their judiciary" on behalf of the German government. The IRZ foundation was established in 1992 as a non-profit making association on the initiative of the then Federal Minister Klaus Kinkel. According to their website, in previous years the work of the foundation was largely promoted within the framework of the Transform program. The major share of funding now comes from the budget of the Federal Ministry of Justice (www.irz.de).

including civil society projects are contracted out to external, private and profit-seeking firms. These are commonly well-established development consultancy firms such as Chemonics, Management Systems International, Creative Associates International, KPMG or Barents Group. The firm that wins the contract then assembles a consortium of specialized sub-sub-contractors including institutes, non-profit organizations and smaller consultancies (see Guilhot 2003). In the field of civil society assistance, in which the sums are often smaller and might not be that attractive for large companies, specialized non-for-profit organizations often fulfill the role of the sub-contractor.¹¹⁴ One can conclude that the logic behind the program management of USAID follows the logic of a market marked by oligopoly, and thus highly differs from the above illustrated example of the public-dominated German practice.

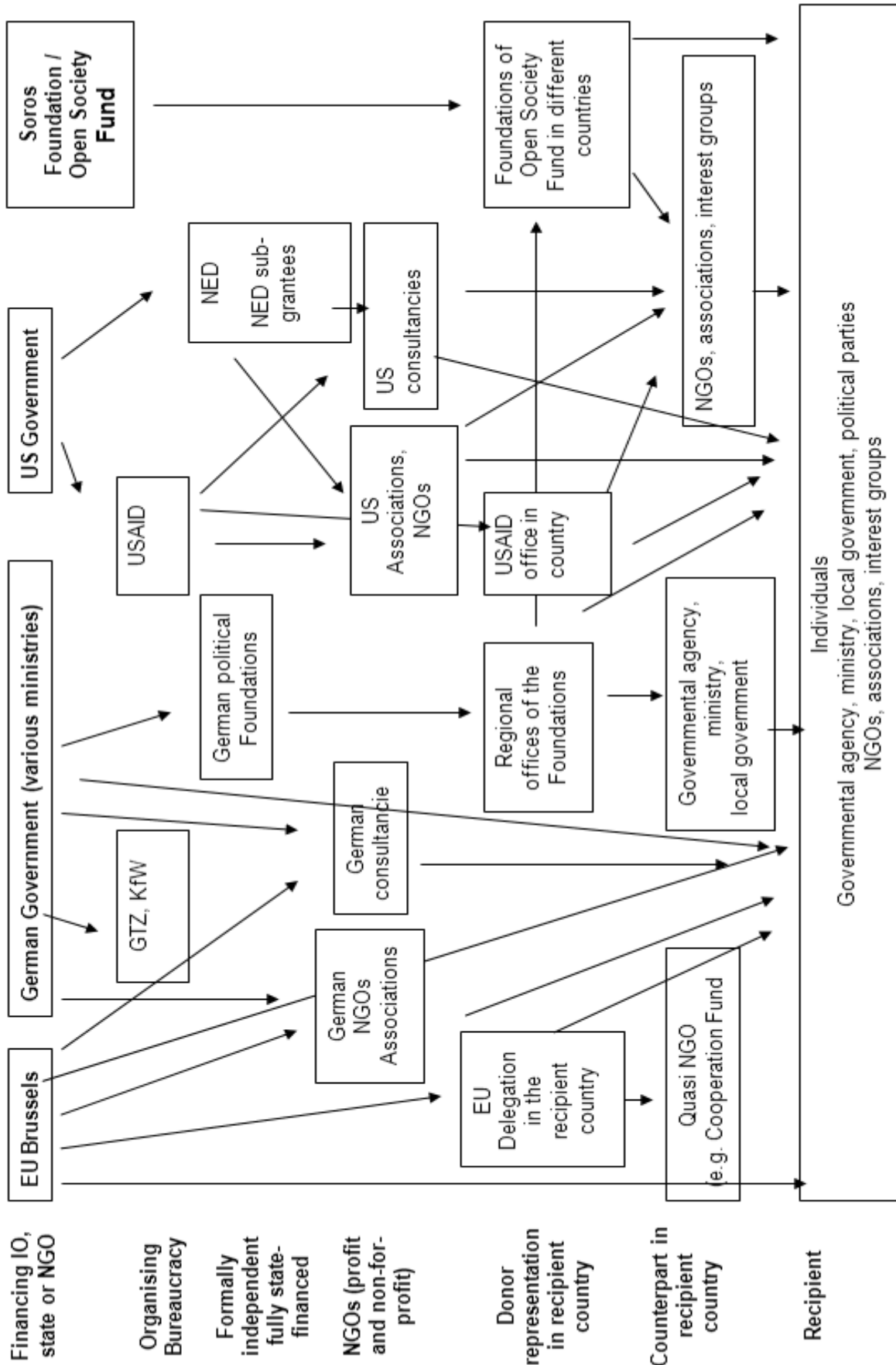
The EU's distributive practice may be characterized as a mixture of the two. Parts of the Phare program with relevance to civil society assistance are administered by the commission. In these cases, which mainly concern cross-country partnerships, i.e. projects, which involve at least two civil society organizations from different countries and horizontal programs, recipients apply directly in Brussels. However, the recipients often disapprove of this approach due to long and bureaucratic procedures. According to an additional distribution practice, funds are administered by the delegations of the Commission in the respective target countries. They in turn may rely on further sub-contractors. For example, in Poland, the Cooperation Fund fulfills this function. Finally, the Commission often relies on specialized NGOs or consultancies often located in Brussels to administer programs, e.g. the European Human Rights Council (EHRC) which administers the macro-grant projects of the Phare and Tacis Democracy Program.

Private organizations are known for having the most direct chain between donors and recipients. The Soros foundations directly administer their programs. Hence, they give grants, but do not conduct projects themselves. However, the various national foundations may also act as sub-grantees of other donors. Due to their acknowledged regional and national expertise, they are attractive intermediaries that may distribute German, European or American funds. The different distribution channels are illustrated in table 4 (next page).¹¹⁵

114 e.g. the Academy for Educational Development that implemented the DemNet program in Poland (see chapter 7.3, and appendix 5, portray 10).

115 Note that the graph mainly serves illustrative purposes.

Table 4 Donor-Recipient Relationships (by Direction of Money Flows).



Based on the outlined distribution practice of four donors we can make the following observations on donor-recipient relationships in civil society assistance. First, civil society assistance in CEE is marked by a variety of actors involved: governmental and quasi-governmental agencies on the one hand, non-for-profit and for-profit non-governmental organizations on the other. As a result, civil society assistance is administered by different links between the public sector and the private sector in the donor country. On the one hand, there is a free market and flexible business conditions, on the other hand stable political-administrative arrangements between governmental and non-governmental agencies within national borders determine the paths of assistance (see Guilhot 2003). Second, one has to acknowledge the fact that a clear-cut distinction between those who give, those who administer, those who implement and those who receive is difficult to detect. Although there is a general tendency for governmental agencies to shape the framework of assistance and provide the funds, while NGOs implement the project in the field, several organizations may be sometimes the donor, sometimes the recipient or both at the same time. This leads us to the third observation: the frequent use of sub-grantees and -contractors or even sub-sub-grantees. In particular with regard to governmental agencies, the project administration is more often than not delegated to either profit-seeking firms or to non-for-profit oriented organizations depending on the linkage between the public and the private sector common in the donor country. Fourth, "national tribes" can be identified, but they are blurred the closer one gets to the recipient side of the chain. Whereas contracts from the American SEED-Program went to US-firms or NGOs and exclusively German organizations applied for Transform-projects, some consultancies operate on an European if not global scale and administer temporally bilateral projects, World Bank or Phare projects. Moreover, international NGOs specializing in civil society assistance act as intermediaries of governmental, EU and private funds. And certain highly professional operating recipient organizations apply everywhere. Finally and closely related to the previous point, there is a pronounced tendency to choose local organizations to implement civil society projects. As a result, certain organizations in recipient countries re-distribute funds and act as intermediaries between foreign donors and domestic recipients and as professional 'brokers of aid'.

We can conclude that civil society assistance in CEE is shaped by a variety of different actors with various and overlapping relations. In international relations literature this complex picture of various relations of state and non-state actors has been described as a multi-level relationship (especially in order to comprehend processes of European politics). Although this model allows for alignments between state and non-state, sub-national and supranational level it still preserves the impression of being vertical. However, it was demonstrated that various relations cut across national borders. The metaphor of a network

seems more useful to describe the various relations and links between the different donors and recipients. This point becomes especially apparent if working relationships, private contacts, and informal networks serving informative and consultative purposes are included. Not just one network evolves but several networks, which are also interlinked and overlap. There are the national policy-networks of development ministries, agencies, democracy promotion foundations and important consultants that design and conceptualize policies and programs. There are international networks between certain kinds of donors such as the 'democracy foundations', quasi-governmental foundations whose major aim is to support civil society and democracy abroad. There are certain issue area networks such as human right networks. And in the recipient countries there are networks between donors – often called 'donor forums'¹¹⁶ What evolves is a network of various communities with different, more or less institutionalized links.

¹¹⁶ 'Donor forums', i.e. regular and more or less institutionalized meetings between various donor organizations with the aim of exchanging information and coordinate action, can be found e.g. in Slovakia and the Czech Republic. In Poland an attempt to establish a similar body failed. The principle behind the establishment of such forums or organizations is to coordinate donor activities in order to prevent double-funding of single projects and in order to be more effective. In Slovakia the previously informal donor forum was registered as a civic association last year. The donor forums can thus be comprehended as the result of a learning process on side of the donors.

7 Analyzing Civil Society Assistance in Poland

The subsequent chapter investigates civil society assistance to Poland. What donors have been involved? What strategies have been pursued? What has been the output of civil society assistance and, more importantly, did these outputs facilitate the re-emergence of civil society in Poland after the end of authoritarian rule? In other words, may one plausibly attribute the state of civil society in Poland roughly ten years after transition to external assistance? Or are the various external support measures and programs nothing more than a footnote to a historically determined path shaped by existing or non-existing cultural preconditions rooted in the communist past and in the experience with the Solidarity opposition movement? The theoretical framework of this work pointed to two divergent hypothetical answers to these questions, whereby both are grounded in the assumption that past experiences and domestic settings matter. Following the line of thought of sociological institutionalism one comes to the conclusion that civil society assistance is doomed to fail and results at best in a supplementary stratum of donor-driven NGOs detached from society. The argumentation inspired by actor-centered institutionalism, however, comes to a different result. Civil society assistance may indeed facilitate the development of civil society via the mechanisms of empowerment and learning. The provision of resources raises the capabilities of civil society actors in achieving political outcomes. More importantly, transnational networks facilitate learning and the spread of ideas. Civil society assistance may thus effect the orientations of domestic actors, teaching them to trust their fellow citizens, to tolerate and respect the opinions of their political opponents, to place trust in the liability of public institutions and rules and to perceive themselves as agents of political change. The objective of this chapter is to determine which of our two hypothetical answers hold true in the Polish case.

To answer this tricky question the chapter takes the following steps: First, it investigates the “near past” and identifies the cultural legacies underpinning civil society development in Poland. Cultural legacies are not regarded here as major driving forces determining the development of civil society. Using the words of Scharpf, historical experiences are instead regarded as “*a shorthand term to describe the most important influences on those factors that in fact drive our explanations – namely, actors with their orientations and capabilities, actor constellations, and modes of interaction*” (Scharpf 1997: 39). Moreover, past experiences and cultural legacies as a major alternative explanation for the development of civil society need to be explicated in greater detail. Secondly, an illustration of the state of civil society roughly ten years after transition will be given. In doing so the research applies

the distinction between the “structural” and the “cultural” dimension of civil society and makes use of the indicators put forward in chapter 2.2.3.¹¹⁷ The third section then gives an overview of the history of civil society assistance to Poland throughout the 1990s. It will be clear that civil society assistance to Poland came in sequences, in which three different time periods can be distinguished with varying strategies and emphasis. Finally the chapter focuses on the output and outcome of external assistance to civil society. As outlined in the methodology of this work (chapter 5.3.2), special emphasis will be placed on major recipients, especially so-called infrastructural NGOs, and their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness in advancing the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society. The role of these “main recipients” in advancing a relationship between civil society and the state, in acting as intermediaries of assistance and in building networks and horizontal links among various civil society groups is of particular importance (see chapter 2). The study thus aims to clarify the extent to which civil society assistance supported non-governmental organizations that acted as carriers of civil society. However, the analysis does not stop here. The relationship between donors and recipients also requires clarification. Thus, the investigation assesses the extent to which major recipients benefited from external assistance by placing special emphasis on the two modes of influence outlined above: empowerment and learning (see chapter 4.4.2). A summary of the major findings is subject of the fifth section.

117 The identified indicators are: (1) number of NGOs and associations, (2) thematic distribution of NGOs, (3) regional distribution of NGOs, (4) civic participation and volunteerism, (5) relationship between civil society and state, (6) horizontal relationships between NGOs.

7.1 The Domestic Context - Historical and Cultural Legacies

The following is based on the conviction that the re-emergence of civil society in Poland after 1989 must be viewed in a historical context.

“The collective memory of bygone days... has significantly affected the existing basic codes of national-political culture via the uninterrupted reinterpretation of historical facts” (Kurczewska 1995: 38).

The author restrains from giving a minute and chronological account of civil society development in different periods of Polish history.¹¹⁸ Instead, the section draws attention to the legacies of the near past relevant to civil society development.¹¹⁹ The guiding question is to what extent have cultural legacies from previous events hindered or facilitated the development of civil society. The legacies of the communist regime evident in all post-communist countries have been summarized above (see chapter 2.3.). For this reason, the following will mainly focus on the Polish liberalization experiences and on the “legacies” of the oppositional movement Solidarity.

7.1.1 Solidarity and the Legacies of a “Successful” Opposition

It is no exaggeration to state that Poland is the one country in CEE where liberalization experiences were the most far-reaching and profound. Poland is the only case in CEE where a strong oppositional movement existed, the trade union Solidarity. It therefore would be misleading to take the characteristics of communist states outlined in chapter 2.3. as the only

118 For historical accounts of civil society including the “distant past”, see: Leś et al (2000: 2-12); Szücs (1988); Kurczewska (1995).

119 Disagreement exists over the question whether the “distant past”, i.e. experiences with non-governmental forms of self-organization and interest representation before the onset of communist rule, facilitates the upspring of civil society in countries such as Poland in contrast to the countries farther East such as Ukraine or Russia (Klein 2001: 41). Some authors point to the century-long existence of federations and especially charity based organizations in Poland (Leś et al 2000), or stress the importance of the noble democracy of the 18th century, the experience of the two partitions and the traditions of Polish national culture based on the ideas of social solidarity, egalitarianism and social emancipation (Kurczewska 1995: 44pp). Others, in contrast, argue that previous states of civil society have been demolished under communism: *“Crucially, the Soviet-type revolution destroyed the civil societies that were coming into being after the Second World War. Before the communist take-overs these countries were at best semi-developed ... but they were not the homogenized, simple polities that they became as a result of the Stalinist revolution. The countries of the region had embarked on their own, often rather fitful roads toward modernity, which recognized the existence of the market and the move toward greater complexity. These processes were cut short and all subsequent development took place under the aegis of the state”* (Schöpflin 1993: 226). It is, however, not the purpose of this work to resolve this dispute. Being well aware of the fact that civil society development in Poland pursues a rather different pathway after 1990 than civil society development in countries such as Russia, Ukraine or Belarus, the author concentrates for reasons of simplicity and lack of space on the “near past”, i.e. the period of communist rule, and only occasionally will draw attention to more distant historical legacies.

factor pre-conditioning the cultural basis of civil society. The following thus briefly portrays liberalization tendencies and oppositional activities in Poland throughout the communist period. Secondly, the section discusses the extent to which the history of civic initiatives independent from the state nurtured an ethical life and civic values, thus facilitating the emergence of civil society once authoritarian rule came to end.

Liberalization tendencies and the rise of Solidarity

Throughout the communist period spheres of social life existed that were outside the control of the communist state. One of such “circles of freedom” that resisted the centralization tendencies was agriculture, large parts of which remained in private hands in Poland. As a result, farmers presented a relatively autonomous interest group that was further represented in the form of a political satellite party (Pelczynski 1988). More important from the point of view of the opposition, however, were different partly legal, partly illegal citizens’ initiatives that enjoyed sometimes more, sometimes less freedom of maneuver. One can differentiate between individual and disconnected single oppositional initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s, the establishment of the infrastructure of an “alternative” society in the 1970s, the short interlude of “publicity” during the legalization of the *Solidarity* movement in 1981/1982, the subsequent underground activities, and a short but lively liberalization period in 1987/88, which led to the rise of several different organizations.

Throughout this period, the Catholic Church proved to be the most important guarantor of self-organized social activities in communist Poland. It ensured the existence of civic organizations on the one hand, and protected illegal protest movements on the other.¹²⁰ In 1956 the Polish state granted the Catholic Church among other things the right to maintain its own organizations. As a result, the Catholic Church functioned as a protector of the oppositional movement and permitted the establishment of “*permitted, but limited*” citizens’ initiatives (Matynia 2001: 920). These initiatives included organizations critical of the official state ideology such as e.g. the Clubs of the Catholic Intelligentsia, parts of the Polish scouting organizations and partly the student cultural movement, academic associations and independent journals. Leading intellectuals were also affiliated with the Catholic Church and made use of the relative freedom of church near associations in order to spread critical ideas and thoughts (Michnick 1990: 186).

While using the openings in the system, these initiatives thus laid the ground for further oppositional citizen activities beginning in the 1970s that have been labeled the realm of the

120 In various cases, e.g. at the time of the student protests at Warsaw University in 1968, the Catholic church openly sided with the protesters and subscribed to the demands of citizens and human rights principles (see Fehr 1996: 72p).

“*unofficial*” and “*forbidden*” (Matynia 2001: 922). It was the aim of the “*unofficial*” to create an alternative to the system, an informal sector or second society (see Fehr 1996: 61pp) as conceptualized in the writings of intellectual leaders such as Kolakowski (1970) or Adam Michnik (1976). This alternative was based on a moral concept of society as the sphere of citizens living in “truth” and “dignity”. Values inside society were contrasted with the ambiguities of the Communist regime thus praising the former and de-legitimizing the latter. The moral concept referred to human rights, to the identity as humans and the inviolability of human dignity (Tatur 1989: 221p). As pointed out in Michnik’s essay “*the new evolutionism*”, the aim was to achieve an evolutionary extension of civic rights. The way toward this goal was to “*be constantly and incessantly visible in public life*” rather than to act in hiding, and to “*formulate alternative programs*” (Michnik 1985 cit. in Matynia 2001: 921). The strikes at the Gdansk shipyards in December 1970 and strikes in Ursus and Radom in June 1976 finally resulted in the establishment of the “Workers Defense Committee” (KOR) in 1976, whose foundation marked an alliance of intellectuals and workers. After further nation-wide strikes in 1980s the trade union Solidarity was founded by Lech Wałęsa in Gdansk. Additionally, several other forbidden civic organizations as well as a vibrant *zamisdat* underground publication sprang up. What evolved was an “*infrastructure of organizations that facilitated political group interaction*” (Fehr 1996: 107, own translation).

Finally, the oppositional trade union *Solidarity* and the regime reached an agreement that legalized the union in August 1980s. Moreover, the regime recognized *Solidarity* as representative of society, thus giving up its claim to best represent the interest of the people (Morawski 1992: 99). The subsequent 16 months marked a period of lively citizen’s activities under the banner of *Solidarity* that filled the “social vacuum” (Matynia 2001: 927). Besides the workers’ committees, these initiatives included debating societies (e.g. DiP (Experience and Future)), expert councils, a “workers university”, human rights organizations, independent journals and even a center for social studies conducting among others opinion surveys (OBS) (Fehr 1996:88pp).¹²¹ Preserving the name of a union, the movement united several different initiatives concerned not only with labor issues but also with culture, education, publication, and with the advancement of a “self-administrated republic”. This concept fully developed in summer 1981 partly in response to the delaying tactics of the government. It marked a programmatic shift away from previous doctrine of the “anti-political” trade union and the “self-limiting revolution” that was until then seen as a warrant for stability and autonomy (Tatur 1989: 125pp). The concept stressed the importance of active citizens,

121 The author refrains from a detailed description of the story of *Solidarność* and instead points to the numerous excellent studies on the foundation and history of the movement: e.g. Staniszkis (1984), Tatur (1989), Thaa (1996: 255-271), Fehr (1996: 88-111), Matynia (2001), Carpenter (1999), Pelczynski (1988).

and proclaimed the self-administration of society, i.e. the (re-)establishment of classical institutions of public life, resulting in a “reformation from below” and the construction of a social infrastructure “from below”.¹²²

The period of “publicity” and legalization of citizens’ activities came to an abrupt end with the establishment of martial law in 1982. The subsequent years were marked by underground activities kept alive by informal groups and social networks. Particularly important in this underground period were the survival of the independent publication activities and the circle of politically active intellectuals that nurtured a language of pragmatism and mediation and slowly worked toward a political dialogue with the authorities (Fehr 1996: 98pp).

With Perestroika and Glasnost, liberalization also advanced in Poland. Although single liberalization measures were already taken in the middle of the 1980s,¹²³ the years 1987/1988 are usually regarded as the liberalization period in Poland (see e.g. Staniszkis 1991: 7; Fehr 1996: 111). In these years, several civic initiatives such as political clubs, economic student societies, or local environmental initiatives sprang up.¹²⁴ The numerous organizations and clubs operated under the heading of *Solidarity*, shared the moral concepts of the oppositional movement, and were partly inspired by 1980/81. However, it has been convincingly argued that they had an independent organizational structure and developed a distinct style of action and discourse (Fehr 1996: 153).

The legacies of Solidarity

The question now is the extent to which the history of civic initiatives independent from the state nurtured an “ethical life” or civic culture of tolerance and trust that has been identified as inevitable for civil society development. It often has been argued (see e.g. Morawski 1992, Ekiert/Kubik 1998) that *Solidarity* was a nascent civil society. Several factors support this argument: The size of the movement that embraced one fourth of the Polish population, the evolving infrastructure of organizations, independent circles, and publishing houses that filled the “social vacuum” between private life and nation; the moral concept of civil society as well

122 After the strategies of “revolution from below” and “reformation from above” failed in 1956 and 1968, “reformation from below” based on an “anti-political” movement seemed to be the last available option. For the oppositional strategy of solidarity and the moral concept underpinning it see: Klein (2001: 38pp); Ogrodzinski (1995), Thaa (1996: 163pp), Fehr (1996:78pp).

123 Examples of liberalization measures before 1987 include the legalization of local branches of the Polish Ecological Club (PEC) as early as 1983, the foundations act of 1984 or the amnesty act for political prisoners in 1985. The legalization of parts of the PEC allowed not only the development of a state-critical and effective environmental movement (still strong in Poland today), but the local ecological clubs also functioned as a training facility of independently minded activists that supported underground “Solidarity” and often took local political posts after 1989 (Ekiert / Kubik 1998: 20). The legalization of foundations facilitated the transfer of Western financial aid to Polish oppositional groups, usually under the auspices of the church.

124 See Fehr (1996: 111-154) for a detailed description and classification of these initiatives.

as a cultivated culture of communication and discourse on which the movement was based; and finally the aim to build a “self-administered republic from below” that resulted in a “*politicization of professional competences*” in different issue areas (Tatur 1989: 179 own translation).

Nonetheless, the role of Solidarity in bringing about civil society has been highly disputed. Carpenter (1999) points out that Solidarity embraced civil society to a lesser extent than it drew on a strong sense of national consciousness moving it closer to a national movement than to civil society. The monolithic character of the movement, the tendency to suppress internal opposition (Carpenter 1999: 333), the “*politics of unity*” that referred to fundamental attitudes including neo-traditionalist, if not nationalist tendencies (Staniszki 1991: 221), and the “*fundamental heritage*” (Thaa 1996: 260pp) are labeled as legacies of the Solidarity movement that counteract the development of civil society based on conflicting and diverging interests. Besides the moral concept of civil society based on civic values of society, the movement equally referred to and was transported by national and religious symbols. A romantic image of Solidarity was upheld, which equalized the movement with the unity of the Polish people. As a result Solidarity was based on a strong feeling of identity and unity in a “*community of faith*”, and on a strong sense of fraternity, mutual obligation and the common good (Carpenter 1999: 338). This strong feeling of identity maintained the unity of the movement, and was thus preserved as an important guarantor of its strength and power. However, although the monolithic character of the movement and the “*myth of solidarity*” ensured unity of the movement, mobilized the masses and was thus important to bring down the ruling regime, it has been identified as a major obstacle for the development of civil society and democracy. This is mainly for two reasons:

Firstly, the “*myth of solidarity*” and the strong idealized feelings of a “*community of faith*” easily resulted in disillusionment and an “*agony of myth*” (Szacki 1991: 721). The romantic feeling of unity, the moral-cultural group identity and a “*fundamental mentality*” were especially evident in the masses of union members (Tatur 1989: 177). This “*symbolic radicalization of the masses*” highly contrasted with an increasingly pragmatic stance of the oppositional elite that continuously worked at the end of the 1980s toward a settlement with the communist regime (ibid). The new and old elites were united in their fear of mass protests.

Staniszki makes the point that this new pact that aimed at the demobilization of the masses alienated the electorate from their leaders.¹²⁵ Moreover, the “identity crisis” inside Solidarity that brought divergent viewpoints to the fore and triggered the split inside the movement further disillusioned the masses that strongly believed in a united front (Staniszki 1991: 215). Especially the “*war at the top*” evolving between the political leaders at the beginning of the 1990s had this effect. The outcome is a surprising and unanticipated passivity evident in Poland after the first elections, a phenomenon Staniszki (1991: 221) compared with “*a new social vacuum*”.

Secondly, the idealized image of society on which Solidarity was based cemented the deep state-society divide. The image of a community of the “better” standing in sharp contrast to politics and the state as a realm of corruption and illegitimacy resulted in distrust and disguise of politics and the state. Additionally, the corporate character of the movement prevented a differentiation of interests despite the variety of divergent sub-groups that united under the roof of Solidarity: ...”*Illegal civil society ... was diversified but also strongly unified by a common umbrella (the myth of solidarity)*” (Ekiert/Kubik 1998: 20). The result was an administrative structure outside of and paralleling the state.¹²⁶ Elzbieta Matynia (2001: 928p) points out that what developed was

“... *a highly mobilized polity that shadowed the state, creating its own authorities, experts, and domains of competence. Solidarity did not work against the regime in most cases, but rather in spite of the regime, or simply aside from the regime.*”

Even the whole movement can be taken as a substitute for the state: Carpenter (1999: 341) makes the point: “*Solidarity in effect took on the Party’s function of having a monopoly on public representation.*”

125 It is worthwhile to note that Staniszki’s assessment of the form the transition took, thus what has been called the “mode of transition” (Karl/Schmitter 1995) is rather different than the assessment of others. Karl and Schmitter (1995) regard a pacted transition as a promising start for democratization and pose the hypothesis that a pact will support the consolidation of democracy. It is not the time and place here to delve deeper into the question what “legacies” are to be expected by the mode of transition. However, one may risk the suggestion that a pacted transition contributes to the stabilization of new political institutions, but may amper the emergence of civil society. This is due to two factors. Firstly, a pacted transition may be followed by “a new social vacuum” (Staniszki 1991) as a result of the disillusionment of the mass population, as was the case in Poland. Secondly, a pact leads to the “*decapitation of the oppositional elites by success*” and thus demobilizes the emergent civil society of the liberalization phase for the simple reason that it deprives civil society of its leaders (Bernhard 1996: 323). This effect may be short-term, which was the case in Poland, because Solidarity members of the middle ranks and people activated by solidarity’s civic committees quickly filled the gaps.

126 It is worthwhile to note that the paralleling of state structures in Poland already had its roots in the time of partitions: “... *during the partitions the society demonstrated that it was capable of enduring for more than one hundred years without its own state, thanks to unity of culture, religion, and language. As a consequence, informal institutions ensured the continuity of the social bond. This made it possible in the 1970s to articulate the notion of a “substitute society”, a self-organizing society that was supposed to take over the functions of the state*” (Staniszki 1991: 182).

7.1.2 Summary: Preconditions of Civil Society in Poland

So what conclusion is to be drawn from the legacies of the communist regime, and the oppositional movement? It has been argued above (chapter 2) that civil society needs to be enshrined in a civic culture and certain values of tolerance and trust. This culture is, however, not the one of a community of faith inspired by a common public good or a corporatist ideal, for which each individual is willing to sacrifice him or herself. Rather it is a culture of a society of “*modular men*” (Gellner 1995) with different interests and desires who tolerate and trust their (unknown) fellow citizens thus respecting their different interests. Tolerance in the other becomes possible as each member of society trusts the other to equally comply with the same set of rules. This is the very “clue” that allows for compromise, conflict-resolution and a peaceful co-existence. Civil society is thus pluralistic and is based on *Sittlichkeit* or an “ethical life” and relies on institutional rules provided by the state. In this sense the legacies determining post-communism in Poland - the passivity, the distrust in others, and the negative image of the state - are all heritages that severely weaken the prospects for a re-emergence of civil society (see chapter 2.3.).

Moreover, although the oppositional movement drew on an enlightened concept of civil society and triggered values of solidarity and trust, Solidarity did not automatically provide a fertile ground for civil society development. Rather it preserved an image of civil society that is not compatible with a liberal concept of civil society based on the recognition of divergent interests. Civil society was seen as a “community of equals” whereby equals are not understood as citizens holding equal rights but as a collective of people with equal economic status, viewpoints and religious and national feelings. Secondly, civil society is not perceived as a sphere holding a symbiotic relationship with the state, rather as a sphere ‘without’ the state, paralleling state structures. In addition, the moral image on which the movement was based preserved an image of civil society as the realm of the “equal” and “benevolent” that contrasts with the concept of civil society as a sphere of contesting and competing interests. This moral image of civil society cements the state-society divide and the deep distrust of both the state and anything ‘political’ and quickly triggered disillusionment and alienation once the movement split.

Nevertheless, Solidarity did make a change. The mobilization taking place on a mass scale, especially in 1981/82 broke through the passivity and incapability to mobilize prevalent in communist societies - An experience that was preserved in society’s memory. Marcin Krol made the point:

“The effects of solidarity are not only that there had been the time (of legality), but the results of it, that is the participation of a large number of people in public life and the

development of a political consciousness of these people” (Marcin Krol cit in. Fehr 1996: 120 own translation).

It has been rightly stated that the developing infrastructure of divergent social groups and initiatives were united under the roof of Solidarity. The same holds true for the conceptual approaches of different professional groups to create a “self-administrating republic”. However, concepts and ideas have been developed in various issue areas, be it environment, regional and local democracy, education or culture. Furthermore, distinctive organizations and networks striving for the fulfillment of these ideas developed that assumed the role of intermediary organizations filling the “social vacuum” (Fehr 1996: 114). The variety of organizations in existence thus contributed to the differentiation of the public sphere and laid the ground for differentiated social representation (ibid: 154). Moreover, a substantial basis of political, local and professional leaders and activists has been formed who were able and willing to build up civil society after 1989. These are cultural, institutional, and in particular personnel assets other post-communist societies did not possess and from which civil society in Poland could profit.

The following section will demonstrate the extent to which the cultural legacies outlined above shape the development of civil society after transition.

7.2 Ten Years After – The Reemerging Civil Society in Poland

I now turn to an assessment of the development of civil society in Poland in the period of roughly 13 years after transition. The analysis follows the indicators of the structural and the cultural dimension identified in chapter two. The section thus firstly portrays the pluralism and inclusiveness of civil society by focusing upon the mere number of non-governmental organizations, the composition and regional dispersion of associational life.¹²⁷ Secondly, the section aims to focus upon the cultural dimension of civil society by focusing on three indicators: (1) the willingness of citizens to participate in civic initiatives; (2) the relationship between state authorities and people active in civil society organizations; and (3) the relationship among civil society organizations. It will be evident in the following that in the period of investigation civil society advanced on the structural and the cultural dimension. However, the legacy of a state-society divide as well as distrust towards federations and umbrella organizations can still be felt.

¹²⁷ The analysis greatly profits from three independent studies on NGOs in Poland: The Klon/Jawor surveys, the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, and the DPP survey (see chapter 5.4.).

7.2.1 Quantity of Non-Governmental Organizations

After the overthrow of the communist regime in 1989, Poland experienced a fast and steady increase in non-governmental organizations, while the years between 1989 and 1993 marked a “rebirth period” with the most dynamic growth (Leś et al 2000: 21). Leś et al (2000: 12) estimate that there were approximately 50,300 active NGOs in Poland in 1997 and assume that 85% of the registered organizations are actually active. Based on a comparison of different sources, Klon/Jawor come up with a more pessimistic estimation. They risk the statement that at the end of 1994 about 18,500 foundations and associations were actively operating in Poland in contrast to 48,000 officially registered organization (BORDO 1998: 54).¹²⁸ The vast majority of the organizations (about 85%) have been founded after 1989 (ibid). Many organizations that had been active in the communist period ceased to exist. Others “depoliticized”, thus reformed their programs and structures or returned to the programs maintained before the communist centralization.¹²⁹ A comparative survey conducted by Johns Hopkins University assesses the size of non-profit non-governmental activity in terms of employment rather than actual numbers. According to their findings, the Polish nonprofit sector accounts for 1 % of non-agricultural paid labor and is thus about the same size than other non-profit sectors in CEE. For comparison, the equivalent average of Western Europe is 7% (Leś et al 1999: 331).

128 The difference in the figures is partly due to differing report years and partly to different definitions applied. Leś et al employ an encompassing understanding of “nonprofits” including any type of associations and foundations, including voluntary fire brigades, plus labor unions, professional, business and employers’ organizations, church-based social institutions and political parties in line with the definition of the Johns Hopkins nonprofit project. In contrast Klon/Jawor focuses mainly on the legal form of associations and foundations and consequently neither on trade unions, professional organizations and unions of employers nor on political parties or church-based nonprofit organizations, as they are all three subject to other legal regulations. The difference in numbers already points out the unclear legal situation of non-governmental organizations that are subject to various legal regulations and registration procedures. A fact that impedes statistical inquiry (see Leś et al 2000: 13pp).

129 Examples of such organizations that reformed their statute are: the association of Polish Lawyers, the Polish Historical Society, the Polish Sociological Society (Kurczewska / Bojar 1995: 166). One should note here that several organizations existed throughout the communist period. Examples for organizations that were established before 1945 are: the Polish Women’s League, the Union of Polish State Artists, Children’s Friends Society or the Polish Red Cross (see e.g. Bordo 1998: 27).

7.2.2 Composition

If one looks at the composition of associational life in Poland, two different pictures emerge depending on whether one takes number of organizations or employment as indicators. As measured by absolute numbers, most organizations in Poland in 1996/97, i.e. 51%, are dedicated to the provision of social services and see their primary field of activity in health care and social assistance. Activities related to education, family, children and youth, arts and culture, local and regional development, sports and recreation, environmental protection and human rights are further important areas of activity (BORDO 1998: 60).¹³⁰ If non-governmental activity is measured on the basis of paid employment, the relationship looks much different though. Like other post-communist countries the percentage of paid employment in Poland is assumingly the highest in organizations involved with sports and recreation activities, followed by education (18%) and social service provision (12%) (Central European average) (Anheier/Salamon 1999: 18). Anheier/Salamon (ibid) attribute the surprising importance of sports and recreation in the associational life of Central European countries, which stands in stark contrast to other world regions, to the heavy subsidization of such associations during the Communist era. These findings are even more interesting if the different areas of activity are compared with Western Europe. Whereas the three areas (1) unions and professional associations; (2) sports / recreation; and (3) environment/advocacy are more developed (in terms of paid labor) in Central than in Western Europe, the areas of social services, health, and education are underdeveloped in comparison to Western Europe.¹³¹ These figures point clearly to the old and new faces of non-state activities in CEE countries.

130 One has to note that these findings of the Klon/Jawor survey correspond with the results of the DPP survey. According to the DPP survey conducted in 2002/03 the largest share of NGOs is active in the area of social services (30%), followed by youth, culture and education (24%), decentralization / regional development (17%), and economic development (10%). The differences in percentage are due to the fact that in the Klon/Jawor survey more than one answer could be given (see appendix 8).

131 This fact is most evident in the following numbers: one paid employee in labor unions or professional associations in Western Europe opposes 3.7 salaried staff in similar organizations in Central Europe. In recreation and sport the ratio is 1:3.5 and in environment and advocacy 1:2. In contrast 1 paid employee in organizations dedicated to social service provision in Central Europe equals 2.3 employees in Western Europe, one employed in the health protection in Central Europe faces 2.8 colleagues in Western Europe, and the ratio in education is still 1:1.6 (own calculation based on Anheier/Salamon 1999: 18).

On the one hand, we have a rather limited number of financially powerful organizations, namely sports clubs, trade unions and other social organizations that were already active during Communism and fall back on the assets accumulated during communist times.¹³² On the other hand, we observe a large number of newly created organizations, in Poland namely in the area of social service provision, but also in areas such as decentralization and regionalization. This majority of associations in quantitative terms, however, does not have salaried staff positions but largely rely on volunteers (BORDO 1998: 64). A further interesting result of the findings above is the oversized environment / advocacy sector. The surprisingly high number of paid staff in environmental and advocacy organizations, both institutional forms of “new social movements” that are usually not equipped with exceeding financial resources in Western Europe, points to the “new” features of nongovernmental activity in post-communist Europe. The NGO sector is not only determined by a small number of powerful organizations that already existed under Communism, but additionally by a small number of organizations, which are at least well financed and whose objectives lie in areas such as environmental protection, human and minority rights, development or women issues. These organizations who count themselves as belonging to the “Third Sector” or “*the movement of non-governmental organizations*” (Gliński 1998: 31) hold intense contacts to the West, are influenced by ideas and concepts previously developed in the “new social movements” of the West, employ mainly young people (Gliński 1998: 31), and are financially supported by Western sources. In line with these findings Kurczewska / Bojar (1995: 166pp) differentiate between organizations that adopt models, values and organizational forms that are rather new in the Polish society and that often refer to Western models and ideas, and organizations that revert to models and tradition from pre-war times. The first category includes ecological movements, feminist organization and advocacy organizations but also quickly growing private foundations such as the Foundation for the Development of Democracy in Poland, the Foundation for the Development of Local Communities, or the Cultural foundation, organizations dedicated to international and European issues, and moreover economic associations inspired by the possibilities of private ownership and the market. The other category includes organizations that existed before the war and that have been resurrected¹³³ or social initiatives and organizations that refer to organizational and

132 One has to note that the figures above refer to a country sample which Poland was not part of. However, there are sufficient grounds to believe that the findings equally hold true for Poland. Gliński points out that NGOs established during the communist period in Poland have not only a tremendous property at their disposal but further benefit from “*access paths*” to public funds, mainly in the form of personal and informal contacts (Gliński 1999: 12). On the other hand, “new stances” of non-governmental activities in Poland are well-established and equipped. For more on the well-established environmental movement in Poland see: Gliński (1999: 20).

133 Examples include: the Polonia, Jagiellonie, Union of Catholic Youth, League of Polish Women.

cultural traditions that date back to the time of the partitions¹³⁴, or Polish divisions of international associations¹³⁵ (ibid: 167).

7.2.3 Regional Distribution

As concerns the regional dispersion of nongovernmental organizations, the Klon/Jawor survey on NGOs in Poland in 1997 still noted that the activities of NGOs mainly focus upon large urban areas - usually former voivodship centers. The largest share of NGOs in 1997 was located in Warsaw (29.5%), followed by Krakow (6.7%), Gdansk (5.8%) and Katowice (5.7%) (BORDO 1998: 57p). Moreover, NGOs existed only in 54% of all *gminy*, the lowest level of the territorial organization of Poland (Chimiak 2000: 466). However, in recent years a shift to the regional and local level is observable. Especially, the territorial reform of 1999 that enhanced the process of territorial decentralization in Poland and included a county level is assumed to provide a possible impetus for NGO development (Kuti 1999: 54, Leś et al 2000: 22). The Klon / Jawor survey on NGOs of the year 2000 thus notes a lower territorial concentration than in 1997: in 2000 the number of NGOs registered in Warsaw sank to 20%.¹³⁶

7.2.4 Civic Participation and Volunteerism

If one turns to the cultural dimension of civil society one must first note that civil participation in Poland is still relatively low, but rising. According to Gliński (1999: 9), civil participation in Poland measured by membership in non-governmental organizations, increased from 5.5% of the population in 1990 to 13.7% in 1995 and 16% in 1997. Despite these optimistic figures, evidence suggests that organizational membership is exceptionally low in Poland in comparison with other post-communist countries (Howard 2003: 58). One further has to stress the point that passivity and a disbelief in the ability of NGOs persist in the Polish population. According to opinion polls conducted by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology Polish Academy of Science (IfiS PAN) in 1992, 1995 and 1999, more than 50% of the respondents each time declared that no existing civic organization represented their interests and roughly the same percentage wanted new organizations to emerge, which 51% (1995) are in turn willing to join (Leś et al 2000: 21, Gliński 1999: 9). Gliński concludes that there is a

134 Examples include: Society of the Friends of the Małopolska Land, Wielkopolan Society, Friends of the Mazowiecki Land, Unions of Silesians, Kaszuby Peoples, People of Podhale.

135 Examples include: Lions Club, Red Cross Club, Rotary Club, Zonta, Soroptmist, YMCA.

136 Quoted from the working document of the fifth meeting of the EU-Poland Joint Consultative Committee, Warsaw, May 13th-14th 2002 on "NGO Sector in Poland and its Role in the Process of Accession into the European Union".

www.esc.eu.int/pages/Enlarg/ccm/pologne/meeting5_13_05_02/di_ces47_2002_di_en_original_.pdf

substantial potential for civil activity in Poland, yet he has to admit that citizens do not place trust in the effectiveness of citizen's activities. Over 76% of Poles claim that socially active people can achieve little or nothing (CBOS 1998 cit in: Gliński 1999: 10). Paternalism and a lack of faith in participatory mechanisms thus continue to be a disease of post-communist Poland. A further indicator for civic participation is the willingness of citizens to support NGOs as volunteers. Especially in Poland where the situation of NGOs is marked by a lack of financial resources, volunteerism is an important factor for many NGOs to sustain their activities (Wyganski 1997: 94, Leś et al 2000: 17)). According to Leś et al (1999: 328), 16% of the adult population contributes time to non-governmental organizations. This figure is relatively low if compared with the "world" average of volunteerism derived from 22 countries that equals 28% (Anheier/Salamon 1999: 10). Moreover, volunteerism in Poland is also slightly lower than in other Central European countries (ibid: 329). One has to note, however, that the picture looks different if religious institutions are included. In this case 25% of the adult population volunteers (ibid: 328). This fact demonstrates that the lack of volunteerism, which has been identified as one major obstacle to NGO development (Regulska 1999: 63), does not equally apply to all NGOs. In particular non-governmental organization that already existed under communism, usually referred to as "social organizations" in Poland, have difficulties in recruiting volunteers (ibid). Since "volunteerism" had been imposed on the people from above during Communist times, the willingness to contribute to these organizations sank to a low. People are more willing to contribute to small and newly established organizations especially in charity. In the year 2000 87% of NGOs reported that they utilize the services of volunteers (Klon/Jawor data cit. in USAID 2001: 121).

7.2.5 Relationship between Non-Governmental Organizations and State Authorities

With regard to the relationship between non-governmental organizations and state authorities, one can note that a distorted relationship between civil society and the state is still apparent in Poland. This problematic relationship is grounded in attitudes and convictions prevailing in civil society organizations as much as in an ambiguous state policy and a lacking political will of the governing elite.

Leś et al (2000: 19) make the point that the strong awareness of a social identity that is separate and independent from the state and grounded in the experiences with Solidarity and further cultivated by the disillusionment with the Solidarity elite that “changed sides” is still alive among civil society activists.¹³⁷ One could argue that middle rank Solidarity leaders preserved the “myth of Solidarity” and the moral concept on which Solidarity has been based inside organizations of civil society.¹³⁸ However, as Piotr Gliński points out, the young generation that has been influenced little by the experience of Solidarity also sees political elites and politics in a decisively negative light: “*The stereotype of rejecting politics as something dirty and immoral is still rife*” (Gliński 1998: 33). Gliński thus sees the hypothesis of A. Rychard confirmed that “... *Polish social life is very specifically removed from the field of politics*” (cit. in *ibid*). The distrust of politicians and political parties has also been revealed by the DPP survey on NGOs in Poland. The majority of NGOs (79%) report that they have no relations with political parties. Moreover, the largest share of them (70%, 55% of total) does not regard such relations as important. The ones that hold contacts to political parties largely assess them as less important (33% of the ones with contact, 14% of total) (see appendix 8, table 26, question 10). On top of that, the question on major problems of NGOs reveals the big frustration with the government among Polish NGOs. 71% of Polish NGOs judge lacking governmental support as very problematic. The lack of governmental support thus ranks as the second pressing problem of Polish NGOs directly behind the lack of financial sources. A deficient cooperation among NGOs and state authorities is further regarded as a point of concern (see *ibid*, question 12).

Whereas activists of civil society seem to regard politics as dirty and the state as superfluous, state authorities and political elites in contrast consider organizations of civil society to be unwelcome and unnecessary competitors. A political will by the political elites to stimulate civil society development is as much lacking as an understanding for the purpose of intermediary organizations.

137 This judgment has been confirmed by interviews conducted by the author. The disillusionment with politics as much as with the new political elites is also due to the fact that many civil society organizations were founded by people that had been active in the civic committees of Solidarność. These committees whose major purpose was to mobilize voters for the first election were dissolved by Wałęsa after this aim had been achieved. This practice cause tremendous frustration among people involved. One could argue that a split occurred between the Solidarity activists that dedicated their time to civil society organizations and those that went into politics whereby the latter have been perceived by the former as “giving up their ideals”.

138 The preservation of the moral myth of Solidarność inside civil society organizations is evident in statements such as the following : “*In a difficult situation of the country’s transformation, we represent environments and places, where the meaning of human life is regained*” (Statement of the Regional Forum of Non-governmental Organizations in Poznań April 1995 cit. in *Asocjacje* www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/217.htm).

“Generally speaking the Polish political class does not understand the importance of the non-governmental sector in the new democratic states; it tries to control it and is not interested in its development, although there are some exceptions, mainly amongst the politicians of the Freedom Union” (Gliński 1998: 39).

Rather than stimulating and deliberately constructing intermediary organizations and non-governmental service providers through the provision of incentives, specific opportunity structures, or a suitable infrastructure, state policies are ambiguous and often destructive to civil society development.¹³⁹ Formal structures ensuring communication with NGO representatives exist, but they are not supported by a coherent and clear state policy. In June 1993 the Bureau for the Cooperation with Non-governmental Organizations was along with the Ministry of Employment and Social Policy. Having just started its operations it was already closed in January 1994 subsequent to a change in government.¹⁴⁰ In 1997 a plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister to Co-operation with NGOs, Minister Zbigniew Wozniak, was brought into office. In 1998 he appointed a working group consisting of leaders of NGOs, representatives of the government and experts that aimed to prepare the principles of reform and met for the first and only time in May 1998.¹⁴¹ The position of plenipotentiary of the Prime Minister was, however, again closed in March 1999. Several ministries, including the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy, and the Ministry of Environmental Protection, Natural Resources, and Forestry put the question of NGO development on their organizational agenda. However, with the exception of the Ministry of Environment protection that had been involved in regular and growingly intense working contacts and informational exchange with environmental NGOs since 1991, most ministerial activities in this area remain poor and are restricted to the drafting of purposive statements and ineffectual meetings (Gliński 1999: 19). In sum, the various formal structures created with the stated aim to establish institutionalized forms of cooperation and consultation between civil society organizations and state authorities hardly fulfilled their purpose. Throughout the years no constructive and coherent state policy to support civil society organizations existed. As a result, progress in legislative issues concerning NGO operations has long been postponed, leaving the legal framework that regulated the operations of nongovernmental organizations throughout the 1990s as ambiguous, inaccurate and insufficient.¹⁴² In the words of Zbigniew Lasocik, a Polish NGO activist:

139 See e.g. Regulska (1998: 45), Leś et al (1999: 333), Lasocik (2000).

140 See Asocjacje: Polish NGO Review – History of the Third Sector 1989-1999. www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/215.htm.

141 See Asocjacje www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/2191.htm and [/2192.htm](http://www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/2192.htm).

142 see e.g. Lasocik (2000), Regulska (1999: 67), Regulska (1998: 45), Gliński (1999: 8), Wygnanski (2000), Leś et al (1999: 333).

“It must be noted that the Polish legal system fails to fully implement the constitutional principle of freedom of association. Numerous lacunae can be found in our provisional regulations: some fundamental definitions are lacking; some solutions negate the principle of impartiality of the registering bodies; and freedom of association is unjustly limited through some faulty solutions” (Lasocik 2000: 6).

Gliński (1999: 18) thus jumps to the conclusion that state authorities continue to treat civil society organizations according to customs and procedures inherited from the socialist times. More often than not, informal and personal are more important than institutionalized and legalized principles and rules. In this way, clientelism and corruption is common practice especially on the local level.

Despite everything stated above, one nonetheless has to note that changes in attitude are visible and that progresses in diminishing the state-society divide is in sight. Firstly, despite the incoherent governmental policy on NGOs and regardless of the repeatedly changing administrative structures in charge of NGOs there has been an on-going, although sometimes conflictual, communication process between government and NGOs. Secondly, in 2003 an agreement has been reached on new legislation regulating the relationship between civil society organizations and state authorities. Finally, one should add that the legislative process was marked by an ongoing although often interrupted process of consultation between representatives of civil society organizations and the government through which NGO activists were included in the decision making process (see in detail chapter 7.4). Moreover, it has been pointed out that the relationship between NGOs and state authorities is improving especially on the local level. Although it is still true that only 1/3 of NGO received local authority funding in 1996 (Gliński 1999: 23) and that the cooperation between local authorities and NGOs is especially low in the field of social services,¹⁴³ signs are visible in recent years that a constructive relationship between local authorities and NGOs is developing (Regulska 1998: 64). As the studies conducted by Klon/Jawor indicate, NGOs label local authorities as their prime cooperation partner and this cooperation has been consolidated over the years of the survey and is increasingly perceived as important (BORDO 1998: 49).¹⁴⁴ Additionally, triggered by operations of so-called “NGO support centers” and “infrastructural NGOs” (see chapter 7.4.), several local co-operations programs have been introduced as e.g. in Gdynia and in Gdańsk in 1995 (Gliński 1999: 22).

143 This is evident in the following figures: In 1999 only 8% of all counties (powiats) contracted social services out to NGOs while another 12 % offered grants (Leś et al 2000: 22).

144 This fact has also been confirmed by the DPP survey (see appendix 8, table 26, question 10).

7.2.6 Relationships Among NGOs and Inside Civil Society

The remaining question of this section points to the relationships prevalent inside civil society, i.e. relationships between various civil society organizations. The image of “one sector” to which activists of certain advocacy NGOs like to refer obliterates the fact that civil society consists of a variety of different organizations with divergent interests. As outlined above, in Poland NGOs are active in various issue areas, be it labor issues, social services, health, education, culture, decentralization, environment or human rights. One can note that no evidence points to exclusionary animosities between the various groups that result in the preservation rather than a “cross-cutting” of cleavages within society. Nonetheless, I want to highlight two points referring to relationships among civil society groups. Firstly, in Poland distrust toward umbrella organizations and federations aiming to join forces of NGOs is observable (see e.g. Wejcman 1999). This distrust is largely attributable to the “negative associational freedom” described above (see chapter 2.3.). Umbrella organizations remind NGO activists too much of communist times (see in greater detail chapter 7.4.). Secondly, tensions inside civil society do not run along the lines of divergent interests, such as the interests of labor and capital, but additionally are apparent between what has been called above the “old” and the “new” stances of civil society organizations. Although transmission belt organizations of the former regime adapted to the new democratic system and truly reformed themselves (Bernhard 1996: 324), newly established organizations with a Western outlook often distrust those organizations. Such is the case for example between the two main federations of trade unions, Solidarity and OPZZ. Although both have similar interests as representatives of workers, and notwithstanding the fact that branches of both already cooperate on company level, political cooperation was unthinkable for a long time.

7.2.7 Summary

To conclude, ten years after transition a re-emerging civil society is visible in Poland. Some even call the NGO sector in Poland the “*most robust in Central and Eastern Europe*” (USAID 2001: 126). Numerous civil society organizations sprang up in a variety of issue areas, thus constituting a substantial and vibrant sector of NGO activity. Having said this, civil society in Poland still suffers from cultural legacies inherited from the communist past. The sector is characterized by “old” and “new” organizations, whereby the “old” features of the NGO sector in Poland have money and informal networks to administrative personnel, whereas the “new” strand has the youth, volunteers and Western support. Organizational membership and volunteerism is still low due to prevalent passivity and a lack of faith in participatory mechanisms. Civil society activists regard politics and politicians as something dirty; politicians in contrast regard NGOs as unnecessary competitors. A coherent state policy that

aims to stimulate civic participation and self-organization has long been lacking. In this regard, the legacy of a state-society divide lives on. In addition, ties inside civil society are largely based on informal and personal contacts.

Having said all this, one still must mention that there is a visible advancement of civil society on the structural as well as on the cultural dimension. Statistical material depicts that not only the numbers of organizations but also civic participation and voluntarism are rising over the years. In addition, a small but very active circle of individuals and organizations exist, which see their purpose in the advancement of "the Third Sector". Moreover, the year-long battle between activists of NGOs and governmental representatives ended with a final agreement on new legislation in 2003 that is regarded by both sides as favorable to civil society development. Additionally, on the local level signs of an evolving cooperation between local authorities and NGOs are also visible. The question now is: to what extent are these positive changes in the structural and in the cultural dimension of civil society attributable to Western assistance and support? In a first step to answer this question, I now summarize Western support to civil society in Poland in the 1990s.

7.3 The External Push – Forms and Types of Civil Society Assistance in Poland

As already stated, it is not the purpose of the case studies to compare donors, their activities and strategies. Nevertheless, a brief analysis of civil society assistance in Poland, understood in line with most donors as assistance to “Third Sector” NGOs (see chap. 4.5)¹⁴⁵ is indispensable. Based on the proceeding account of the programs and projects of major donors (chap. 6) and the strategies and concepts applied (chap. 4), this section aims to illustrate the external assistance to Polish civil society in the period under investigation.¹⁴⁶ What kind and quantity of assistance has been donated, to whom, when and how? The chapter will approach this question by providing a chronological account of civil society assistance. It will be argued that civil society assistance came in sequences, in which roughly three time periods can be distinguished: the initial period of assistance from 1989 to 1993, a period of intensive support from 1994 to 1998, and a period of donor withdrawal starting at the end of the 1990s. In each period the chapter focuses on the aim, type and strategy of Western assistance. Before this is done, however, civil society assistance is approached in quantitative terms.

145 The equation of civil society assistance with NGO assistance is also evident in the Polish case: The evaluation of the NGO support program of the Stefan Batory Foundation points out: “...*(the foundation's) understanding of 'civil society' includes an institutional concept of the civic sphere.... The Foundation turns its strategic look towards civic activities that have already obtained an institutional form.*” (Open Society Institute 2000: 10). The basic objective of the Phare Civic Dialogue Program was to “*provide support for civil society by means of help for NGOs that are recognized to be the manifestation of civic activity and the inevitable part of any modern democratic society*” (Mendza-Drozd 2000: 31).

146 In line with the account given in chapter six, the following is based on an analysis of the activities of some chosen large donors: the EU, USA, Germany, and the Stefan Batory Foundation (founded by George Soros).

7.3.1 The Quantity of Civil Society Assistance – A Minor Financial Item

One has to note that Poland was by far the principal beneficiary of Western attention among the CEE countries. The head start in democratization, the prominence of the Solidarity movement, and not least the large immigrant populations abroad translated into huge public and private Western commitments (Wedel 1998: 205, Quigley 1997: 46).¹⁴⁷

However, if the available data is explored in greater detail one realizes quickly that the major share of aid went to economic restructuring, privatization and to infrastructural measures (see appendix 2). Civil society assistance is a minor financial item that makes up for less than 2% of the overall assistance granted.¹⁴⁸ Moreover, if one focuses only upon support in favor of democracy, what has been called “democracy promotion and protection” (DPP), it is evident that donors did place less emphasis on civil society assistance in Poland than in other CEE countries. In Poland civil society assistance makes up for 23% of the funds available for the support of democracy. This is a substantial share. However, one has to note that the share is lower than in other CEE countries. On average, civil society received 30% of funds available for the support of democratization in CEE countries. In Slovakia, even 42% of the DPP means went to civil society assistance (see table 7). In Poland, in contrast, emphasis was placed on institution building (such as administrative reform, decentralization measures) with 49% of the means available for DPP. Also per capita Poland received less support to civil society than the CEE average. 1.9 Euros were spent for civil society assistance per Polish inhabitant. In contrast, 3.5 Euros per capita went for the support of civil society on the CEE average. In institution building the ratio is only 4 to 4.8 (ibid).

147 This favored status is illustrated in the following numbers: Nearly half of all the commitments provided by the Group of Twenty-Four Industrialized Countries between 1990-1993 (16.871.7 million ECUs), and 45.2% i.e. 2346.8 million ECUs from the IMF went to Poland (Quigley 1997: 47). From 1990 to 1998 Poland received 1732 million ECUs, that is 25% of all PHARE money assigned to 14 country programs (European Commission 1998a: 92). The USA also assisted Poland with more financial aid than any other CEE country. Until 1996 Poland benefited from 34% of the finances earmarked for the SEED program. Until the year 2000 USAID spent a total of US\$ 960.5 million in Poland via its SEED program (USAID 2000a). By contrast, the German involvement in Poland is rather modest. Until 1997 Poland received 11.3% of the German Transform money which translates in 181 million DM (BMWi 1998: 23). The German political foundations spent a further 45 million until 1994 (Quigley 1997: 124). To sum it up, especially in the first half of the 1990s Poland received more Western assistance than any other country. An estimated 10% of the aid consisted of grants (Wedel 1998: 29).

148 For example, USAID spent 1.3% of its total allocations on direct aid to NGOs (see appendix 5, table 11). Phare remained with an estimated 1.7% to civil society assistance below the average share of 2% of total Phare allocations (see appendix 3, table 6, and the European Commission 1998b: 31).

Table 5 Civil Society Assistance in Relation to other Forms of DPP in Poland, Slovakia and CEE Average, 1990 – 2000

Categories of DPP	CEE AVERAGE*			POLAND			SLOVAKIA		
	In Mio US\$	% of total	Per capita	In Mio US\$	% of total	Per capita	In Mio US\$	% of total	Per capita
Civil Society Strengthening	329.8	30%	3.5	72.9	23%	1.9	55.4	42%	10.3
Democracy Promotion general	281.6	26%	3.0	80.5	25%	2.1	26.4	20%	4.9
Institution Building	451.7	41%	4.8	155.5	49%	4.0	46.9	35%	8.7
Political Process	39.6	4%	0.4	8.9	3%	0.2	4.7	3%	0.9
TOTAL	1102.8		11.6	317.7	29%***	8.2	133.3	12%***	24.7

Source: Own calculations based on the database of international DPP activities conducted by the joint research project “Democracy Promotion and Protection in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa of the Humboldt University and the European University Institute.¹⁴⁹

*** Share of all DPP expenditures in the six CEE countries under investigation.

149 The research project collected data on support to democratization from 17 donor countries, the UN, the EU and private foundations in the years 1990-1998, and is thus the most comprehensive databank on donor support to democratization up to date. The collected data have been classified into three broad categories: (1) Civil Society Strengthening (incl. assistance to democracy advocacy groups, human rights advocacy groups, trade unions and business associations, women’s organizations, organizations representing ethnic minorities, generic support for non-governmental organizations, media); (2) Institution Building (incl. assistance to legal and judiciary institutions, local governments, (public administration, legislative bodies); (3) Political Process (electoral assistance, political party assistance). The category “Democracy Promotion General” refers to projects or programs that could not clearly be put into the above categories. In CEE the project covered the following countries: Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. The data includes projects from the following donors: (1) nation states, such as Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and USA, (with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, Italy, Japan, Spain, and Switzerland as minor contributors); (2) international organizations such as the European Union and several agencies of the United Nations System such as UNDP, ILO and UNESCO; and (3) political foundations such as the German Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), the British Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), and the publicly funded and privately managed American National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The only “private” donor to contribute enough to be included in our database is the Open Society (Soros) Foundation – which does not exclude occasional efforts by others such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Fund, the MacArthur Foundation, etc (see Gbikpi 2002).

7.3.2 The Marriot Brigades and Some Favored Cliques: The Years 1990-1993

If one aims to investigate into the first years of Western assistance to Poland after regime change, one is well advised to risk a glimpse at the preceding decade. Unlike most other CEE countries, the story of Western aid to Polish civil society or non-state actors did not start in 1989 but long before. In the 1970s and 1980s personal contacts and ties had been established between Polish dissidents and the West, which Western donors were glad to use when they came to the country in 1989/90. In this way, civil society assistance to Poland in the period 1990-1993 was at least in part shaped by previous experiences.

According to Ekiert and Kubik (1998: 18) Polish dissidents have had intense and various contacts with the West that became “*massive*” in comparison with other CEE countries especially at the end of the 1980s. The links to Western social scientists and journalists allowed Polish intellectuals to publish in the West. This helped to raise Western awareness of the Polish situation. Much needed financial assistance followed on the spot. Especially after the introduction of martial law, the foreign outposts of Solidarity, i.e. its Brussels office and the Committee in Support of Solidarity in New York ensured a continuous inflow of financial and material resources assisting the de-legalized movement. This assistance came from private and non-governmental sources such as trade unions, social and political organizations or Polish émigré organizations but also from governmental sources, especially from the USA (Ekiert / Kubik 1998: 19). This head-start not only in democratization but also in assistance provided Poland with a great advantage. Personal contacts were already in place on which the massive inflow of aid coming in 1989/90 could rely.

These contacts were of special importance in the first years after transition. The Western willingness to assist the democratization process was enormous and financial aid came in fast and on a grand scale. However, little knowledge existed on how and whom to support. Like most others, donor agencies were largely taken by surprise by the end of the Cold War, which made assistance to democratization in CEE possible. Neither concepts nor strategies existed that helped to face the new challenge. Moreover, Western agencies had no relevant experience, as experience with developing aid in the Third World was not applicable. Donors that previously conducted democracy assistance, e. g. the German political foundations, also found their experience in Latin America and Southern Europe unsuitable for the Polish and in general the post-communist cases. Whereas in former cases structures and organizations had been largely in place, finding suitable partner organizations proved a major problem in Poland (see appendix 6). “Bridgeheads” who identified worthwhile ways to invest in Polish democracy were consequently much needed (Wedel 1998: 5). Polish emigrants and Poles

associated with the Solidarity movement played that role. Besides relying on individuals and on former contacts, donors focused upon the organizations largely opposed to the former regime: trade unions and universities. Or they concentrated on specific issues they regarded as important hoping that the provided publications, conferences or training would be of some use for the recipients. In brief, trial and error substituted a comprehensive strategy. And as Poland was the first CEE country to which donors moved, Poland was both a testing ground and learning field. Mistakes were inevitable and mistakes were made. For example, USAID relied in the initial period largely on short-term advisers. However, as USAID admits on its website:

“The predominant emphasis on providing U.S. short-term advisors, rather than on the creation of sustainable institutions, weakened the longer-term impact of some programs.”¹⁵⁰

The consultants that resided in the only Western-style hotel available, the Marriot Hotel, became quickly known among Polish recipients as “the Marriot Brigades”. The lack of local knowledge and sensitivity for the Polish situation and especially the obvious gap between the well-suited Westerners residing in the luxurious hotel and the living conditions of the Polish people provoked envy and frustration more than it provided needed advice (interview Stanowski).

One has to note that civil society assistance was not the major focus of Western assistance in the initial period. Chief emphasis was placed upon the economic transformation and on the reform of political institutions on the national level (see e.g. USAID 2000a: 4; Europäische Kommission (European Commission) 1990: 5).¹⁵¹

The donors’ lack of enthusiasm for supporting NGOs however does not imply that assistance had not been available for civil society and civic initiatives that sprang up. One has to note, though, that the initial support benefited only a few organizations, namely trade unions, the media, scientific institutions or individual scholars. US donors in particular continued their support of Solidarity of previous years.

150 Cit. from the homepage of the USAID mission to Europe, Decade of USAID assistance, <http://www.usaid.gov/pl/decadeof.htm>.

151 The primary emphasis of donors on the economy and on national political institutions has been highly criticized. Regulska (1998) argues that the lack or delay of foreign assistance worked against civic initiatives and NGOs: “...*the delayed focus on local initiatives and NGOs put them structurally in a disadvantaged position to negotiate space within the local community development process. Citizen’s initiatives and NGOs have often found themselves marginalized and in confrontation with a growing small business sector ... and with restructured local governments that are gaining stability.*” (Regulska 1998: 44p). This assessment cannot be confirmed by the author in her interviews with Polish recipients.

The NSZZ Solidarity was one of the principal recipients of grants to non-state actors from both USAID and NED (see tables 11 and 13 in appendix 5). For example the NED, who also administered the majority of SEED funds in 1990-1991, invested 60% of its funds in trade union development in 1990, mainly supporting NSZZ Solidarity, and spent another 20% on support to Solidarity' citizen committees, in line with the US focus upon electoral assistance. Only 9% of the funds went to support of civic initiatives and "the Third Sector" (see appendix 5, table 15). The two largest German political foundations concentrated on political elites, and on potential "multipliers", namely scholars and journalists. They worked together with universities, research institutes and in the case of the FES with trade unions. The initial activities aimed at the transfer of information to general topics such as social market economy, democracy and pluralism. Moreover, the German political foundations concentrated on specific issue areas such as decentralization in the case of the KAS and regional development and trade union development in the case of the FES (see appendix 6, portray 12). The Stefan Batory foundation placed an initial emphasis on the support of science, research, education, and the media (see appendix 4, table 10+portray 8).

However, support to civic initiatives, associations and NGOs was available and steadily increased starting from 1991/92. In 1991 the NED already awarded 34% of its funds for third-sector development (see appendix 5, table 15). Also USAID invested a substantial amount (7.2 million US\$) between 1989 and 1994 for overall support to NGO development (USAID 2000a: 77). In 1992 the Phare "civic-dialogue" program was launched with the major objective to *"provide support for civic society by means of help for NGOs that are recognized to be the manifestation of civic activity and the inevitable part of any modern democratic society"* (Mendza-Drozd 2000: 31). Financial aid in the form of grants, information, and legal services and training programs for NGOs were the three major activities carried out by the civic dialogue program (ibid). Here it is important to note that the dialogue program was less donor-driven than recipient-driven. It evolved out of a series of meetings labeled *"the role of NGOs in a civil society"* at the ministers' council's office.¹⁵² It was thus the Polish government that initiated the NGO support program as part of the Phare national program. Moreover, it was also the Polish side that looked into the administration of the program. The Cooperation Fund, a state treasury foundation established for the implementation of various aid programs for Poland in 1990, was in charge of the program – (see appendix 3, portray 6). Between 1992 and 1994 3 million Euros were earmarked for the civic dialogue program, benefiting 302 NGOs with 1.3 mio Euros (ibid: 29). Also the German political foundations and especially

152 See Asocjacje – the Polish NGO Review, Find out about the Third Sector in Poland, History 1991: www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/213.htm

the Stefan Batory Foundation provided important initial support for the establishment of various NGOs.

In sum, money was available in the first years after transition in particular and donors were willing to spend it. However, it was the well-known personalities of the Solidarity movement that easily gained access to Western resources. Contacts established before the regime change as well as bridgeheads that identified valuable “investment opportunities” for donors were decisive. Moreover, in particular governmental donors opted for large-scale funding providing a few organizations with excessive means, training and advice and largely neglecting small and local initiatives.¹⁵³ As a result, the assistance mainly benefited “some favored cliques” (Wedel 1998).¹⁵⁴ As will be shown (chapter 7.4.), the beneficiaries of assistance in this early stage were not only still in existence but also became important and well-known organizations in their respective fields by the end of the 1990s. One can thus conclude that notwithstanding trial and error and a likely waste of resources, the massive inflow of foreign assistance in this initial period provided an important impetus for institution building and supported several NGOs that subsequently contributed to the development of a NGO sector and the advancement of civil society.

7.3.3 From Macro to Micro – The Donor Learning Curve: The Years 1994 - 1998

Civil society assistance gained momentum in 1994/95. Not only did civil society assistance expand in quantitative terms, but a shift from capital-based NGOs with well-known founders to small and local initiatives is also visible. Along with that, donors moved from “institution-building” to “capacity-building” applying a more fine-tuned strategic approach (see chapt. 3.4.).

153 For example the large-scale USAID project supporting Polish NGOs in 1989-1994 equipped with 7.25 million US\$ was largely spent for the re-establishment of the Polish YMCA providing funding for youth leadership to address problems of social, environmental and economic concerns (USAID 2000a: 77 and 106).

154 Examples of organizations enjoying this status are first and foremost the trade union NSZZ Solidarność. Another example is the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD), an organization whose major aim is to advance the territorial decentralization and local democracy in Poland. FSLD was a major grantee of USAID and Phare and also received assistance from all other donors. Another example is the Warsaw Journalism Center that had been established with USAID funding, or several think tanks or associations active in the economic field. Finally, the “Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe” (IDEE), the successor of the US based “Solidarity in exile” served as a bridge of US-American funds to Poland (see appendix 7, table 23, see also chapter 7.4.1.).

The funds available for civil society increased, specific programs were implemented, and the focus shifted from “macro to micro”¹⁵⁵, substituting large-scale funding with small grant schemes. For example, between 1992 and 1998 the Cooperation Fund awarded between 1992-1998 2.4 million Euros in 1028 grants via the Phare micro-grant schemes dedicated to NGO development (Civic Dialogue Program, Lien Program, Democracy Program) (see appendix 3, portray 6). USAID set up the Democracy Network Program (DemNet) in 1995 with the aim of strengthening the NGO sector. Administered by an American NGO, the Academy for Educational Development, and equipped with a local office and local staff, DemNet developed and supported public policy-oriented NGOs in Poland through grants, training and technical assistance. In a period of three years the program distributed 1.8 Mio US\$ to 67 NGOs for 91 projects (appendix 5, portray 10). The Stefan Batory Foundation also shifted its focus from education and research to NGO support. Whereas in 1992 the two largest shares of funds were spent in the area of science and culture with 25% and 24% of the budget respectively, by 1995 28% of the grant budget and thus the largest share have been allocated for support for NGOs. Moreover, NGOs were recipients of most of the grants awarded by other Foundation programs. As a result, 66% of beneficiaries were NGOs in 1999 absorbing 77% of the total grants awarded by the Foundation (appendix 4). The German political foundations continued their support, but with a slight thematic shift. Emphasis was placed less on education and research and shifted to organizations with a European perspective from 1995 onwards.

The increasing use of micro-grants ensured that smaller, less professional, and local NGOs also gained access to foreign funds.¹⁵⁶ The evaluation of the Phare Democracy Program jumps to the conclusion:

“... (micro-projects) have much more of a direct impact in supporting civic education and civic activity and in mobilising people (in Poland). The small grants enable faster development of NGOs which are process-oriented and membership-based” (European Commission 1997c: 104).

In addition, the target of assistance broadened, although most donors continued to focus primarily on public policy-oriented NGOs, on NGOs active in civic education, and on activities of NGOs that contribute to the promotion of a pluralistic and democratic society (DemNet, the Phare Democracy Program, German political foundations). In contrast, the Stefan Batory foundation and the Phare Civic Dialogue Program had only limited restrictions concerning the

155 “We were moving from macro to micro” that is how USAID Mission Director Donald Pressley described the USAID activities in civil society assistance after its arrival in 1993. Quoted in USAID (2000a: 28).

156 To give an example: The Cooperation fund awarded grants in almost all of Polish voivodships (regions) in 1996/97. NGOs in Warsaw received 27% of the awarded grants, and over 70% of the awarded grants went to regional centers and local areas (see appendix 3, table 9).

thematic scope of supported NGO activities, although they placed special emphasis on activities aiming to support the NGO sector. The Batory Foundation stated broadly that it assisted NGOs that “*are involved in the social, cultural and economic transformation processes*” (Stefan Batory Foundation 1997: 3). The Civic Dialogue Program had no restrictions as to its thematic scope. Although a significant aspect was that the organizations cooperated with other organizations and self-governments and acquired new skills (Mendza-Drozd 2000: 35). The DemNet program also gave up its initial focus on public policy oriented NGOs and shifted to local grassroots and to NGOs addressing specific topical issues or social problems. The program operators realized that by focusing primarily on capital-based NGOs active in the diffuse field of “democracy promotion”, NGOs might be built up that are “*sophisticated and skillful at courting the Western donor community while not responding well to their local constituents’ needs*” (USAID 1999: 12).

Yet NGO assistance did not only gain in quantitative terms by covering a wider range of NGOs including the local level and focusing on thematic oriented NGOs as well, civil society assistance also profited with regard to the strategies and types of assistance. Donors became increasingly aware of the importance of indigenous processes and local knowledge.¹⁵⁷ The International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) put the lesson learned as follows:

“...reform must result from an indigenous, transparent, participatory process. International organizations ... help catalyze the process, by bringing important stakeholder together and providing technical assistance and comparative analysis...(but) in order for an.. reform process to succeed, indigenous institutions and individuals must assume ownership of activities” (USAID 1999: B1).

Training and capacity building became an important aspect of the NGO support programs. Thus the times of the “Marriot brigades” had passed. Instead of relying on foreign experts donors chose to refer to local expertise or to get involved in “train the trainer” projects that aimed to pass technical know-how onto Polish professional trainers. For example the Phare Civic Dialogue Program provided training and information services in order to enhance the professional standards of NGOs. In the period 1996/97 altogether 4258 NGO representatives had been trained in a range of subjects including management, fundraising, public relations, strategic development and the role of NGOs in a changing society (Cooperation Fund 1998: 29pp). Moreover, donors increasingly relied on domestic NGOs in order to implement their projects.

157 This point holds not only for civil society assistance but for assistance in general. USAID, for example, underwent a process of decentralization and regionalization transferring its operations from Washington to Poland in 1993-1995. This process went hand in hand with an increasing use of Polish consultants and organizations as implementers of USAID funded projects (USAID 2000a).

For example, the DemNet team restricted from conducting an informational and outreach campaign on their own to help NGOs apply for DemNet grants. Instead they relied on a network of support centers, later known as SPLOT, to do so and trained the SPLOT staff in order to achieve this goal. The aim was not only to pass on information but also to strengthen local support centers (appendix 5, portray 10).

Capacity building was further understood as “network building” between NGOs and between NGOs and local authorities. Moreover, the installment of an “infrastructure” of the NGO sector has been of special importance. This infrastructure consisted of “leading institutions”, that are local NGO support centers and a NGO representative, supported by a favorable legal environment. All specific NGO support programs (Civic Dialogue, Batory Foundation, DemNet) worked towards that goal (see chapter 7.4.).

In sum, donors applied a more fine-tuned approach starting in 1994. The emphasis was shifted to micro-grants that also benefited small and local NGOs. Moreover, a wider range of NGOs received assistance. Along with that, donors increasingly relied on domestic organizations and local know-how in conducting their programs. The EU as well as USAID used local staff in order to manage their NGO support programs. Domestic organizations were also used in order to implement projects. Finally emphasis shifted from institution building to capacity building. Not only intensive training, but also the building of networks and a favorable environment for non-governmental activities became the major concern.

7.3.4 Withdrawal of Donors and the Europeanization of Assistance: The End of the 1990s

The end of the 1990s marked a further turning point in the history of Western assistance to civil society in Poland: Western donors were increasingly withdrawing from the scene. USAID ended its commitment in the year 2000 and US-based philanthropic foundations such as the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation or the Ford Foundation that have been very active in the field of NGO development are shifting their focus further East. The support of the German political foundations continues. However, their resources are too limited to broadly support civil society. They instead focus upon specific issue areas such as activities related to European integration. The Phare Civic Dialogue program was closed at the end of 1998, Phare democracy, Phare Lien and Phare Partnership followed shortly after.

Donors aim to smooth out the consequences of their withdrawal. Thereby US-American and European donors apply two different strategies. USAID thoroughly worked on its exit strategy by starting initiatives in anticipation of its departure from Poland already in 1996. In the area of NGO assistance the USAID exit strategy consisted of two main pillars. Firstly, major

emphasis was placed on ensuring the long-term sustainability of Polish NGOs. The initiatives and priority areas of DemNet have to be seen in this light. DemNet's activities aim to raise the professionalism and public opinion on NGOs and to trigger local funding for NGOs by establishing "community foundations" (see appendix 5, portray 10). Professionalism, philanthropy and local support in contrast to state funding are thus seen as the best ways to ensure NGO sustainability. Secondly, USAID frequently leaves "successor organizations" behind that have been established by local staff of the USAID projects.¹⁵⁸ In the case of DemNet the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy established in 1998 aimed to continue DemNet's efforts to promote long-term sustainability of NGOs.

In contrast to the USA, the European Union continues its support, not under the banner of "democracy assistance" though. Instead the EU incorporates the candidate countries into the common European support structure of the cohesion and structural funds. As a result the specific Phare NGO support programs end in 1998.¹⁵⁹ Starting in the year 2000 Poland, like other EU candidate countries, is eligible for the EU's internal support programs and the structural funds. NGOs are thus eligible to various support programs in the area of education (e.g. Leonardo, Socrates), Justice (e.g. Daphne), Research & Development, Equal Opportunities for Women, Health or Human Rights (see Open Society Institute 2001).¹⁶⁰ Moreover, in 2000 the EU launched the new program ACCESS with a budget of 20 million Euros for the ten accession candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe (total allocation for grants in Poland is 5.58 million €). ACCESS aims to support the development of Civil Society in these countries and replaces the Phare Lien, Democracy and Partnership program.

158 Examples of such "successor" organizations are the European Institute for Democracy (evolving out of the USAID political party building program), or FIRMA 2000 (successor of Business Support Program).

159 In 1999 Polish NGOs could still apply to some Phare projects. However, in line with the streamlining of Phare as a primarily pre-accession instrument, support was exclusively assigned to activities with a European focus. For example, Polish NGOs that engaged in joint projects with their local governments could apply for financial support within the Pro-European Initiatives Project (Phare 1997) for activities related to the promotion of European integration (Mendza-Drozd 2000: 33).

160 Whether NGOs can apply for these funds depends, however, on their government. The Polish state has to contribute partly to respective programs which they are not willing to do in all fields. As a result, NGO activists are eager to participate in the discussions preceding the EU integrations. The question is the subject of several working groups between NGO representatives and representatives of respective governments.

According to the European Commission “Access will support initiatives and strengthen the operational capacity of non-governmental and non-profit organizations through co-financing grants for projects of relevance to *acquis* implementation and to certain social need priorities” (cit. from <http://www.access.atomnet.pl/html/guide.html>).¹⁶¹

The Stefan Batory Foundation as a “local donor” seeks to ease the shift from foreign to domestic and European funding. To do so, it expanded its institutional grant scheme as a substitute for foreign funding:

“The IGP (institutional grant program) fills a temporary foreign funding void. Two-three years ago institutional grants defined as support for “statutory activities” would be sought from a variety of foreign donors; this diversity has decreased considerably. The Helsinki Foundation for human rights with grants in 1996 and 1997, matched from the Ford Foundation, is a perfect example: In the past, it had secure funding from foreign donors; only one year later, these foreign donors are leaving” (Stefan Batory Foundation 2000: 11).

Moreover, the Stefan Batory Foundation supported the establishment of a Polish NGO Office in Brussels in 2001 to improve the communication between Poland’s NGO community, European NGOs and EU officials, and to ensure a better preparation of Polish NGOs for the membership in the EU.¹⁶²

To conclude, the section has investigated in civil society assistance in Poland over time. It became clear that the importance donors place on civil society has changed over the years. In other words, civil society assistance came in sequences. Roughly three different periods have been distinguished: In the years 1989/90 to 1993, donors concentrated more on political institutions on the national level and on political elites than on civil society. However, this does not mean that civil society did not receive any assistance. On the contrary, important financial means were available that laid the ground for non-governmental

161 Doubts have been raised, however, whether ACCESS is suited to replace the Phare civic dialogue, democracy and LIEN programs. Firstly, ACCESS is “accession-driven”, i.e. its aim is to facilitate the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* in the respective countries. Along the same lines, the range of eligible projects is limited to certain key areas. In Poland those are environmental protection, socio-economic development especially the promotion of worker’s rights and social dialogue, and activities in the social sector (ibid). Moreover, ACCESS firstly provides macro-grants only. Small grant schemes similar to the previous programs that operated with micro-grants between 3000 and 10,000 Euros were only established in 2001. Macro-grants, however, exceed by far the capacity of the majority of small NGOs in Poland.

162 See: <http://www.eu.ngo.pl>. Since 2001 the Polish NGO Office in Brussels has been fulfilling the following tasks: (1) distributing information on issues important to European network NGOs and civil dialogue at the EU level, back to Poland for wide and rapid dissemination through Poland’s NGO website (www.ngo.pl) and the media; (2) bringing Poland’s Third Sector closer to the decision makers and participants of the European civil dialogue in the run-up to EU enlargement through provision of news and data; (3) bringing Poland’s NGOs into the discussions on social and political issues important to European network NGOs and the future development of the European Union; and (4) assisting in bringing Poland’s NGOs into contact with similar organizations in the 15 member states, as well as providing resources to host Polish interns and visitors in Brussels.

organizations to start their operations. However, the aid benefited mainly “*some favored cliques*” (Wedel 1998) and was often directed by contacts already established in previous years. Like this, organizations came into existence that shaped the subsequent development of civil society. Civil society assistance gained prominence in the middle of the 1990s, starting around 1994/95. This new emphasis did not only translate into more available funds, but also in the provision of a more fine-tuned and appropriate technical assistance and in a broadening of the range of recipients. Donors aimed to build up the capacity of NGOs. This implied on the one hand an advancement of professional standards and organizational knowledge; on the other hand, donors stressed the importance of networks, thus a cooperative relationship among NGOs and local authorities, and aimed to build a favorable “infrastructure” of the NGO sector. Finally, at the end of the 1990s we were witness to a withdrawal of mainly American donors which posed a major challenge to Polish NGOs. As illustrated above (chapter 7.2), the NGO sector in Poland is quite developed in comparison to the situation in 1990. However, it is far from being consolidated. The question thus is whether Polish NGOs manage to shift from US funds to European or domestic sources. Issues such as sustainability, governmental support, cooperation with local authorities and advancement of philanthropy rank high on the agenda of NGO activists. It is left to the next section to clarify the extent to which recipients of foreign assistance succeed in settling these issues.

7.4 The Output and Outcome of Assistance – Recipients in Focus

Whereas the aim of the previous section was to highlight donor activities throughout the 1990s in Poland, the subsequent section aims to give a tentative assessment of the output and the outcome of the described endeavors, and thus shifts the attention from donors to recipients. Questions arise as to the extent to which the described efforts of donors have reached their aim to strengthen civil society in Poland. Did Western civil society assistance contribute to an increase in the quantity and plurality of organizations, and did it succeed in transplanting a respective cultural basis of civil society that is evident in the vertical relationship with government, and in horizontal relationships between NGOs (see chapter 2.2.3.)?

This question is even more salient with respect to the two problems of civil society assistance: the problem of selectivity and legitimacy. It has been pointed out that the selectivity of donors may not translate into a variety of non-governmental organizations and a classical civil society, rather a distorted and structural image of civil society evolves marked by a few organizations that serve donor rather than domestic needs and remain

disconnected to society. If this is the case, civil society assistance supports nothing more than a “supplementary stratum” of highly professional NGOs that will vanish once donors funding ends.

This section aims to clarify whether this has been the case in Poland. In order to approach this question, the analysis concentrates on major beneficiaries of assistance or “main recipients” in line with the argumentation outlined in the methodology of this work (chapter 5.3). The analysis thereby follows the leading research questions identified in chapter 5.3.1. First, what type of organizations gained Western attention? Second, are such “main recipients” sustainable in the long run? Third, are they embedded in local structures and perceived as legitimate domestic actors or as puppets of Western agencies, intruders and “bridgeheads of alien influence”? Fourth, are they the often-cited “multipliers” that contribute to an advancement of civil society on the structural and the cultural dimension? And fifth, to what extent does external assistance support main recipients in fulfilling their role as carriers of civil society? A key question of the research is whether the outcomes of main recipients are owed to the peculiarities of domestic settings or whether the cooperation and transactions with external actors were decisive in bringing about the described results. In other words, to what extent did civil society assistance alter the capabilities and orientations of civil society actors and impacted upon social and political change by means of empowerment and learning?

7.4.1 Types of Main Recipients

It has been pointed out that external assistance tends to be selective in the distribution of civil society assistance and favors only a few organizations (see chapter 3.5.). Evidence suggests that this is also the case in Poland. According to the Klon/Jawor survey from 1997, with 17.6% of all resources available to Polish NGOs foreign funding is the second largest sources of financing for the nongovernmental sector in Poland in 1997 (BORDO 1998: 70). However, only 16% of all NGOs benefited from this important source (BORDO 1998: 67). Western civil society assistance thus benefits only a small segment of civil society in Poland. The question arises what segment of civil society has been supported and whether types of “typical” recipients can be identified?

Based on the observations of the author in Poland, three different types of “typical” recipients have been identified that have been labeled “democracy promoters”; “infrastructural organizations”, and “thematic organizations”. The organizations differ according to their statutory objective, their activities, and their relationship with donors.¹⁶³

Democracy Promoters:

Donors rely on domestic NGOs as implementers of their democracy and civil society development projects (see chapter 3). Instead of conducting civic education, awareness-raising, or anti-corruption projects themselves, they sponsor a domestic NGO to do so. In this way, organizations are established whose only objective is the promotion of democracy and civil society. Examples include organizations such as “The Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe” (IDEE), The Foundation for the Education of Democracy (Fundacja Edukacja dla Demokracji – FED), or the “Civil Society Development Foundation” (CSDF). Despite different backgrounds all three organizations are rather similar in terms of objective, areas of activity and origin.¹⁶⁴

The “democracy promoters” see their main objective in the promotion of democracy and civil society. IDEE *“is committed to the development of a civic society and the enlivening of contacts between people actively working in non-governmental organizations ...”* (www.idea.ngo.pl). CSDF *“works to strengthen and improve the effectiveness of citizen-based initiatives in Poland and other countries of CEE”* (free.ngo.pl/csdf/English.htm). Also FED names *“the promotion of ideas about democracy and the free market economy”* as its major objective (www.edudemo.org.pl).

Additionally, the approach to the promotion of democracy and civil society is similar. Civic education and training of NGO leaders are the main area of activity. The provision of consultation, technical assistance and information to NGOs, or the organization of internships

163 The following typology is based on the field research of the author in Poland. The sample includes examples of large recipient organizations that sometimes even directly evolved from donor programs and that are still visible in the Polish civil society sector today. The “main recipients” of each group have in common that they received assistance from at least three of the main donors covered by this study, i.e. the EU, American donor organizations (NED; USAID), the Stefan Batory foundation, and the two largest German political foundations. Additionally, the chosen NGOs are frequently supported by Western funds, and their budget relies to at least 30% on foreign sources (see chapter 5.3.1). The selection was based on a systematic analysis of available project lists of the four donor organizations (see appendix 7) and was the result of a “snowballing process” (see in detail chapter 5.4). Emphasis was placed here on “infrastructural NGOs” for reasons given above (see chapter 5.3.2). As a result, one has to note that the described organizations provide no exhaustive list of “main recipients” but are only typical examples.

164 The following is based on information given on the respective websites of each organization, on personal interviews, and on annual reports and other materials: FED (1999), IDEE (1999), CSDF (1997), CSDF (1999), CSDF (2000).

and study trips are further undertakings. CSDF thereby mainly focuses on services to NGOs (e.g. strategic planning processes, evaluations, trainings). FED and IDEE have a wider target group. FED originally provided civic education to schoolteachers, but soon included NGO leaders, local government members and students. IDEE founded a network between like-minded organizations in CEE, the “Centers of Pluralism”. Both also manage projects supporting local press development in Poland and other countries, work with school councils and youth groups or organize internships and study trips for councilors of Ukraine to Poland (IDEE 1999: 13).

Finally, the establishment of all three is interwoven with Western based organizations. IDEE is the branch of the Washington based Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe, the successor of the exile representative of Solidarity, the “Committee in Support of Solidarity” in New York. FED is the outgrowth of a joint program, created by Polish and American teachers in 1982 as a response to the introduction of martial law in Poland that became one of the first grantees of the NED in 1990. Workshops in union skills organized since 1990 by trainers from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) led to the creation of a team of Polish volunteer trainers, which then began conducting independent training courses based on the AFT model. Finally the Polish team established its own organizations, the FED. CSDF evolved out of a two-year “train the trainer” program for indigenous NGOs trainers initiated in Poland and Hungary in 1994. The program titled “Civil Society Development Program” was launched in response to a report prepared for the Rockefeller Brothers Fund on Civil Society Assistance in CEE that recommended the creation of indigenous teams of trainers and consultations (Siegel / Yancey 1992).¹⁶⁵ The program was funded by a group of mainly private, US-American donors.¹⁶⁶

Infrastructural organizations

Infrastructural organizations may be labeled the “second generation” of recipients. They differ from the previous group in that they focus less on education and more on structures. Moreover, they compliment the provision of services with a political perspective. The aim is to build an “infrastructure” for civil society organizations including not only the provision of

165 For more information see the website of Dan Siegel and Jenny Yancey who were the founding Co-Directors of the Civil Society Development Program: www.newvisionsprd.org/index.html

166 Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Stefan Batory Foundation, Joyce Mertz-Gilmore Foundation, Open Society Institute, Partners for International Education and Training, Phare Civic Dialogue Program, Phare Democracy Program, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Trust for Mutual Understanding, Winston Foundation for World Peace.

services, information and know how, but also a constructive political environment for NGOs including respective laws and representative structures.¹⁶⁷

The most important of these infrastructural organizations in Poland are:

- “Associations for the Forum of Non-Governmental Initiatives” (Forum Inicjatyw Pozarządowych) (FIP); an NGO founded in 1996 by individual members. FIP regards itself as an advocate for NGOs.
- The KLON/ JAWOR association transformed into an independent NGO in 2000 as an offspring of a database on NGOs in Poland of same denominator created in 1990 (then run by the “Regardless of Bad Weather Foundation). It provides free information on NGO- relevant issues with the aim of developing civil society.
- The “Support Office for the Movement of Self-Help Initiatives” (BORIS) founded in 1992 and “The Network of Information and Support” (SPLOT) (1995), the so called “NGO support centers” that support NGOs active in social welfare with the provision of training, information and know-how.
- The “Working Community of Associations of Social NGOs in Poland” (WRZOS) founded in 2000; an umbrella organization of seven regional associations of NGOs working on social welfare in Poland. All in all, WRZOS represents a growing number of 280 organizations.
- The “Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland” (Academy) founded in 1998, a NGO that aims to advance funding possibilities for NGOs via the establishment of community foundations.

Regarding their major objective and mission, the “infrastructural organizations” do not differ much from the “democracy promoters”. The main mission is to promote the development of civil society as stated with different wording in each statute.¹⁶⁸

167 The following is based on information given on the respective websites of each organizations, in personal interviews, in Wejcman (1999) and in annual reports and other materials: BORIS (2001), BORIS (2000), FIP (2000), FIP (1999).

168 The organizations aim to “*support broadly understood civic activity*” (BORIS); “*to promote the participation of NGOs in creating the civil society*” (FIP); “*to strengthen the civil society and encourage citizen participation in solving social problems at local community level*” (WRZOS), or to “*support the development of civil society through rendering help to associations, foundations, support groups and other civil initiatives*” (SPLOT).

However, the activities and approaches to civil society development are slightly different than the “democracy promoters”. On the one hand, the activities aim to support NGOs via the provision of services.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, activities aim to build an “infrastructure” for NGOs. Such an infrastructure embraces networks and institutionalized forms of cooperation among NGOs, but also a respective legal framework as well as cooperative relationships between NGOs and state authorities. In order to ensure such an “infrastructure”, the organizations engage in network building among NGOs (BORIS, FIP), lobby for legislative reform (FIP, representatives of KLON, BORIS, Academy), or lobby central government on behalf of social NGOs (WROSZ). They aim to install an NGO representative (FIP, WROSZ) and domestic funding possibilities for NGOs (Academy).

One must note that the described organizations have their roots in social initiatives surrounding the Solidarity civic committees and are further manifestations of a strong charity tradition in Poland (Wejcman 1999: 19). Nonetheless, all organizations hold intensive contacts with Western donors, benefit from technical and financial assistance, and also embrace Western models and ideas. One may say that the organizations are inspired rather than driven by the different foreign models and templates. BORIS was founded in 1992 with the aim of coordinating the self-help initiatives movement. From the very beginning BORIS has been cooperating with the *Deutsch-Polnische Verständigung e.V.* (Association for German-Polish Understanding) sponsored by the German *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband* (German welfare association). BORIS acted as the Polish partner of the *Deutsch-Polnische Verständigung* assisting the implementation of various training and internship activities for Polish social workers (program “training and twinning”) (Balon 1999: 6). Moreover, BORIS received start-up funding from USAID and was supported by Phare civic dialogue (appendix 7, table 19, 23). The network SPLOT previously known under the heading “Open Society Network” received financial and technical assistance from Phare civic dialogue, the DemNet project of USAID, and the Batory foundation. It consists of previously established regional centers of social initiatives (the first one was founded already in 1989 as the “Council to coordinate self-help” at the regional office of the NSZZ Solidarity in Poznań).¹⁷⁰ Western assistance aimed at enhancing the services of SPLOT for its members including information provision, standards of training etc.

169 BORIS and the different organizations of the network SPLOT (of which BORIS is part of) engage in training activities, the organization of conferences, but also in consultancy. KLON/JAWOR compiles reports on the NGO sector in Poland and provides relevant information for NGOs via a special Internet platform (www.ngo.pl). WROSZ also provides services in the form of information and know-how to its members. FIP, too, emanates information relevant for NGOs (funding possibilities, conferences, legislative alterations etc.).

170 See Asocjacje “the association supporting social initiatives” Review on the Third Sector in Poland; <http://www.ml.com.pl/asocjacje/index-e.htm>.

The process leading to the national representation of social NGOs WROSZ, i.e. the process of building regionally organized umbrella organizations and federations is modeled on the German system of *“freie Wohlfahrtsverbände”* and has been accompanied and supported by the association *Deutsch-Polnische Verständigung e.V.* and regional branches of the German association *“der Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband”*. The first regional association of this kind called WROS was founded in 1995 in Wrocław after a study visit of Polish social workers in Germany. From the beginning the organization received assistance from its partner organizations in Germany, while the major share of assistance was coming in the form of training and advice and less in the form of material goods and direct financial support (Drogoś 1999). FIP was founded in 1996 after the first national forum of Non-governmental initiatives was held in Warsaw in September 1996. It was founded by individual members including among others employees of the Civic Dialogue Program, of BORIS, and of the Foundation for Poland (Polish representative of the Fondation de France) (Cooperation Fund 1998: 23; FIP 2000). Local representatives of donor organizations were thus founding members of FIP. Moreover, FIP can name most Western donors as their sponsors. The Academy is finally a direct offspring of a donor program. The Academy continues the efforts of the USAID DemNet project aiming to promote local philanthropy (see appendix 5, portray 10). The local staff and their know-how have still been ensuring that the Academy remains embedded in local structures. The director Pawel Łukasiak is the former president of BORIS and well known in the NGO community. The Academy's endeavors are joint ventures with FIP and the Batory Foundation. Moreover, it received some further funding from USAID. This little summary depicts that the described organizations hold frequent personal and informal contacts. What evolves is an informal network of recipients and locally active donors.

Thematic Organizations

Although they have a certain preference in this respect, donors do not only sponsor advocacy NGOs or NGOs that regard the promotion of democracy and civil society as their main statutory goal. NGOs with specific thematic objectives are also “main recipients” that benefit from donor funding. One has to note, however, that some topics receive more Western attention than others. A fact revealed by the survey of KLON /JAWOR (see table 6). According to this survey, NGOs active in the area of “state, law, politics”, “human rights”, “education” the “mass media”, “family/children/youth”, “religion”, “social issues”, “decentralization”, and “environment” relied more frequently on foreign resources than the average of NGOs in Poland.

Table 6 NGOs Relying Partially on Foreign Funds by Core Area of Activity in Poland 1994

Area of activity	Declared as core activity in 1994 in %	% of organizations using foreign funds
Total of NGOs		16
State, law, politics	3.8	28
Human rights	6.3	24
Education	40.9	20
Mass media	7.3	19
Family, children, youth	12.5	19
Religions, denominations	4.8	18
Social assistance	29.6	17
Health	21.4	17
Regional Development	16.7	16
Ecology	23.6	16
Science	11.2	14
Rural areas / decentralization	3.6	13
Economy	10	13
Hobby	7.4	11
Sports	13.5	11
Arts, culture	29.4	11
Construction	2.5	11
Professional groups	6.4	8
Communication	2	7
Public safety	1.5	6

Source: Survey of Klon/Jawor 1994 published in BORDO 1998: 44, 32

Note: More than one answer is possible

Examples for such thematically oriented “main recipients” are the “Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights” (HFHR), “The Foundation in Support for Local Democracy” (FSLD) but also various think tanks such as the “Institute for Public Affairs” (ISP, *Instytut Spraw Publicznych*) or the “Institute for International Relations” (CIM).¹⁷¹

The named organizations are active in different issue areas and strive for different objectives.¹⁷²

One has to note that the mentioned organizations are rather different with regard to statutory objectives and major activities. Nevertheless, three combining characteristics can be highlighted. First, the briefly described organizations did profit from an early start and early Western support. By the year 2000 they are well-known and reputable organizations with a substantial budget and a high number of paid staff that shape the development of their specific thematic fields.¹⁷³ Second, all of the organizations are affiliated with prominent personalities from politics and (social) science with international contacts and reputation.¹⁷⁴ This fact facilitated the access to financial resources at least as much as the specific thematic orientation. And finally, one has to note that all of the covered organizations have strands in the Solidarity movement and evolve out of domestic concerns. The Helsinki Committee in Poland that founded HFHR in 1989 was established during the period of martial law in 1982. It was an underground organization, which aimed to inform the international community on the situation in Poland by publishing Human Rights reports and smuggling them to the West (HFHR 2000: 24, interview Danuta Przywara). FSLD was

171 The following is based on interviews by the author, on respective websites (www.hfhrpol.waw.pl; www.csm.org.pl; www.isp.org.pl, and the following material: FSLD (1999); FSLD (1997); HFHR (2000).

172 The Helsinki Foundation was founded in 1989 as an independent institute for education and research in human rights. The HFHR engages in legislative monitoring in the area of respect of human rights in Poland and other countries of CEE. The Foundation in Support for Local Democracy aims to advance local self-government in Poland. It implements its mission primarily through training and educational programs via a network of 15 Regional Training Centers, a College of Local Government and Administration and three Higher Education Schools of Public Administration. Besides the provision of training, consulting and technical assistance to local governments, the FSLD supported the state system reform introducing the *powiat* level in 1999. The Institute of Public Affairs as well as its offshoot the Center for International Relations are think-tanks in the area of public politics and international relations launched in 1995. They evolved out of a program of the Batory foundation (see appendix 4, table 10).

173 For example the FSLD budget in 1999 was 5.1 mio Euro (www.fundersonline.org). In 1999 FSLD employed 186 people (FSLD 2000: 44).

174 The Helsinki committee in Poland that acts as the Program Board of the HFHR consists mainly of professors and known figures of the Solidarity movement (Jacek Kurczewski, Zbigniew Holda, Ewa Letowska (also advisory board of IPA), Janusz Grzelak, Marek Nowicki, Teresa Bogucka, Stefan Starczewski ...). The advisory council of IPA consist for example of Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz (former Prime Minister), Bronisław Geremek (former Minister of Foreign Affairs), Tadeusz Mazowiecki (former Prime Minister). CIM has been founded by Janusz Reiter (former Minister of Foreign Affairs). FSLD is headed by Prof. Jerzy Regulski (also advisory board of IPA).

created in 1989 by a group of members of the Civic Committee led by Professor Regulski (FSLD 1997: 8). The group tied up to the Solidarity principle of “self-administration”. Although this principle was primarily connected to workers committees, a small group of experts inside the Solidarity movement connected the idea with the self-government of local and regional levels (see e.g. Baldersheim/Illner 1996, Benzler 1993). The think-tanks ISP and CIM are not only connected with well-known personalities but are also connected to a strong tradition of social sciences in Poland. A further example – that has not been covered here – are the strong environmental NGOs that on the one hand received massive Western support, but on the other hand can be traced back to environmentally oriented sub-groups operating under the broad roof of the Solidarity movement (see Glinski 1999; REC 1997: 55pp). We thus must conclude that these “main recipients” are rather recipient than donor-driven. It holds true that some topics are more supported by donor organizations than others. But this fact is as much due to donor preferences as to domestic concerns. The major differences among the three types of main recipients are summarized in the following table:

Table 7 Types of Main Recipients

Type	Objective	Activity	Role of donor
Democracy Promoters	Democracy and Civil Society	Civic education / service provision	Role model
Infrastructural NGOs	Civil Society and “Third Sector”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provision (information, know-how, finances to NGOs) • Lobbying for respective legal framework • Integrative measures (network building, representation / umbrella) 	Supermarket of Ideas, Inspiration
Thematic Organizations	Thematic Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service provision (training, research) • Awareness raising • Lobbying • Monitoring 	Sponsor

7.4.2 Sustainability of Main Recipients

It was made clear above that the three groups of recipients evolved as well-established and highly professional organizations over the years with the help of external assistance. The question remains, however, whether they will be able to ensure their sustainability once international donors withdraw from Poland. The question of sustainability seems to be of special importance concerning “democracy promoters” and “infrastructural organizations”. What can be the tasks of “democracy promoters” once donors decide that a country is “democratic” and that end the funding of civil society assistance activities has come? Along the same lines, how can “infrastructural organizations” make their living, once the “infrastructure” of NGOs is in place and their mission is thus fulfilled? It will be made clear in the following that in Poland the main recipients typologized above managed to sustain themselves in the period of donor withdrawal. However, they did so while pursuing different strategies.

The organizations labeled above as “democracy promoters” succeeded in ensuring their sustainability by continuing their efforts in other countries and regions. They shift their geographic focus in line with donor attention. All three organizations described above (IDEE, FED, CSDF) increasingly conduct (Western funded) projects in countries such as Ukraine, Byelorussia or Kosovo. In 1999 IDEE even managed a “Democracy support program” in Cuba. One may argue that with the support to “democracy promoters”, external civil society assistance transferred development-aid organizations. In other words, donors transferred their own images and created templates of themselves, which lack the finances and the governmental funding or the philanthropic support of their role models though.

The sustainability of “infrastructural organizations” is guaranteed at least in the short-run. This is largely due to the Batory Foundation that continues and intensifies its support to NGOs in Poland and thus aims to facilitate the withdrawal of mainly American donors. Moreover, the highly professional and well-connected “infrastructural organizations” are in a favored position to make the shift to European funding. FIP for example manages several projects appointed by the delegation of the EU Commission in Poland. The Stefan Batory Foundation that sponsors a representation of Polish NGOs in Brussels further facilitates the shift to European funds. Moreover, the socially oriented organizations such as BORIS, WROSZ or SPLOT can partially draw on indigenous support and continue their relationships with German welfare associations. Finally, the organizations do possess contacts to governmental and administrative bodies. Whether they manage to succeed in receiving domestic funding is to be seen in the future. Nevertheless the limitation of funds is felt. This is

e.g. evident in the move of organizations such as FIP, WROSZ, KLON/JAWOR (and others such as Humanitarian Action, Polish Foundation) in a joint “NGO center” in Warsaw.

As far as domestic funding possibilities for Polish NGOs are concerned, one can state that with the support of foreign aid, a number of domestic donors in form of foundations and support centers evolved that support NGOs. These are, e.g. above called “thematic organizations” such as the Children and Youth Foundation that provides grants to NGOs engaging in social projects. Moreover, the work of the Academy seems to take fruit. The Academy assisted the establishment of 13 local philanthropic organizations in Poland by 2001, including five equipped with their own capital endowment. This point is confirmed by the following insights from the DPP survey on NGOs in Poland and Slovakia conducted in 2002 and 03 (see appendix 8). Asked about their main donors, 24% of the participating Polish NGOs name a domestic foundation or fund as one of their main donors (e.g. Polish Children and Youth Foundation, Pastwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji). Additionally, 5% draw on funds of the Academy in Support of Local Philanthropy; and 20% name the Stefan Batory Foundation as one major donor. 42% draw only on domestic sources (including governmental support) and a further 37% depend on a mix of foreign and domestic sources. Only 12% mention exclusively foreign donors as their main donors (including Batory Foundation) (ibid: question 13, 13a).

In sum, contrary to doubts that have been raised concerning the ability of “main recipients” to sustain themselves, once donor commitments came to an end, the organizations under investigation managed to guarantee their existence. However the strategies that ensured sustainability are different. “Democracy promoters” use their expertise in democracy assistance in order to conduct their projects in other countries further to the East now. “Infrastructural NGOs” succeeded in shifting to European and local funding. And “thematic organizations” managed to turn their favored stand due to early and massive external support into a comparative edge. As a result, they are reputable and well-known organizations with relatively easy access to domestic (and foreign) sources.

Moreover, a large share of Polish non-governmental organizations benefit at least indirectly via the work of “main recipients” from Western funding. In this way, the provision of material resources and institution building greatly benefits Polish civil society (see chapter 7.4.4. below).

7.4.3 Legitimacy of Main Recipients

So far the analysis has focused on major characteristics of main recipients and tackled the question of sustainability. The proceeding section jumped to the conclusion that main recipients succeeded in maintaining sustainability. Main recipients can therefore be classified as an output of civil society assistance. The following will go one step further and aim to tackle the question of legitimacy. Are organizations with international contacts that draw on foreign resources to a great extent accepted as legitimate domestic actors?

As regards the acceptance of “main recipients” in Polish society, one must first note that in Poland (as in most CEE countries) Western contacts are assessed as something positive rather than negative. Instead of undermining the credibility of recipients, Western assistance thus raises the self-esteem and results in reputation and standing. This point is confirmed by the DPP survey conducted in 2002. A vast majority of Polish NGOs (93%) assesses international contacts as very important (appendix 8, table 26, question 10). Thereby it makes no difference whether the questioned NGO has international contacts or not.¹⁷⁵ In other words, also non-recipients see international contacts as something positive and not as something illegitimate. Therefore one cannot confirm that main recipients are perceived as “bridgeheads of alien influence”. Most NGOs further agree that one can profit from the reputation of the donor organization (75%) (ibid: question 12). However, the questioned NGOs largely agree that donors prefer a few highly professional NGOs; 51% agree that this is partially the case; 14% agree that this is the case with all donors (ibid: question 17). One could argue that envy is more of a problem than the rejection of recipients as westernized intruders. NGOs have further no negative image in public opinion. In the DPP survey the majority of NGOs (52%) report that a negative public opinion of NGOs is no problem of NGOs in Poland (ibid: question 12).

7.4.4 Main Recipients as Carriers of Civil Society?

The following tackles the question whether “main recipients” contribute with their activities to an advancement of civil society on the structural and the cultural dimension. In other words, can we attribute the positive changes in civil society development identified in chapter 7.2. to the activities of main recipients?

¹⁷⁵ Approximately half of the questioned NGOs hold international contacts, half did not. Both groups equally assessed international contacts as very important. It is important to note that the survey covered a substantial share of local NGOs. 44% of the questioned NGOs are located in cities with less than 100.000 inhabitants. Only 19% are located in the capital.

Did main recipients strengthen non-governmental structures in Poland, help to overcome the deep state society divide, and advance the relationships among civil society organizations? To answer these questions, the section focuses on three different areas of activity: service provision to small and local NGOs, lobbying for legal reform and the installment of a NGO representative. Emphasis is largely placed upon “infrastructural NGOs” for reasons given above (chapter 5.3.2.).

Service Provision

The first indicator of the effectiveness of main recipients in advancing the structural and cultural dimension of civil society is their role as service providers to NGOs. Did main recipients contribute to the organizational capacity of small and local NGOs by the provision of services, techniques, know-how and financial resources? It will be argued in the following that this has been the case. Organizations that benefited from foreign support more often than not acted in one form or another as “intermediaries” in the sense that they passed on the gained benefits in the form of information, training and advice, but also in the form of finances. With regard to the provision of information, in particular, there are many examples, KLON published a series of issue-oriented directories¹⁷⁶ as well as a “Know your Rights” series of brochures covering topics related to social services and legal rights. Moreover, KLON enabled NGOs to gain access to the Internet and set up an e-mail account on their NGO Internet server (www.ngo.pl). The use of modern communicative technology further facilitates the access to important information such as funding possibilities, training opportunities and legal issues. SPLOT also collects and disseminates information relevant to NGOs. It published e.g. a guidebook to American organizations offering grants in CEE as well as a brochure on selected national public funds accessible to NGOs. Moreover they have altogether six bulletins that inform about the work of NGOs in Poland. Secondly, “main recipients” contribute to the organizational capacity of NGOs and other organizations via the provision of training. Primarily “democracy promoters” are active in this field, but the “support centers” also train NGO leaders and activists in such a wide range of issues like “strategic planning of long-term activities”, “effective self-evaluation”, or “how to establish ties with the public administration and local government” (BORIS).

To sum it up, a broad range of NGOs increased their professionalism or in the language of donors “they build up capacity” thanks to the services provided by main recipients. In this manner, the intermediary role of main recipients reduced the problem of selectivity inherent in

176 These included among others: A directory on NGOs working in the field of disabilities (1997), a catalog of non-governmental environmental initiatives in Poland (1998), directory on organizations working for the advancement of rural areas and agriculture (1998).

civil society assistance. One has to note, however, that the training provided is often thematically restricted. Management techniques, questions of how to guarantee sustainability and how to raise funds stand in the forefront. The major focus is thus often placed on strengthening the organizational capacity of NGOs regardless of their thematic objective.

Legislative Reform

Besides the provision of services, infrastructural NGOs have been very active in striving for legislative reform concerning NGO law and in campaigning for NGOs rights. In Poland non-governmental organizations either take the legal form of an association according to the associations act of 1989 (amended in 1990, 1996 and 1998) or the legal form of a foundation according to the foundation act of 1984 (amended in 1991).¹⁷⁷ Although it is undisputable that the two laws on associations and foundations grant the freedom of association and permit NGOs to exist, Third Sector activists have been criticizing for over ten years that the acts do not sufficiently regulate the rights and duties of NGOs, and thus do not provide a framework that stimulates the emergence of a thriving civil sector. Critics point to a lack of definitions, a confusing legal situation due to a co-existence of old and new regulations, restrictive interpretations of the laws by the courts, time-consuming registration processes for foundations together with unclear tax regulations and restrictions concerning the economic activity of associations and foundations in particular (conducted with the purpose to dedicate the income to public benefit objectives).¹⁷⁸ NGO activists were especially frustrated with the unclear tax situation, and the obstacles to contracting out public services to NGOs.

The dissatisfaction with the unclear tax regulation reached its peak when the Foundation for Polish Science was charged with overdue corporate income tax. The foundation invested its

177 See for a discussion of the different acts regulating non-governmental organizations in Poland Lasocik (2000); Wygnanski (2000), various contributions in the International Journal for Non-for profit law (IJNL).

178 Critics point out that instead of a coherent legal framework a patchwork of new and old regulations is in existence that applies to different organizations. Besides the two fundamental regulations on associations and foundations a number of legal acts are still in effect which apply to "social organizations" (Lasocik 2000: 9), a term that referred to quasi-voluntary organizations during communism. Moreover, some organizations have special regulations such as the Law on the Polish Red Cross, The Law on the Polish Allotments Union, or the Law on the Polish Hunting Union (Leś et al 2000: 16). Sports clubs are subject to the law on Physical Culture of 1996 (ibid: 14). The legal situation is consequently "*somewhat complex and confusing*" (IJNL 1998, Iss.1). A further problem is the lacking definition of foundations. Associations have been defined in the law as a "*voluntary, self-managed and permanent union with non-profit aims (which)... defines its own aims, programs and structure (and) ... bases its activity on unpaid work of its members*" (Lasocik 2000: 8p). The foundation act, however, fails to give a clear definition of foundations but only stipulates that the major features of foundations include legal personality, a non-profit-making purpose, and a declaration of aims stated in the founding act (Leś et al 2000: 14). In consequence of this unclear legal situation, foundations engaging in business operations have often been treated as companies although they dedicated their income for common benefit purposes (see for a critical assessment of the legal situation in Poland e.g. Lasocik (2000), Regulaska (1999: 45); Gliński (1999:8); Wygnanski (2000); Leś et al (1999:333).

funds in treasury bills determined to use the realized gains for its core activity – the support of science. According to the Polish Corporate Income Tax Act, Article 17, this objective enjoys a tax-exempt status. Nevertheless the charge was confirmed in court (Wyganski 2000). In response, the infrastructural NGOs described above launched a nation-wide campaign. They critically declared that *“Polish law and the interpretation thereof treats foundations as if they were for-profit companies, ignoring the very fact that foundations can only register as such if its existence is deemed (by the state) to be of paramount social importance”* (Lasocik 2000: 15), and that economic activities are in accordance with the law if the attained income is spend on core activities and/or public benefit activities (see also Wyganski 2000). The case has been brought to the Supreme Court of Poland.

The legal framework was further criticized for insufficiently regulating the cooperation between public authorities and NGOs, thus hindering the realization of public tasks by NGOs as contractors of public authorities (IJNL 1998, Iss.1). Although the Budgetary Law from 1999 on the Public Finance Act admitted the possibility that public authorities subcontract the provision of public services, there has been a serious battle between NGO activists and regional accounting chambers on how to interpret the law, a battle that ended in 1999 with the modification of the law by the Sejm in favor of nongovernmental organizations. The modified law enforces the transparency of public financing and aims at a broad access to public funds. (Lasocik 2000: 34, Gliński 1999: 19, 21).

For all these reasons, NGO activists, many of which are working for the organizations under investigation, have been fighting for years for a new law that eradicates the above mentioned restrictions. Until 1998 it was attempted to strengthen the legal security of NGOs with a *“Public Utility Act”*. Since then there has been an ongoing discussion on a *“Public Benefits Activity Law”* also called *“Law on the Cooperation between Public Administration and NGOs”* designed to regulate the cooperation between NGOs and government. It took six years and intensive debate between NGO activists and governmental representatives until the Sejm finally adopted the law in April 2003.

The new law regulates a variety of issues relevant for NGOs. Firstly, it defines the criteria for a new type of organization – the “public benefit organization”. NGOs that acquire this new status receive certain privileges, primarily tax benefits. This procedure ensures that not the legal form decides upon tax privileges of NGOs, rather the question whether the organization’s objectives and tasks contribute to the public benefit and whether they are non-profit seeking. A council consisting of representatives from government and NGOs will decide upon the public benefit status of applying NGOs. Secondly, the law installs clear mechanisms of contracting and subsidizing the realization of public tasks by NGOs and thus regulates the cooperation between NGOs and government. Thirdly, the law increases the possibility for

NGOs to engage in economic activities that remain tax-exempt. NGOs now have the possibility to invest their financial assets tax-free and to charge fees for the provision of services. The law thus enables NGOs to raise financial resources spent on statutory activities. Moreover, the law introduces the 1% law that has long been established in other CEE countries (as e.g. Hungary, Bulgaria and Czech Republic and Slovakia) and that provides the possibility of transferring 1% of the personal income tax to public benefit organizations. And finally, the law regulates voluntary work (ICNL 2003).¹⁷⁹ Although it is to be seen how the law will operate in practice, the law is expected to provide an impetus for NGO development, not least because it provides new funding opportunities and aims to ensure that more NGOs gain access to public funds. ¹⁸⁰

The final agreement on the new legislation can be classified as a “success” for the infrastructural organizations under investigation but also of their aligned donors. Representatives of these organizations, mainly from FIP but also from other organizations, have been part of the legislative drafting group, and leading figures in the campaign following the court decision charging the Foundation for Polish Science with overdue corporate income tax.

The failed attempt to install a “NGO representative”

Further activities of “infrastructural NGOs” (supported by their donors) aim to develop horizontal relationships and networks among NGOs and to integrate the NGO sector. However, whereas there are several examples of regionally or thematically structured loose networks,¹⁸¹ attempts to install a nation-wide “NGO representative” in order to gain greater bargaining power against the government continuously failed. Efforts in this direction started already in 1991 with the establishment of the Forum of Polish Foundations, an initiative of the Stefan Batory foundation, the European Foundation Center, the Foundation for Poland and others. Since associations could become members, it was hoped that the foundation could act as an “umbrella organization” of Polish foundations and associations. However, the foundation could not live up to these expectations (Asocjacje 1991: 2; Stefan Batory

179 See ICNL 2003. For the ongoing discussion preceding the adoption of the law, see: Gliński (1999: 8pp), Lasocik (2000: 11p).

180 One has to note, however, that it is too early to jump to a concluding assessment of the effects of the new legislation. Anheier/Salamon (1999: 34) make the point that the legal framework is not the only factor that determines the relationship between civil society and the state. Referring to other CEE countries that were much faster in coming to terms with the legislative issue of NGOs they indicate: *“Indeed, in many ways, the new legal frameworks emerging in the region appear to be superior to those in the West.... Nevertheless public attitudes still lag behind this legal development and the public at large seems disillusioned with the promise of the sector.”*

181 BORIS for example initiated a coalition of about 20 Warsaw based NGOs (GRIN Initiative group of Warsaw Pro Bono Organizations) with the aim of developing and coordinating cooperation among the members and with local administration. The aim is to strengthen contacts among NGOs.

Foundation 1997: xiv). A second attempt was made in 1996 with the initiative of the first National Forum of Non-governmental Initiatives (in Polish: Ogólnopolskie Forum Inicjatyw Pozarządowych - FIP), a congregation and fair of 800 NGOs in Warsaw that has been inspired by similar fairs taking place regularly in France (Cooperation Fund 1998: 23). The aim was to promote the activities of NGOs but also to nurture cooperation among NGOs. The organizers of the fair stirred a discussion on the installment of a "NGO representation". However, the participating NGOs did not see the need for the formation of an umbrella organization. Furthermore a deep skepticism towards umbrella organizations and any attempt to "organize from above" that is rooted in communist times prevented any form of institutionalized representation (Wejcman 1999: 24). Instead of a membership-based umbrella organization, the members of the organizational Committee of the fair thus established the "Association for the Forum of Non-governmental Initiatives" (FIP), a non-profit and apolitical organization with the objective of further supporting national NGO meetings, and to act as an advocacy organization of NGOs, substituting a non-existing "NGO representative".

The Working Community of Associations of Social NGO's (WRZOS), a national representation of 12 regional centers of socially active local NGOs founded in 2000, is a further attempt to install an umbrella organization, but not as a representative of NGOs, rather as a federation of thematically oriented organizations active in the social field. Whereas FIP is a typical advocacy NGO without a membership base, WRZOS emulates the German model of territorially organized "*Dachverbände*" (umbrella organizations) and receives various supports from regional branches of the German *Paritätischer Wohlfahrtsverband*.

7.4.5 Recipient Benefits – Did Civil Society Assistance Make a Difference?

The question arises to what extent recipients benefited from civil society assistance. Did donors assist main recipients in assuming their roles and fulfilling their tasks? The section will focus on three main benefits according to three different types of assistance that have been granted (see chapter 5.3.1.): (1) finances; (2) knowledge, i.e. the provision of information, training, techniques and know-how; and (3) moral support.

Financial Support

A large majority of NGOs in Poland highly benefited from financial support granted by external donors. In the DPP survey, 58% of the participating NGOs report that they received institutional grants, while 64% profited from project grants. In both cases more than 90% of

the beneficiaries regarded this kind of support as very important (see appendix 8, table 26, question 15). This data suggests that without external support a large part of Polish NGOs could not have carried out a wide range of their activities. Furthermore, external financial support guaranteed the existence of several Polish NGOs. This holds especially true for main recipients, as the following examples demonstrate. The Batory foundation used its institutional grants to increase the number of support centers in Poland. Moreover, the Batory foundation expanded its institutional grants to cushion the withdrawal of foreign funds from Poland. Particularly main recipients benefited from this expansion (see appendix 4, portray 8). While striving for legislative reform, the community of Polish NGO activists received backing and support from foreign donors throughout the political process. As already noted (chapter 7.4.1.), this support came firstly in the form of finances, enabling the organizations to sustain their activities.

One has to note, however, that donor preferences did not always correspond with local needs. The following observation of the Cooperation fund suggests that the vast majority of Polish NGOs in need of financial assistance did not always fit donor requirements:

The contests organized within the framework of the (Phare) Democracy Programme had considerably fewer applicants than the contests organized by the Civic Dialogue Programme and LIEN.... Such situation was on one hand the outcome of very stringent substantive requirements that the applying organizations were to fulfill, and on the other hand, it was caused by the fact that the number of organizations focused on democratic activities, no matter how broad that notion might be was notably limited..... It is worth noticing that the applications submitted to the contests organized by Phare Democracy Programme were generally very well prepared and the projects implemented within the budget of that programme were at the highest professional level (Cooperation Fund 1998: 11).

With their narrow focus on democracy building projects, donors seem to forget that organizations of civil society have various purposes among which awareness rising and civic education is only one.

Capacity Building

However, financial support is only one facet of foreign assistance. The transfer of knowledge, concepts and techniques as well as the provision of expertise and advice is another.

The support centers and other main recipients profited from the training they received from donor organizations. The Civic Dialogue Program was among the first to pay much attention to the development of regional NGO support centers in order to ensure long term support for NGOs especially at the regional and community level (see table 10). DemNet trained the existing centers in management techniques and relied on the centers as intermediaries passing on information on DemNet grants and assisting local NGOs in applying for funding. Additionally, donors relied on the described organizations as intermediaries enabling them to

reach small and local NGOs. For example, BORIS assisted German welfare organizations in organizing regional conferences on social welfare issues in Poland. Through this cooperation between international donors and domestic intermediaries and “multipliers”, a large majority of Polish NGOs did receive support in the form of training and expertise and highly benefited from it, as confirmed by the DPP survey. When questioned why foreign cooperation has been or would have been important, the majority of replying NGOs reported that they received benefits from international organizations in the form of expertise/consultancy (60%), and training / workshops (54%). Again more than 90% of the NGOs acknowledge these benefits as very important (appendix 8, question 15).

The value of externally granted expertise is demonstrated by the process of legislative reform in NGO law described above (chapter 7.4.). In their negotiations with governmental representatives NGO activists could draw on free expertise ordered by several donor organizations. The USAID funded International Center for Non-for-Profit Law (ICNL) accompanied the legislative process, assisted the NGO representatives in developing draft laws, and continuously provided professional legal expertise on the various proposals. The Phare Civic Dialogue Program appointed an expert group to analyze the current legal status of NGOs. Moreover, the team of three legal experts prepared a study draft of the legal act on non-profit organizations after extensive consultation with the NGO sector (Cooperation Fund 1998: 28; IJNL 1998). The result was the first draft of the “Law on the Cooperation between Public Administration and NGOs” finally adopted in April 2003.

One should further note that expertise and know-how often came as unintended side-products of cooperation with international organizations in the form of Western models that provided impetus and stirred emulation. The short history of the Polish NGO sector is full of such examples. The idea for the National Forum of Non-governmental Initiatives, an annual fair aimed at the development of cooperation and promotion of the activities of NGOs first held in September 1996 in Warsaw, originally came from France (Cooperation Fund 1998: 23). An important facet of the new “law on the Cooperation between Public Administration and NGOs” adopted in April 2003, namely the installment of legal councils that decide on a public benefit status of NGOs, follows a Scottish model. The foundation of the NGO “WROSZ” a national representation of 12 regional centers of socially active local NGOs that has entered in a transnational partnership with the German *Paritätische Wohlfahrtsverband*, Berlin Brandenburg, resembles the model of federation of social service oriented NGOs usually found in Germany.

Moral Support

Besides the well-known benefits of foreign assistance coming in the form of “institution building” and “capacity building”, one should not neglect hardly visible and often unintended “side-products” such as moral support or a higher reputation and standing of the recipient. Ekiert / Kubik (1998:19) point out that “*moral support*” was of utmost importance for the Solidarity underground movement in the 1980s. Gestures such as the donation of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lech Wałęsa in 1983 or the fact that Solidarity was formally affiliated and thus already recognized by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labor in 1986 increased the movement’s confidence and standing and helped to make the distinction between “illegal” and “legitimate”. Western support thus contributed to the oppositional strategy to undermine the credibility of the regime and to break up the monopoly of the leading ideology on determining the truth (see also Klein 2001: 37). Moreover, the support was important for individuals. In the words of Danuta Przywara from the Helsinki Foundation: “*This moral support showed that we are important and that we should go on.*” In the transition period Western backing also contributed to instead of damaging the reputation of their cooperation partners, as Western support demonstrated expertise, which was often lacking in the organizations themselves. In the words of Regulski, the president of FSDL regarding assistance from the USAID: “*You can’t underestimate the psychological character of USAID’s support. It was crucial at the time to our success. People were afraid; we had no experience but we had someone assisting us*” (USAID 2000a: 32).

In the survey on NGOs of 2002 most NGOs also still agree that one can profit from the reputation of the donor organization (75%) (appendix 8, question 12). Additionally, the majority of NGOs (58%) see the foreign donor as a partner that strives for the same goals, a fact that is highly valued (87%). A further unintended consequence that is highly valued by recipient organizations is the provision of “networks and contacts”. 77% of the participating NGOs report that the cooperation with Western donors is important for them as it provides networks and contacts. Nearly all of the questioned NGOs (99%) regard this form of support as very important (ibid).

The evaluation of the Phare Democracy Program points to another benefit:

“The major overall impact of PTDP (Phare Tacis Democracy Programme) in Poland was a political one. Its pure existence on such a range and scale gave real credibility to the NGO sector as such... (projects) initiated by EU meant a clear sign to Polish decision-makers that the NGO sector cannot be ignored if Poland wants to join the EU” (European Commission 1997c: 102).

In other words, the in financial terms rather modest support of the Phare Democracy program benefited Polish NGOs mainly by means of increasing the visibility and acceptance of NGOs.

In negotiations with a government that strives to enter the EU, international cooperation translates into political bargaining power.

We can thus conclude that Polish civil society benefited from Western support in many ways. Moreover, the Polish organizations are aware of this fact and appreciate the support they received.

7.4.6 Summary

Chapter three points to the problem of donor selectivity that may undermine the credibility of donors. It became clear above that in the Polish case donors did prefer some type of organizations to others and thus supported only a small segment of civil society. Furthermore, the externally supported NGOs are not representative of the NGO sector in Poland at large. Instead some thematic issues are more supported than others. Especially NGOs declaring their core activity to lie in the area of “state, law, and policy” or “human rights” over-proportionally profit from foreign funds.¹⁸² This fact confirms that foreign donors do select recipients and prefer so-called “advocacy”, “watch-dog” or “public policy oriented” NGOs that comply with Western standards. Three main types of “main recipients” have been identified: (1) “democracy promoters” which, similar to their foreign role models, aim to support democracy and conduct civic education projects; (2) “infrastructural NGOs” that strive to install a favorable infrastructure for NGO activities including a legal framework, networks and representative bodies of NGOs and funding opportunities; (3) thematically oriented NGOs, mainly working in the field of human resources, education, the media, children and youth. These organizations received massive donor support from the very beginning often thanks to well-known leaders.

This section aimed to tackle the question whether the organizations donors regard as building blocks of democracy and civil society really act as carriers of civil society. In other words, does donor funding translate into a variety of non-governmental organizations and a pluralistic civil society or rather in a distorted image of civil society marked by a few organizations that serve donor rather than domestic needs and remain disconnected from society?

In the Polish case, one can note that despite donor selectivity main recipients are embedded in domestic settings. Main recipients succeeded in ensuring their sustainability. “Democracy

¹⁸² 28% of NGOs active in the area “state, law, politics” declare that they frequently draw on foreign sources, more than NGOs active in other thematic fields. The second biggest “receivers” are human rights NGOs. 24% of these draw frequently on foreign sources (average: 16%) (BORDO 1998: 44). See also table 6.

Promoters” implemented civil society assistance projects in other countries and regions. Infrastructural NGOs managed to shift to European and domestic sources of funding. And most thematic organizations developed thanks to the early and massive support for well-situated and reputable domestic actors with access to domestic and European funding. In none of the cases did Western contacts and funding undermine the legitimacy of recipients. On the contrary, Western contacts more often than not boost the reputation of the domestic organization. Main recipients additionally act in one form or another as “intermediaries” in the sense that they pass on the gained benefits in the form of grants, but also training or advice. Examples include organizations such as the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy that trains a high amount of local administrative staff via its regional branches, the Children and Youth Foundation that provides grants to NGOs engaging in social projects, or the community foundations established with the help of the Academy of Philanthropy. What evolved with the support of foreign aid is a number of domestic donors in form of foundations and support centers that continue to support local NGOs. This way a larger share of civil society organizations benefited at least indirectly from Western funding. Foreign funding thus fuelled the rise of non-governmental organizations in Poland portrayed in chapter 7.2. By these means foreign support and main recipients contributed to the structural dimension of civil society in Poland. Civil society assistance has been less successful in advancing the cultural dimension of civil society. The animosity between politicians and NGOs mirroring the state-society divide evident in Poland and the lacking willingness of the Polish people to participate in civil activities continue to be problems of civil society development. Nonetheless, changes in the cultural dimension are visible. Main recipients aimed for better cooperation among NGOs. Various activities such as the regional and national NGO meetings or regional networks of cooperation work in this direction. The attempts to install a nation-wide umbrella organization or representative for the NGO sector for the sake of effective lobbying, however, largely failed due to a prevailing distrust towards umbrella organizations among Polish civil society organizations. Main recipients further learned to understand that the rise of civic activity is difficult without cooperative ties with state administration and a respective legal environment. Their aspirations for a respective legal framework for non-governmental initiatives in Poland that facilitates the cooperation among NGOs and state administration succeeded in 2003 with the passing of a new law. Whether the law will help to overcome the animosities between state administrations and NGOs is to be seen.

We can thus conclude that “main recipients” in Poland are more than donor-driven NGOs but act as carriers of civil society. What is even more salient from the point of view of this study is that main recipients benefited from the assistance granted by their donors in bringing about the described achievements. Building the capacity of local NGOs, enhancing their knowledge

base and emanating information had often not been possible without their having been trained previously by donor organizations themselves and without Western financial support. The internationally granted expertise also proved an important tool in the legislative process and enhanced the bargaining power of the NGO representative in the drafting group on NGO legislation. The transfer of foreign models and ideas that provided impetus and inspiration was an additional unintended “by-product” of international cooperation and communication.

7.5 Conclusion: Civil Society Assistance in Poland – A Success Story by Accident or Skill?

The proceeding analysis aimed to answer one major question: Is it possible for externally granted assistance to civil society organizations to contribute positively to civil society development in Poland after transition from authoritarian rule in structural as well as cultural terms? The initial notion guiding this research has been that civil society development in Poland after transition was highly shaped by the historical legacies of previous years, but rather disconnected from the various Western endeavors to build up civil society. Moreover, the faults evident in civil society assistance, namely its selectivity and lacking legitimacy, are bound to result at best in nothing more than donor-driven NGOs detached from society that will wither away once donor funding comes to an end. Even if this initial hypothesis were not to be confirmed, doubts can still be raised that it was external assistance that shaped Polish civil society and not the past experiences with organized forms of civic activities and a nationwide oppositional movement that existed in Polish history. Thus, if the Polish case is a “success story” of donor organizations, it may well be a success by accident rather than skill. In order to answer these questions and to verify or falsify our initial hunch, the analysis faced a threefold task: firstly, to assess civil society and its cultural preconditions in Poland; secondly, to plausibly attribute the current state of civil society to Western assistance; and thirdly, to rule out other plausible explanations that ground civil society development in historical and cultural prepositions of civil society.

Chapter 2.3.. portrayed the historic legacies of the communist rule that are widely regarded as an obstacle to the re-emergence of civil society even after liberalization legalizes the self-organization of society. It has been shown that communist rule is obstructive for civil society to take root as it preserves an image of social homogeneity that inhibits interest differentiation and representation. The bad reputation of associations is a further stumbling block for organized civic activity. The communist patronage state that acts as a care-taker of the people results in passive citizens with extensive demands toward the state, and since the state largely failed to live up to the expectations it raised, it leads to a deep state-society

divide. For all these reasons, communist rule does not provide fertile ground for civil society, but instead is quite obstructive for the cultural basis so much needed for a lively civil society to develop. However, it has been argued that communist states are characterized by as many similarities as differences, and the differences in the Polish case emanating from the oppositional movement Solidarity, is not to be neglected. The experience with Solidarity taught the Polish people that civic action makes a difference and may result in change. Moreover, the aim of achieving an evolutionary extension of civic rights (Michnik) and the concept of a "self-administrated republic" resulted in independent circles of freedom and the construction of a social infrastructure of various political clubs and organizations "from below". This resulted in the existence of various initiatives and concepts in different issue areas such as human rights, environment, or local self-administration. Along with that, a substantial basis of political, local and professional leaders and activists has been formed that were able and willing to build up civil society after 1989. Nevertheless, it would be misleading to assume that the experience of the Solidarity movement countermands the legacies of the communist past. On the contrary, it has been argued that it particularly deepened the state-society divide. The monolithic character of the movement that was based on the myth of a "community of faith" striving for the "common good" and standing and fighting against a corrupt state preserved the image of society as the place of the "better" and the state and politics as the place of "evil". Moreover, once the movement came to power and the differences inside the movement came to the fore citizens reacted with disillusionment and passivity. The myth of solidarity translated into an "agony of myth" (Szacki 1991).

Chapter 7.2. gave an assessment of the state of civil society in Poland roughly ten years after transition. It jumped to the conclusion that progress is visible on the structural as well as cultural dimension. The number of non-governmental organizations has been growing rapidly. Additionally, the organizations are active in a broad range of issue areas. Nevertheless it became clear that civil society development suffered from the legacies outlined above. Civic participation remained low and NGOs have first been largely restricted to urban centers. However, communication among the various civic organizations is evident, but the distrust toward institutionalized forms of cooperation is high and largely prevents the building of umbrella organizations. The state-society divide also has left its traces. Politicians continue to regard NGOs as unwelcome competitors, while civil society activists regard politicians as corrupt and politics as something dirty. This attitude has been evident in a lacking state policy, which triggers the self-organization of society and an unfavorable legal framework regulating non-governmental activities. However, throughout the period of investigation improvement was evident. In recent years, NGOs are increasingly springing up in regional and local areas. An agreement among government and NGO representatives on a new NGO law has finally been reached after a long struggle. And a process of integration of

single organizations active in the same issue areas is taking place, although the attempt to establish a membership-based representative of NGOs failed.

The key question of this chapter has been whether the depicted positive changes in the structural and in the cultural dimension of civil society are attributable to Western assistance and support, or whether civil society assistance leads to donor-driven NGOs that fail to meet local demands. The analysis of the output and outcome of civil society assistance given in chapter 7.4 revealed that the hypothesis of a supplementary stratum could not be confirmed. Although civil society assistance to Poland was selective and mainly supported by only a few specific NGOs, i.e. so-called “democracy promoters”, “infrastructural NGOs” or thematic organizations run by well-known personalities, Western assistance is neither perceived as illegitimate, nor do the main recipients fail to ensure their sustainability. Additionally, major recipients acted as intermediaries that pass on the gained benefits and supported other non-governmental organizations with the provision of training, know-how, information and access to funds. The struggle for favorable legal regulations, more cooperation between state administration and NGOs and among NGOs also benefited Polish NGOs at large. The section thus concluded that main recipients acted as carriers of civil society.

More important from the point of view of this study is the fact that while bringing about the described achievements, main recipients highly benefited from international cooperation as demonstrated in chapter 7.4.5. These benefits came firstly as material assistance in the form of project or institutional grants. Due to the lack of domestic funding possibilities especially in the early 1990s, these funds were of utmost importance as they ensured the mere existence of non-governmental organizations in Poland. Recipients also highly valued and profited from so-called “soft products” of assistance that are activities of donors usually referred to as “capacity building”. The provision of training, information and know-how increased the professionalism of NGOs and raised their operational capacity. As a result, NGOs became better in gaining funding on the one hand. On the other hand, they became experts in their respective fields. More than anything else, this expertise increased their domestic reputation and their recognition by state authorities. This was even more so the case when domestic NGOs were backed internationally. Such was the case in the legislative process on a respective NGO law. The domestic authorities could not neglect the fact that legal reports presented by the NGO representative on the draft law of the government were firstly drafted by an international expert and secondly financed by the EU. These are politically powerful arguments in the negotiations with a government that wants to enter the EU. In other words, the international support as such directly translated into the increasing visibility and acceptance of the NGO sector and political bargaining power. Applying the language of actor-centered institutionalism, donors raised the capabilities of civil society actors, i.e., “*all*

action resources that allow an actor to influence an outcome in certain respects and to a certain degree" (Scharpf 1997: 43).

However, it would be misleading to assume that these merits and benefits of civil society assistance to Polish NGOs have been the inevitable consequences of all donor activities. One must keep in mind that the effect of foreign assistance was facilitated by several factors.

Firstly, one must remark that although all three types of main recipients highly benefited from foreign technical and financial assistance, none of them was fully donor-driven. For the "democracy promoters" donors have been a role model that stirs emulation. "Infrastructural NGOs" used external models as a ground for inspiration rather than copying. Organizations such as BORIS or SPLOT combine features of American small lobby groups and of European intermediary organizations. Thematically oriented recipients finally use external techniques, methods and financial resources in order to pursue their own agenda more effectively. From their standpoint, donors were mainly sponsors. In all three cases the recipient organizations are driven as much by indigenous concerns as by opportunities provided for by donors. Additionally, all three types are rooted in the Solidarity movement, and they often have been founded in response to domestic concerns.

Secondly, foreign support was largely perceived as legitimate and acceptable assistance in Poland. Based on the strong belief that Poland would have been a democratic and wealthy country similar to its Western neighbors if it had not been for the Soviet occupation, Western assistance was demanded by the Polish people as a way to re-install normality. Aid was not regarded as a pittance, rather as assistance to which Poland is entitled. The credibility and esteem of the donor also played a role. American donors, in particular, are highly appreciated in Poland thanks to the massive support they had already granted during the 1980s. The civil society assistance of the European Union has to be seen in the light of the prospects for membership in the EU. The fact that Poland wants to enter the European Union provided important leverage not only for donors that aim to foster civil society development but also to NGO activists in the country who were not tired of reminding their governments of the importance of a lively civil society for EU accession. One may argue that thanks to European enlargement the adoption of a new NGO law came within the range of appropriate policy options to governmental representatives.

Finally, one has to note that the focus on main recipients that are still active and visible in Polish civil society today deliberately neglects civil society assistance "failures", be it recipient organizations that failed to ensure their sustainability or high-priced short-term consultants whose expertise proved useless. Chapter 7.3 pointed out that the history of civil society assistance to Poland was full of such failures. The early period in particular was marked by a

lack of strategy and a tremendous ignorance towards domestic contexts. Not until the middle of the 1990s did donors change their approach to civil society assistance in Poland and apply a more fine-tuned strategy. They became aware of the shortcomings of selecting a few recipients and increasingly provided small grants to a wider spectrum of NGOs active in a variety of thematic areas. Additionally, donors placed greater emphasis on “capacity building” with a focus on training, network building and a favorable regulatory environment for NGOs. Most importantly, donors learned that local knowledge and initiative was important to ensure success. They decentralized their support and increasingly relied on decentralized structures and local staff in carrying out civil society assistance. Most Phare NGO support programs were administered by the locally run Cooperation Fund. The NGO support program of USAID called “DemNet” also operated with local staff. And the Soros-funded Stefan Batory Foundation was run as a domestic foundation with domestic staff from its very beginning. The local administration of the programs ensured a close cooperation with domestic NGOs and their needs. This is even more so, as the NGO support programs and the infrastructural NGOs cultivated close personal links, which are demonstrated by the fact that staff of the former are often board members (or even founding members) of the latter or vice versa.¹⁸³ Instead of strictly divided “donors” and “recipients” we thus observe a group of Polish and international activists that work together in order to advance civil society. The result are transnational networks of civil society activists that are often held together by what one may call “local donors”, i.e. donor organizations with local offices that highly rely on local expertise and local staff. These “activist networks” acted as a source of impetus and inspiration and are characterized by close cooperation. Through this intensive cooperation donors had an impact on projects and activities of main recipients. In the same vein, recipients influenced grant schemes and donor strategies. Thus, learning processes took place on both sides. One may argue that the insight that civil society is more than a collection of NGOs but also requires a favorable environment, a regulative framework and horizontal ties among the various organizations and initiatives based on tolerance and trust was the result of a common learning process of donors and recipients starting in the middle of the 1990s

We can thus conclude that external support positively assisted the re-emergence of civil society in Poland via the mechanisms of learning and empowerment. In this process the provision of material resources, training and know-how proved as important as the type of

183 Some examples can illuminate this point. Kuba Wygnański is Board Member of BORIS, the Batory Foundation, FIP, Council member of CSDF, and head of KLON/JAWOR. The Project Director of DemNet Paweł Łukasiak who is now heading the Academy, is the former president of BORIS, now a Council member, and additionally a member of FIP. The Director of the Deutsch-Polnische Verständigung e.V., Krzysztof Balon, is a board member of BORIS. Further examples are: Paweł Jordan (president of BORIS, member of FIP); Zbigniew Wejcman (employee BORIS, board member of WROSZ) and others.

transactions between recipients and donors. Doubts may be raised, however, whether the Polish experience is applicable to other cases, as it was clear that without the various facilitating factors described above civil society assistance may have remained without much impact in the Polish case. So what conclusion is to be drawn? Is Poland a “success story” of the combined donor efforts to “build” civil society? Or is civil society assistance nothing more than a footnote to a process that followed a path dependent on past experiences and that was highly shaped by local actors socialized in the Solidarity movement? It has been pointed out that alternative explanations are hard to rule out by looking on single cases. For this reason, the following will briefly highlight civil society assistance in Slovakia - a country whose cultural preconditions are less favorable to civil society.

8 Analyzing Civil Society Assistance in Slovakia

The following chapter focuses on the case of Slovakia. For the purpose of this study, Slovakia can be regarded as a divergent case, because the emergence of civil society in Slovakia is an unlikely phenomenon according to a sociological understanding of civil society as put forward above. History has not provided Slovakia with the cultural assets commonly regarded as favorable for civil society. The prospects for a vibrant civil society based on active citizens and moral qualities such as tolerance and trust are dim. The reasons lie in both the repressive nature of the previous regime and the identified legacy of communism (chap. 2.3.) as well as its late independence and belated modernization. The times when Slovakia was a state are scarce; Slovakia was mostly under the influence of other states such as Bohemia, Hungary, or the Habsburg Empire. National elites that act as carriers of civil society did not exist. Instead the Slovak lands were characterized by a poor, peasant, and catholic population that believed in the merits of rural life and in the superiority of Hungarian nobility. The communist regime in Czechoslovakia maintained a repressive policy that left little room for public dissent and “circles of freedom” outside of state control. As a result, analysts describe the political culture of Slovakia as one shaped by state paternalism, an apathetic and passive citizenry, and “*civic impotence*” (Fialová 2002).

Keeping this pessimistic analysis in mind, it is not that surprising that Slovakia was the only country of the Visegrad-Four to experience a democratic reverse wave of authoritarian rule between 1994 and 1998. With a short interlude in 1994, Slovakia was ruled by Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar and his party “Movement for a Democratic Slovakia” (HZDS) between 1993 and 1998. After the elections in 1994, the HZDS entered a coalition with the nationalistic “Slovak National Party” and the radical left-wing “Association of Workers of Slovakia”. The regime of Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar and his ruling nationalist-communist coalition was based on populist and nationalist rhetoric and on undemocratic means of suppressing the opposition. Events provoked by the government such as the illegal ousting of a Slovak parliamentarian in 1996, the refusal of the government to protect minority languages, attempts to control the media and to restrict the freedom of NGOs, and not least the harassment of the president’s son resulted in harsh international criticism and a poor international image of Slovakia.¹⁸⁴

184 For an account of recent developments in Slovakia, see: Wolchik (1997: 233p), Goldmann (1997: 148), Bútorá / Bútorová (1999: 84pp), Mihalikova (2004), Human Rights Watch World Report 1998 on Slovakia (www.hrw.org/worldreport/Helsinki-21.htm).

Despite everything mentioned above Slovakia has a lively NGO-Sector, which is characterized by a high degree of organization and cooperation. One may even argue that it is due to the work of NGOs that the Mečiar government was succeeded in 1998 by the coalition under Mikulas Dzurinda, which facilitated the democratic and economic transition of the country and laid the path into the European Union. The NGO sector has created its own infrastructure including regional associations and national umbrella organizations, and a democratically elected body, the "Gremium for the Third Sector" (G3S), which advocates the interests of NGOs and coordinates joint actions of NGOs. The "Gremium" has been successful in mobilizing NGO support for large initiatives. In 1996, in response of the Government's Bill on Foundations, the "Gremium" carried out a nationwide media campaign and mobilized NGOs to join the "SOS Third Sector Campaign" in order to prevent the law. The "OK '98" campaign before the parliamentary elections in 1998 proved to be more important from a political standpoint, Several activities and events organized by NGOs such as "get out the vote" concerts, cultural activities or discussion forums aimed to convince especially disillusioned young people to vote and to ensure free and fair elections. The high voter turnout at the 1998 elections (84%)¹⁸⁵ is widely assumed to have benefited the democratic oppositional coalition of Miklas Dzurinda that finally succeeded in breaking Mečiar's rule.¹⁸⁶

In both campaigns and especially before the elections in 1998 Slovak NGOs received massive Western support in financial as well as technical terms. Without this support one may doubt whether the NGOs would have ever had the means to conduct the campaigns and various activities briefly sketched out above. Moreover, the question of Euroatlantic integration came to play a key role in the election campaign. Both western politicians and domestic opposition leaders and NGOs continuously stressed the point that the Slovak prime minister himself was the major obstacle to Slovakia's membership in EU and NATO and that Mečiar was the reason why Slovakia fell from being one of the most promising candidate

185 At 84% the voter turnout was 9% higher than in the 1994 elections (Bútora/Bútorova 1999: 81). Furthermore, the percentage of first-time voters was raised from around 60% in 1994 to over 80% in 1998. 70% of the first-time voters supported the opposition (Bútova /Bútorová 1999: 82, 88).

186 One has to note that the oppositional coalition that was successful in the elections in 1998 was a right-left coalition itself consisting of moderate parties. The oppositional coalition consisted of four "electoral parties" two of which were coalitions themselves. The main party, the "Slovak Democratic Coalition" (SDK) was an alliance of five oppositional parties that aligned in 1997: the conservative "Christian Democratic Movement" (KDH), the liberal "Democratic Union" (DU), the conservative-liberal "Democratic Party" (DS), the Social Democratic Party of Slovakia (SDSS), and the Party of Greens in Slovakia (SZS). The second strongest member of the oppositional coalition with 15% of the votes was the SDL, a part of the former communist party. The third strongest was the SMK, a coalition of three Hungarian parties. Finally SOP, a center-left party was part of the coalition against Mečiar (see e.g. Bútora /Bútorová 1999: 81p). The 10 parties have diverse political programs and ideological profiles. They were, however, united in their goal to beat Mečiar, to support Slovakia's integration into EU and NATO, and to install democratic principles in the country.

countries to one with the weakest prospects of membership. In view of the high public support for Slovak membership in these organizations, the alignment of Slovak opposition leaders and NGOs with foreign actors was a valuable asset of the democratic opposition.¹⁸⁷

The key question of this chapter is to what extent did the NGO sector in Slovakia benefit from Western civil society assistance. Can we attribute the development of NGOs, the high organizational and technical capacity of NGOs as well as the tense cooperation among NGOs to external civil society assistance? Did Western involvement tip the internal power-balance in Slovakia and thus contribute to the outcome of the 1998 elections? And if this is the case, are the elections a victory of civil society? Or did Western funds simply support and install a counter-elite, a non-governmental shadow government consisting of future politicians that “survived” under Western auspices in non-governmental organizations, but who leave their organizations without a mission, goal and human resources once they enter the new government? Or did external assistance support the rise of civil society in a country whose historic legacies left little hope for democracy and civil society? Did the West give Slovakia a “history”?

In order to answer these questions the analysis proceeds in the following steps. The first section briefly outlines the communist and pre-communist legacies impacting upon civil society development. The second section portrays civil society in Slovakia after 1989 in structural and cultural terms. In doing so, focus will be placed on the Mečiar and the post-Mečiar era. Thirdly, the chapter portrays the external assistance granted to non-governmental organizations and civil society in Slovakia. Special emphasis will be placed on the quantity, the timing and the strategy of external civil society assistance. Subsequently, the chapter focuses on the recipients of assistance and investigates their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness in building civil society (see chapter 5.3.). It will be evident that Western assistance played a key role for NGOs in Slovakia. However, several conditions that ensured the beneficial character of external assistance will also be identified. The final section summarizes the major results and is guided by the question whether civil society assistance in Slovakia was nothing more than a subtle form of external intervention from below or a genuine effort to trigger civil society development.

187 Especially public support for EU membership reached in Slovakia a constant high of over 70%. Public support for NATO membership is lower, however rising. Between 2000 and 2001 it ranged between 40 to 50% (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 1).

8.1 The Domestic Context - Historical and Cultural Legacies

As pointed out in chapter two, civil society requires a “cultural basis” of civic attitudes and values shaped and formed in historic processes and by cultural legacies. The following thus focuses briefly on the communist and pre-communist history of the Slovak state in order to pinpoint the cultural foundations on which civil society in Slovakia is built. As the communist legacies hampering civil society development are already discussed thoroughly in chapter 2.3., it is left to this section to pinpoint free spheres of societal life outside state control and dissident activities in the Czech and Slovak lands. Moreover, I will briefly point to Slovakia’s pre-communist history and political traditions in order to highlight a number of important factors specific to the Slovak case: the belated modernization of Slovakia, the interrelationship between Slovak, Hungarian as well as Czech culture, and the striking lack of a national history and consciousness. It will be clear that those who believe in historical explanations will be left with little hope with respect to the rise of civil society in Slovakia. Karen Buerkle makes the point that whenever the territory of Slovakia was democratic, i.e. as part of Czechoslovakia from 1918 until the rise of the Fascist Slovak state in 1939 and after the velvet revolution in 1989, democracy was brought to Slovakia as the result of events outside Slovakia’s borders. In neither case was democracy the result of the public involvement of a large part of the Slovak population. In both periods democracy came to Slovakia before it had a well-developed civil society (Buerkle 2002a: 1).

8.1.1 Pre-Communist Legacies

Slovakia’s history has been determined more than anything else by its lack of experience with independent statehood, an identity that formed in opposition to Hungarian and Czech supremacy, its belated modernization and lack of experience with associational life. All three factors are major legacies still impacting civil society today.

For nearly 1000 years the territory of present-day Slovakia was part of the Hungarian Kingdom and known as Upper Hungary. The Hungarian supremacy only ended with the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918. The Slovaks voluntarily joined the common state, but the cultural and social differences between the industrialized and urbanized Czech lands and the rural and peasant Slovaks quickly created resentment and “... *fed the growth of Slovak nationalism, as many Slovaks felt that Hungarian rule had merely been exchanged for rule from Prague*” (Wolchik: 1997: 199). Despite the fact that they could participate in liberal elections, Slovaks identified little with the political system. In 1939 they euphorically celebrated the creation of their own state, ignoring the fact that this first Slovak state was based on a fascist regime protected and controlled by Hitler Germany. Until the velvet

revolution of 1993 Slovakia thus hardly had any experience with independent statehood. Along with that, Slovakia had no experience with democratic rules and regulations.

“Slovak citizens do not have the experience ... of creating state institutions, administrating the state, or deciding about important political issues affecting their everyday life. This results in naiveté and a political illiteracy, or what is even worse, it leads to apathy and passivity ... that is the ideal ground for authoritarianism” (Fialová 2002b: 11).

A further factor hampering civil society is a late national awakening that in turn was based on an ethno-centric and romantic image of the nation. Gellner (1995) convincingly argued, *“the modular man is a nationalist”*. From this view, the development of civil society necessitates national identity. However, in the Slovak case the evolution of national identity is overshadowed by the supremacy of Hungarian and Czech high culture. The multi-ethnic region of Upper Hungary was strongly dominated by the Hungarian culture. Members of the nobility of the region considered themselves as Hungarians regardless of their ethnic affiliation. The same holds true for educated Slovaks or even Slovak-speaking yeoman of the 17th or 18th century whose predominant identity was Hungarian (Fialová 2002b: 1). In the 19th century a brief and feeble Slovak nationalist movement developed. It was, however, severely hampered by the absence of a historic precedent of land autonomy or statehood on the one hand and the supremacy of the Hungarian culture on the other hand. In their search for Slovak images and models, Slovak intellectuals had to turn to the rural, peasant, catholic and largely conservative population as the main carriers of the language and folklore of ethnic Slovaks. This even more so, as the national movement largely failed to win over the Slovak speaking urban population and Slovak yeoman who were highly influenced by Hungarianism. Slovak emancipation thus had to distinguish itself from Hungarianism and from Hungarian liberalism that significantly shaped Hungarian national emancipation in the 19th century. Pan-Slavism was the only embracing ideal available. Fialová concludes that Slovak emancipation was thus largely based on conservative ideals, anti-liberal tendencies and an ethno-centric and largely romantic image of the nation (ibid: 4). This image was consolidated during the pre-war period when Slovaks aimed to preserve their newly gained cultural identity against “Czechoslovakism” a notion connected to multi-ethnic Bohemism that was largely perceived by Slovaks as purely “Czechism”.

Finally the pre-communist history of the Slovak lands was marked by the lack of associational life. Unlike in Poland, where Polish non-governmental structures and associational life developed during the partitions in response to external intervention (Kurczewska 1995: 44pp), this was not the case in Slovakia. In her analysis of associational life in Slovakia, Buerkle points out that a feeble Slovak civil society developed only at the beginning of the 19th century. It was, however, largely determined by a Hungarian – German

middle class with only a few Slovak charitable associations and self-help societies inspired by a brief Slovak national movement. On the territory of present-day Slovakia self-organized activity remained far below the degree of associational life in other parts of the Habsburg Empire (Buerkle 2002b: 2p). In a society that was largely shaped by an underdeveloped middle class, a low percentage of Protestants and a large majority coming from a mostly poor, rural, peasant, catholic background where liberal values had never been introduced, the development of individualism and self-responsibility was associated with great difficulties.¹⁸⁸ The chief exception was Bratislava, where during the 19th century and at the turn of the century a strong associational life developed that also was ethnically tolerant and of a mixed German –Magyar nature. Although associations sprang up during the first Czechoslovak Republic, Buerkle (ibid: 7) makes the point that the associations mainly formed along ethnical, religious or political lines and were hardly inspired by values such as tolerance and trust. Although some degree of pluralism developed in the cities, in the countryside non-state organized activity remained low and was restricted to fire brigades and agricultural based associations. There were not only fewer associations in Slovakia than in the Czech Lands during the Czechoslovak Republic, but they were also more geographically dispersed (Buerkle 2002a: 6p). The authoritarian regime ruling between 1939 and 1945 marked a major decrease in civic activity. Many associations were dissolved, others controlled and redirected (ibid: 8).

8.1.2 Communist Legacies

Chapter 7.1.1 points to the various legacies of communist societies that are widely considered to obstruct civil society development and even to lead to “*civilizational incompetence*” (Sztompka 1993: 89). In particular, the image of social homogeneity and a resulting lack of interest differentiation and representation, a thoroughly discredited image of associations, citizens’ passivity tied with exceeding claims toward the state as a protector and care-taker, and a deep state-society divide have been identified as the major factors deterring civil society. This section argues that the legacies of communist rule have a more profound effect in Slovakia than in Poland. The repressive character of the Czechoslovak communist regime, the small oppositional circle, and the lacking popularity of the opposition in the Slovak lands are factors that inhibited the development of free spheres of civic activity as we saw in the Polish case (chapter 7.1.).

¹⁸⁸ The rural character of Slovakia is still evident today: The majority of towns in present Slovakia (87,3%) have less than 2000 residents, and about one third of the Slovak population lives in these municipalities (Mannová 1998: 12 cit. in: Fialová 2002c: 6).

In comparison with other socialist regimes in CEE such as Poland or Hungary, the communist regime in Czechoslovakia took a hard-line until its demise in 1989.¹⁸⁹ The liberalization tendencies cumulating in the Prague spring in 1969 were crushed violently. The subsequent period of “normalization” was based on a policy of repression of public dissent that manifested itself in the party purges following 1968, the emergence of conservative party leaders, a harsh response to signatories of the “Charter 77”, and violent crackdowns on demonstrations at the end of the 1980s. The regime took an orthodox and dogmatic stance in economic terms as well. It was strongly against private farming, small-scale industry or small privatization, which was common in other CEE countries.¹⁹⁰

Nonetheless, a small circle of dissidents existed despite the outright repression. Their activities were largely limited to petitions such as the Charter 77, a petition requesting the government to respect the Helsinki treaty on Human Rights it signed in 1975. The number of signatories remained below 2000, an indicator of the small number of open opponents (Glenn 2001: 48). The reasons for the small circle of dissidents lie mainly in the repressive nature of the regime, but also in its economic effectiveness. Czechoslovakia hardly faced an economic crisis: inflation was low, hard currency debt remained in an acceptable range and basic consumer goods were on hand. Nor did the population suffer from food shortage or the government face the burden of large Western debt (see e.g. Glenn 2001: 46). Unlike in Poland where the economic crisis of the 1970s severely damaged the legitimacy of the regime, the patronage state in Czechoslovakia seemed to keep its promises. Only at the end of the 1980s did stagnation prevail and economic analyses affirmed the need for radical economic reform, but did not catch the ear of the conservative ruling elite, though.¹⁹¹ Due to the repressive and conservative regime, the small circles of independent civic activity, and its economic performance, one may well argue that Czechoslovakia was one of the countries where ideology significantly influenced most spheres of social life (Fialová 2002c).

This holds especially true for the Slovak lands. The small dissident circles described above hardly had any appeal in the Slovak part of the country. During the Prague Spring

189 Linz/Stephan (1996: 316pp) classify Czechoslovakia as „frozen post-totalitarianism“ with a dogmatic Stalinism that endured intact after Stalin’s death. After the suppression of the Prague Spring and “*the largest purge of Communist Party membership in the history of Eastern Europe*” (ibid: 318) reform-minded Communists were few and quiet. Also Elster/Offe (1998: 42) point out that communist governments in CEE exercised their rule in different ways with Poland and Hungary as the most liberal regimes, Romania the most repressive regime and with Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and the GDR ranking somewhere in between.

190 For a more detailed description of communist rule in Czechoslovakia, see: Goldmann (1997: 113pp), Glenn (2001: 45pp; 61pp).

191 This was the case with the “Komarek report” by Valtr Komarek, director of the Forecasting Institute of the Academy of Sciences. The report called for a market-driven economy to prevent Czechoslovakia from sinking to the level of a Third World country by 2010 (see Goldman 1997: 119p).

liberalization tendencies were also largely dominated by Czechs (Mansfeldová 1998: 14).¹⁹² In the communist period, the traditionally agricultural Slovak lands experienced a belated economic modernization based on heavy industry. This was additionally accompanied by social achievements. As a result, the communist regime quickly gained prominence:

“This modernization of industrial type was marked by a period of social engineering; it was followed by social rights, applied before and separately from political rights, and it was broadly perceived as successful” ... “Slovakia, as a more traditional society originally (after World War II) did not desire socialism; later it was intrigued by it because of its state paternalism, collectivism, closeness, egalitarianism, redistributiveness, authoritarianism, and anti-intellectualism (Krivý, Feglová, Balko 1996: 40p cit. in Fialová 2002c: 5pp).

Not until the end of the 1980s did Slovakia experience some oppositional tendencies and signs of civil society development. Whereas demonstrations in the Czech lands took place on the anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion (on August 21st in 1988 and 1989) or on the anniversary of the suicide of Jan Palach (in January 1989), demonstrations in the Slovak part of the country were largely influenced by Catholicism. The first mass demonstration against the regime that took place in March 1988 was the “candle demonstration” on the feast day of Lord’s Annunciation in Bratislava. More than 10,000 people protested against the violation of the rights of believers (Glenn 2001: 228). In all of Czechoslovakia several smaller civic initiatives and organizations sprang up.¹⁹³ However civic activity remained much stronger in the Czech in comparison to the Slovak lands (Mansfeldová 1998: 16).

Unlike the “Civic Forum”, the Czech oppositional movement formed in the velvet revolution of November 1989, its Slovak counterpart “Public Against Violence” (*Verejnost’ Proti Nasili*; VPN) included not only anti-communists but also further reform communists and even communists holding top positions in the state apparatus (Samson 2001: 368). In this manner, the movement did not have the capacity to bring to power a democratic elite. Instead, one successor of the VPN, the ruling party of Vladimir Mečiar, the “Movement for a democratic Slovakia” (*Hnuti za Demokraticke Slovensko*, HZDS) consisted of former communists that quickly took on a nationalist and populist rhetoric (ibid). Vladimir Mečiar ruled the country from 1993-1998 with a nine-month interruption by the government of Jozef Moravčík in 1994. After the 1994 elections Mečiar’s HZDS entered a coalition with the far-right, nationalist “Slovak National Party” (SNS) and a populist leftist movement, the “Association of Workers of Slovakia” (ZRS). The nationalist-left wing coalition clearly showed authoritarian political

192 Fialová (2002c: 14) points out: “... the events of 1968 were of Czech origin and the Slovak intelligentsia took only a small part in it. Even those Slovak personalities of 1968 who were on the top of the events (A. Dubček) were not regarded as Slovaks by the domestic or international public”.

193 The major civic initiatives were: the democratic initiative, the independent peace movement, the peace club John Lennon, the movement for civic freedoms (HOS) and the club for social recreation (Mansfeldová 1998: 14, footnote 7).

tendencies, including “*disrespect for the rule of law, favoritism, corruption, the intertwining of crime with politics and a confrontational nationalist policy*” (Bútorá / Bútorová 1999: 80). With its combination of populism and nationalism it appealed to the elderly and the rural population who largely feared economic and political reforms.

8.1.3 Summary: Cultural Preconditions of Civil Society in Slovakia

Due to the historic developments described above, the late independence, nominal democratic and associational experiences, the traditional and rural character of Slovak society, the lacking middle class and intelligentsia, and the belated modernization, most analysts describe the pre-conditions for civil society in Slovakia as rather unfavorable.¹⁹⁴ According to Fialová (2002c), political culture in Slovakia is characterized by a passive attitude towards the state and politics in general. The culture of self-help is poorly developed and strong dependency on the state has a long tradition. The Slovak emancipation, which focused on traditional rural life patterns and aimed to counterweight liberal Hungarianism resulted in anti-liberal attitudes and did not prove capable of breaking patterns of traditional collectivist life. Societal ties are not characterized by trust in Putman’s sense, nor can they be described as associative. Instead they remain collectivist and *gemeinschaftlich*. Distrust prevails and distrust in politics and politicians is particularly regarded as part of Slovak cultural heritage. Additionally, equalitarianism is highly valued among Slovak citizens. However, ‘equal’ is not understood in terms of ‘equal rights’ of equal citizens, but in economic terms. Social justice and social rights prevail over civil rights. In sum, Slovak history is marked by little experience with free civic activity. The goal of the next section is to determine the extent to which this history challenges the development of civil society in Slovakia after the demise of authoritarian rule.

194 See e.g. Fialová (2002b and 2002c), Buerkle (2002a), Vašečka (2002a), Mihalikova (2004).

8.2 The belated Liberalization – The Rise of Civil Society in Slovakia

The following section investigates civil society development in Slovakia throughout the 1990s. The analysis is guided by indicators of the structural and cultural dimension of civil society identified in chapter two. It focuses on (1) the rise of NGOs in quantitative terms; (2) the main areas of organized civic activity outside state and market; (3) regional dispersion of associational life; (4) civic participation; (5) the relationship between state authorities and civil society organizations; and (6) the type of relationship between civil society organizations.¹⁹⁵

In doing so, the section will focus on three time periods: the period from the demise of communist rule until the partition of Czechoslovakia (1989-1992), Slovakia under Mečiar's rule (1993-1998), and the period following the elections of 1998 (1998-2002). It will be demonstrated that despite the previously outlined cultural preconditions effecting civil society development and the authoritarian tendencies under Vladimir Mečiar's rule civil society in Slovakia advanced on the structural and cultural dimension in the period under investigation. Moreover, instead of hampering civil society development, the period of repression triggered it.

8.2.1 Quantity of Non-Governmental Organizations

Focusing on the size of organized civic activity in Slovakia, it can be stated that – like in other Central European states – the number of non-governmental organizations has risen rapidly since the breakdown of communist rule in 1989. Whereas in 1992 7,000 NGOs were registered, the number cumulated to 17,844 registered non-governmental organizations by

¹⁹⁵ The analysis profits greatly from the following studies on NGOs in Slovakia: The first source is the annual "Global Report on the State of Society" of the Institute of Public Affairs in Bratislava which regularly contains a section on NGO development (Bútorá et al 1997, 1998), (Mesežnikov et al 1999; 2001). Secondly, the analysis draws on the Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project conducted by the Johns Hopkins University Center for Civil Society Studies. The project analyzes the nonprofit sector in 28 countries on a comparative basis (see Anheier/Salamon 1999). Thirdly, the analysis greatly profits from a SDI project on civil society in Slovakia (Vašečka (ed.) 2002). The Service Center for the Third Sector, associated with the Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA-SCTS), a non-profit seeking NGO, also maintains a database on NGOs and publish directories of NGOs. One has to note, however, that the SAIA-SCTS database is not a complete list of NGOs active in Slovakia. The database only includes those organizations that chose to register with SAIA which may create a bias. The database thus tends to under-represent certain types of organizations such as sport and hobby clubs (see also Demeš 2001: 472). Unfortunately, alternative data from the Statistical Office is not available. At any rate, one can expect that the SAIA database only consist of active NGOs. Finally, this analysis draws on the findings of the DPP survey conducted among Polish and Slovak NGOs in 2002/03 (see appendix 8). The Slovak sample is based on the SAIA-SCTS database which implies that it may depict the same bias.

April 2000 (Demeš 2001: 471), including approximately 3,000 church organizations (ibid: 483).¹⁹⁶ According to the John Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project, which measures the size of the nonprofit sector with economic indicators, the Slovak NGO sector in 1996 is slightly less developed than its counterparts in the other Visegrad countries. With 0.9% of total non-agricultural employment, Slovakia ranges below the CEE average of 1.1% of total employment (Poland 1%) (Woleková et al 1999: 360). However, if volunteers are included, the share increase to 1.2% - the same share as in Poland (Leš et al 1999: 328).

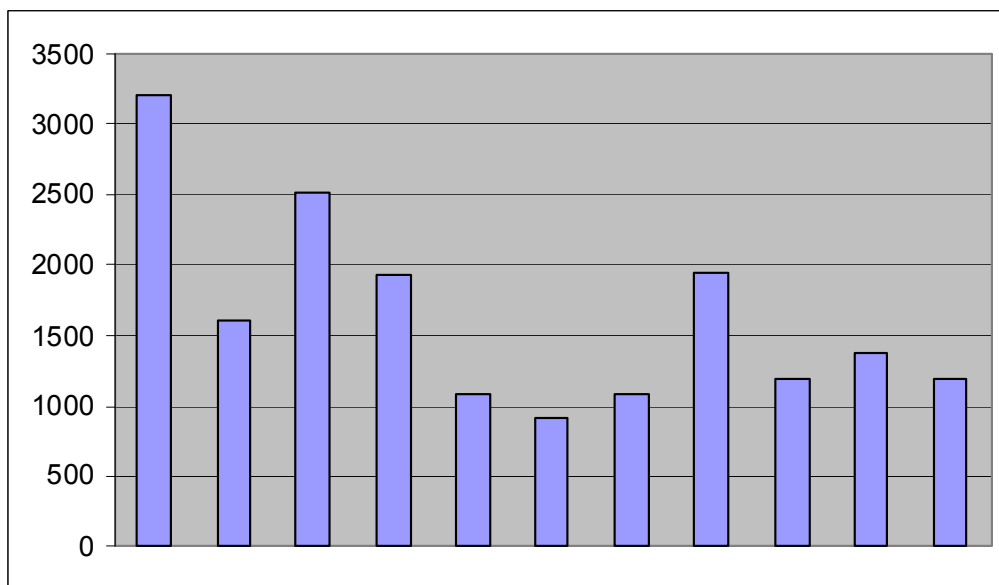
Table 8 illustrates that the major rise of NGOs took place in the years 1990 and 1992-93, when the largest number of NGOs registered with the Interior Ministry.¹⁹⁷ The DPP survey, which is based on the SAIA-SCTS database, indicates a second “wave” of NGO formations between 1993 and 1996. Only 20% of the surveyed NGOs report having been founded between 1989 and 1992. The largest share (44%) started to operate between 1993 and 1996, a period Michal Vašečka refers to as the phase of “*emancipation of civil society*” which was followed in 1997 by a period of “*(political) mobilization*”.¹⁹⁸

196 One has to note, however, that not all registered non-governmental organizations are active and not all consider themselves as part of the “Third Sector”. Demeš (1999: 349) estimates in 1999 that of the then 13.6 thousand registered NGOs, 1300 to 2000 “*take an active part in shaping the Third Sector identity*”.

197 Vašečka (2002a: 1) attributes the rise of NGOs in these years to the burgeoning demand for social and educational services and a natural response to the freedom of association that was not possible under the previous authoritarian regime. Note that the peak of registrations in 1997 is largely due to a new registration law from 1996 that required foundations to re-register.

198 According to Vašečka (2002a: 2p) the development of civil society in Slovakia occurred in four chronological phases: (1) “diversification”, marking a period of rapid growth of NGOs starting in November 1989; (2) “consolidation”, starting in 1992/93 and marking an increasing professionalisation of the non-governmental sector; (3) “emancipation”, a period starting in 1994 with the incorporation of Mečiar’s rule and initiated by an uneasy cooperation with government; and finally (4) “(political) mobilization” of NGOs, which manifested itself in various campaigns starting in 1997, parallel to the deterioration of political and legislative conditions for NGOs. In Vašečka’s view, the professionalism of NGOs as well as their self-identity, coherence, and self-consciousness as a “community of involved people” rose over these various periods.

Table 8 New Registrations of NGOs per Year



Source: own calculations based on Vašečka (2002a: 4)

8.2.2 Composition

If we turn to the composition of non-state, non-economic civic activity, the picture again looks different, when the analysis is based on absolute numbers or on paid employment (see similar observations in the Polish case, chap. 7.2.1). According to the DPP survey in Slovakia, most NGOs focus on issues concerning the youth, culture and education (32%; Poland: 24%), followed by social services (19%; Poland: 30%). Further important issues are ecology with 11% of NGOs (Poland 1%), and human rights issues (8%; Poland: 3%). Decentralization also ranks high on the agenda of Slovak NGOs (9% of NGOs are active in this area). However, this is much lower than in Poland (17%). Moreover, little attention is given to economic development (4%; Poland: 10%). 4% of NGOs aim to support the NGO sector and 15% regard it as a further important area of activity (Poland: 3% / 19%).¹⁹⁹ According to the Johns Hopkins data, the majority of non-profit seeking organizations (37%) focus on culture and recreation, just like in other CEE countries. Education comes seconds with 29% of paid employment, followed by professional organizations (including unions) (10%), and environment and advocacy (10%). Social services, health care and development rank low with 5%, 2%, and 1% of paid employment respectively (Woleková et al 1999: 361).

¹⁹⁹ See appendix 8, table 26. These findings roughly correspond with the SAIA-SCTS database according to which most NGOs in 2000 focused on helping children (32%) and education and science (28%). NGOs are also active in humanity and charity (16%), culture (10%), the environment (7%), human rights (5%) and community initiatives (2%) (Demeš 2001: 472).

These figures are particularly interesting in comparison with the CEE and the West European average. In the case of Poland, it has already been argued that the Johns Hopkins data reveal the old and the new faces of civic activities in CEE that organize outside the state and market (see chap. 7.2.1). In comparison with Western Europe, we witness in CEE on the one hand an oversized sector in the following areas: sports / recreation, professional organizations / unions, and environment/advocacy. On the other hand, the areas social services, health and education are markedly under-developed. These findings are even more striking in the Slovak case. Although the figures for recreation and professional organizations roughly correspond with the CEE average²⁰⁰, the share of paid employment in the field of environment/advocacy at 10% is higher in Slovakia than the CEE average (6%) and by far higher than in Western Europe (3%). The same holds true for private education (Slovakia: 29%; CEE-average: 18%; Western Europe: 28%) (Anheier/Salamon 1999: 17). In the same vein, the field of social services and health care are distinctly underdeveloped, compared even to other CEE countries (ibid).

The findings of the two studies suggest that the new face of organized non-state, nonprofit-seeking civic activity in Slovakia is marked by highly professional organizations active in environmental protection and advocacy, private education, and a feeble but evolving social sector that lacks financial resources and paid labor. In contrast to Poland, like Slovakia a catholic country with a strong charity tradition, fewer organizations deliver social services and the ones who do possess fewer material means to employ labor. Woleková (1999: 363) attributes both the underdeveloped social service and health sector as well as the highly developed environment/advocacy sector to the peculiarities of the Mečiar regime. The small share of employment in health and social services “... *very likely reflects the determination of the post-1989 governments to keep firm control over these two crucial welfare fields*“. Hospitals remain state-owned. Moreover, private health care providers are legally defined as commercial organizations. Besides that, the state maintained social services established during communist times. The organizational strength of new initiatives in the area of education, advocacy, and environment are in her opinion a direct result of “*the crucial role that civic organizations have played in the post communist development of this country*“ (ibid: 364). The authoritarian tendencies of the Mečiar government triggered opposition inside NGOs, and also pushed oppositional leaders into NGOs. The operational effectiveness and unity of NGOs and not least the Western attention and support they received is thus widely regarded as a result of Mečiar’s rule. I will come back to this point later.

200 In the field of recreation work, 37% of paid employment in Slovakia and 35% by the CEE average. 10% of paid employers in Slovakia work in professional unions work, as compared to the CEE average 11% (Woleková 1999: 361).

8.2.3 Regional Distribution

A further striking feature of the NGO sector in Slovakia is its unequal regional distribution. The majority of NGOs, namely 35%, are located in the capital Bratislava (SAIA-SCTS 2000b). The urban centers Košice, Banská Bystrica and Prešov are further strongholds of NGO activity with 12%, 10% and 10% of NGOs respectively (ibid). The concentration of NGOs in urban centers is further visible if one focuses on the number of inhabitants per NGO. In Bratislava there are 716 inhabitants per NGO, Košice has only 2487 inhabitants per NGO. In Trenčín, the city with least inhabitants per NGO, the ratio is 3547 to 1.²⁰¹ The unequal regional distribution of NGOs corresponds with regional socioeconomic disparities between Eastern and Western Slovakia and urbanized and rural areas. In 2001 the share of GDP per capita in Eastern Slovakia equals 39% of the EU average (Slovak average: 49% of the EU GDP average). In contrast, the GDP per capita in Bratislava amounts to 99% of EU average. The unemployment in Bratislava reaches roughly 7% whereas it amounts to 26% in the rural areas (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 1).²⁰²

8.2.4 Civic Participation and Volunteerism

The next indicator I turn to is civic participation. Organisational membership in Slovakia is low as is the case in other CEE countries. According to the 1995-97 World Values Survey organizational membership in Slovakia reached 12,6% (Howard 2003:65p).²⁰³ According to a public opinion survey of the Institute for Public Affairs (IVO, *Inštitút pre verejné otázky*) conducted in 1999, Slovakia experienced an increase in political mobilization in 1998, which manifested itself in a high voter turnout to parliamentary elections. Other forms of civic participation were in 1998 frequently used. 49% of respondents reported that they signed a petition at least once; 24% joined a group or organization pursuing their interest; 17% attended protest demonstrations (Bútorová / Gyárfášová / Velšic 1999: 151). Volunteerism continued to rise. According to the Volunteer Center of SAIA-SCTS, interest in volunteer work grew during 1997, and approximately 19% of the population was involved in some volunteer activity (Demeš 1999: 350). However, the optimistic expectations of large parts of the population towards the future quickly dwindled in view of political struggles and conflicts

201 These findings correspond with the DPP survey: The largest share of Slovak NGOs covered by the survey are located in the capital (44%). Moreover, 48% report to mainly operate on the national level. A surprising share of 14% of NGOs sees the international level as their main field of operation (see appendix 8, table 26, question 8).

202 It is worthwhile to note that the regional disparity of NGOs corresponds not only with socioeconomic disparities but also with voter orientation (see Krivý 1999: 65, see also section 8.2.5.).

within the ruling coalition and a growing unemployment rate.²⁰⁴ The ratio of dissatisfied people grew from 34% in January 1999 to 59% in March 2000 (Bútorová / Gyárfášová / Velšic 2001: 199). The disappointment of citizens with politics translated in less participation in public life. In 2002 the organizations ETP Slovakia and Ekopolis Foundation remarked "... *the participation of citizens in NGO activities has dropped from 25 to 16% in the last five years*" (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 2).

8.2.5 Ties Between Non-Governmental Organizations and Within Civil Society

The following section will demonstrate that the ties between Slovak NGOs are marked by cooperation and good working relations as well as by a striking degree of unity and cohesion. Many groups of NGOs joined coalitions or umbrella organizations.²⁰⁵ Moreover, the Third Sector in Slovakia is very well organized. This is firstly the result of the Stupava Conference, an annual gathering of NGOs. Secondly, in Slovakia an effective body representing NGO interests exists called, "Gremium of the Third Sector" (G3S). This committee, which is regularly elected at the Stupava Conference, is widely accepted as the voice of NGOs in Slovakia. The following will briefly portray the Stupava Conferences and the G3S. Moreover, the questions will be raised as to the extent to which the strong cohesion among NGOs is likely to persist after the downfall of the "common enemy" Vladimir Mečiar and whether the NGO sector is more likely to unite the fragmented Slovak society or deepen existing cleavages.

203 Thereby membership varies according to the type of organization: church or religious (29%), sports or recreational (22%), labor union (19%); political party (7%), professional (7%), charitable (5%), environmental (5%), educational/cultural or artistic (6%), other (13%). See Howard (2003:65p).

204 For a detailed account of the internal problems of the coalition see: Mesežnikov (2001: 27pp). For an account of the economic situation of Slovakia after the 1998 elections see: Jakoby et al (2001).

205 Examples are: the Slovak Humanity Council (SHR), an umbrella of charity NGOs that was the largest umbrella organization in Slovakia in 1995 with 115 members; the Slovak Catholic Charity (SKCH), an umbrella organization of Catholic charity NGOs; the Slovak Youth Council (RMS), an umbrella of NGOs focusing on children and youth; Tree of Life, the umbrella organization of environmental NGOs; the Slovak Association of Nature and Country Protectors (SZOPK), a further umbrella organization of environmental NGOs; and finally the Association of Civil Associations in Slovakia.

The Stupava Conference

The Stupava Conference is an annual gathering of NGOs and their representatives. It is the largest annual meeting of NGOs in Slovakia. The first conference took place in 1991 in former Czechoslovakia. It was initiated by Slovak and foreign charity foundations whose aim was the advancement of civil society in Czechoslovakia (Charta 77 Foundation, Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA), Jan Hus Foundation Brno, European Cultural Foundation).²⁰⁶ After the split-up of the country, Slovak participants of the first conference created the “Gremium of the Stupava conference of Slovak NGOs” in March 1993 and founded the “Service Center for the Third Sector”, a subsection of SAIA, as a permanent organizer of the Stupava conferences (see chapter 8.4.1). The Stupava conference provides a platform of debate for main issues of concern for NGOs. It evaluates the development of the Third Sector and determines goals for the following year. Moreover, the Stupava conferences, which are open to all NGOs, democratically elect the so-called “Gremium of the Third Sector”, thus establishing an effective organ of NGOs. Since 1997 the Stupava conference is supplemented by regional gatherings of NGOs, which elect Regional Gremia of the Third Sector (RG3S). Table 9 provides an overview of the Stupava conferences from 1991 to the year 2000. It is clear that the early conferences mainly focus on operational issues relevant for NGOs such as a respective NGO and tax law or questions of funding or volunteerism. This focus shifted in 1997 when the Stupava conference actively discussed the political role of NGOs and debated the participation of NGOs in political and pre-election activities. This debate resulted in an encompassing pre-election campaign of Slovak NGOs called “OK ‘98” that aimed to motivate especially the young to vote (see chapter 8.4.4).

The Gremium of the Third Sector (G3S)

The Gremium of the Third Sector was firstly elected at the second Stupava Conference in 1994 as an organ representing different types of NGOs. Since then the annually elected 14-16 members of the G3S represent the following areas of NGO activity: humanity and charity, environment, education, youth, culture, human rights and minority issues, and community initiatives. The G3S consists of volunteering representatives of NGOs. According to the SAIA webpage the G3S pursues the following tasks: (1) to develop partner relations with representatives of the state, local governments, the business sector and unions as well as

206 One may note that the Stupava Conferences had a predecessor. In August 1990 a conference on foundations and the volunteer sector in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic took place in Bratislava, which was attended by over 50 participants and foreign experts from the USA, Canada, the Netherlands, Australia, and Central and Eastern Europe. The Department of Education, Youth and Sport in the Slovak Republic, and the Faculty of Law of Comenius University organized the conference in co-operation with the Rockefeller Foundation. See: www.saia.sk/stupavska_konferencia/indexe.htm.

with international non-governmental organizations; (2) to defend and pursue the interests of NGOs, (3) to develop cooperation and solidarity within the Third Sector; and (4) to explain and publicize the task of the Third Sector at home and abroad.²⁰⁷ In fulfilling these tasks the G3S receives administrative support from SAIA-SCTS, which functions as the secretariat of the G3S. The G3S played a leading role in the negotiations about legislation concerning non-governmental organizations with the government and acted as a coordinating body for the major campaigns of the NGO sector such as the SOS campaign and the election campaign "OK '98" (see below). The G3S further cooperates closely with various umbrella organizations and the Donor forum (Vašečka 2002c: 14).

207 See: www.saia.sk/g3s/indexe.htm

Table 9 Topics and Participation on the Stupava Conferences

No.	Year	Title, Location	Major Topics	Participants
1	1991	"The Conference of Foundations in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic", Stupava	Available information on NGOs; tax and legislative conditions for NGOs	24 participants from Slovakia, 34 from the Czech Republic, 20 from abroad
2	1994	"Present and Future Perspectives of the Third Sector in Slovakia, Stupava	Legislative context; cooperation within the sector; transparency of public grant policy; professionalism of NGO activists; first election of a 16 member G3S	150 domestic participants, 20 foreign guests
3	1995	"The Third Sector and the Civil Society", Bratislava	Role of NGOs in civil society; legal and tax context of NGOs	250 domestic participants, 20 foreign guests
4	1996	"The Third Sector - We Serve the Citizens", Banská Bystrica	Community initiatives; cross-sectoral cooperation; legal assistance; media and public relations; organization of independent pre-conferences of five sections; meeting of donors	190 domestic, 20 foreign participants
5	1997	"The Third Sector – Actively Working for Democracy", Košice	Creation of a network of regional gremia; funding opportunities; "Donors' Forum"; legislative issues; upcoming elections	250 domestic, 30 foreign participants
	1998	Extraordinary Conference: "Slovakia After Elections", Bratislava	Analysis of NGO activities in the civic campaign for free and fair elections „OK '98“.	400 NGO representatives, plus politicians and foreign guests
6	1999	"Third Sector for Decentralization and Transparency", Bratislava	Modification of election of G3S; strengthening of regional gremia	
7	2000	"Let People Cooperate", Poprad	Cooperation between government and civil society; regional development; decentralization; Slovak EU integration; definition of the Third Sector; transparency; ethics within the Third Sector	405 participants

Source: Own summary based on: www.saia.sk/stupavska_konferencia/indexe.htm, Bútorá / Demeš (1998: 4, 15p, 21), Demeš (2001: 488)

The common aim of the G3S elected in 1999 read as follows:

“Our common aim is to build a civil society in Slovakia, a society of free and active citizens who do not wait but act for the public benefit. Our basic aim is to achieve an equal status of NGOs in providing of public-benefit services and activities for citizens and their equal access to public resources” (www.saia.sk/g3s/declaration.htm).

Thanks to the G3S and the Stupava Conference, the Third Sector in Slovakia is marked by intense cooperation structures as well as strong unity and cohesion. One has to note, however, that this cohesion is largely the result of the confrontation with a repressive government. One may doubt whether the united front of NGOs will be maintained after the downfall of the “common enemy”, the Mečiar administration. As Pavol Demeš (1999: 355) points out:

“Under the Mečiar government, the Third Sector developed for several years under state pressure, which considerably helped to increase its cohesion. In the future it will probably be more difficult to maintain the spirit of sector-wide cooperation, and a certain fragmentation and the creation of new types of groups can be expected”.

It thus comes as no surprise that fragmentation tendencies are visible. Since 1997 regional G3S offices that exist in all of the seven Slovak regions have supplemented the G3S. Since then a process of decentralization took place which strengthens the increasingly active regional offices of the G3S. This process cumulated in 1999 in a modified format of the G3S. Like that, the regional gremia had been strengthened and the domination of capital based NGOs came to end (Demeš 1999: 355). Along with that, certain issue-oriented NGOs choose to create their own platform of debate. For example, in 1997 environmental groups created their own representative body known as Ekoforum (interview Košťálová).

A process of fragmentation is, however, not necessarily negative for civil society development. On the contrary, the fragmentation of different organizations that represent different constituencies and interests has to be regarded as a way towards civil society based on plural interests and different wants. The question remains, however, to what extent are divergent interests capable of cooperating and/or applying civil conflict-resolution mechanisms. One can state that in Slovakia the fragmentation tendency is unlikely to hinder peaceful relationships among NGOs. This expectation is grounded in the fact that even the Mečiar-friendly “Union of Civic Associations and Foundations” attended the Stupava Conference in 1999 and that environmental NGOs who left the G3S, declared their interest in future cooperation. Moreover, NGOs that perceive themselves as part of the Third Sector hold cooperative and friendly contact to other non-state organizations. The G3S for example established cooperative ties with the “Confederation of Trade Unions” (KOZ) and the “Associations of Employers Unions and Associations” (AZZZ) already in 1996. Both organizations declared their support of NGOs in legislative and other issues. Several common conferences cemented cooperation and information exchange (Vašečka 2002: 16p).

Having said this, one should bear in mind that the NGOs described above and the Third Sector may not fully represent the heterogeneous Slovak society. Slovakia is an ethnically divided state with a large Hungarian minority (10.7%) and a growing Roma and Sinti minority (2.5%).²⁰⁸ Furthermore, socio-economic disparities between Eastern and Western Slovakia and especially between urbanized and rural areas prevail.²⁰⁹ The differences in unemployment, GDP and real wages translate into different political attitudes and party affinity:

“Support for democratic principles is not evenly distributed in the population ... More advocates of democratic principles are among people with higher education, the young and middle-aged generations, members of the Hungarian ethnic minority, and residents of large cities. ... These political cleavages have been visible during the whole period of Slovakia’s independence” (Bútorová / Gyárfášová / Veštic 2001: 216).

The rural-urban divide further manifests itself in electoral results. Whereas the HZDS-SNS coalition was mainly supported in rural areas, the SDK, SDL and SOP have stronger roots in urban centers (Krivý 1999: 65).²¹⁰ An exception to the rule is Southern Slovakia, which is predominantly rural. Nonetheless, the oppositional parties, namely the Hungarian SMK received broad support due to the predominantly Hungarian population. As shown above, the regional and urban-rural divide in Slovakia also manifests itself in the development of NGOs who are still predominant in urban areas.

NGO leaders are aware of this problem and aim to address it. Pavol Demeš (2001: 490) comes to the conclusion:

“Leaders of the Third Sector rightly feel that a lack of cooperation and excessive fragmentation within society may seriously hinder the development and modernization of Slovakia. It will be interesting to observe how representatives of the public sector react to this challenge, and whether NGOs will be able to communicate that message to the wider public”.

208 Additionally several small minorities live in Slovakia: Czechs (1%), Ukrainian (0.3%), German (0.1%), Polish (0.1%). See: Goldman (1997: 117).

209 A glance at the high regional disparity of unemployment figures and wages makes this point clear. By the end of 1999, exactly one half of Slovakia’s districts had an unemployment rate higher than 20% (average unemployment rate in 2000: 19,1%); in 10 districts, predominantly rural areas, it exceeded 30%. Similarly, there are clear regional disparities in wages with Bratislava and Košice as areas of high wages, and 12 districts, seven of which are in the eastern Prešov region, with average wages that are more than 25% below the overall average wage (Woleková / Radičová 2001: 369).

210 One may note that this divide is not a recent phenomenon. Karen Buerkle (2002a: 6) demonstrates that the national-populist Hlinka’s Slovak People’s Party that dominated the Slovak political scene in the 1930s and the HZDS of Vladimir Mečiar have drawn their strength from the same regions within Slovakia.

8.2.6 Relations Between Non-Governmental Organizations and State Authorities

In Slovakia the relationship between civil society organizations and state authorities in the period of investigation depended highly on the government in office. Roughly three relevant time periods can be distinguished: 1990 – 1992, 1993 - 1998 and from 1998 through 2000.

During the early years of the new Czechoslovak state (1989-1993) the relationship between NGOs and government in the Slovak lands were “*promising*” (Vašečka 2002a: 2). A number of NGOs sprang up that were largely characterized by amateurism and a lack of financial resources. The government of the Slovak federation slowly started to approach the issue of civil society and NGOs. Single ministries established cooperative bonds with NGOs and provided financial support (Woleková 1999: 367).

Already after the elections of 1992 and even more so after the establishment of the nationalist-populist left-right coalition under Vladimir Mečiar in 1994, the feeble bonds of cooperation between NGOs and government authorities broke, and the relationship was marked by a growing tension. In the words of Michal Vašečka (2002a: 1):

“... almost all post-communist European governments were suspicious and distrustful of NGOS and were reluctant to support them. Still, in the Slovak case it became clear during the Mečiar years that the government and the non-governmental sector could not only not cooperate but they could hardly coexist...”

The fierce relationship was partly due to the fact that the NGO sector in Slovakia manifested itself as a major oppositional force during the Mečiar years. Mansfeldová (1998: 15) points out, that oppositional Slovak intellectuals drew back from the political scene into civil society. In face of lacking political opportunities, political opponents did not enter or found political parties, as was the case in other post-communist countries, but instead created non-governmental organizations. This was compounded by the fact the HZDS government closely controlled state administration and scientific institutions, thus leaving intellectuals with few prospects to make their living. As a result, there was a mushrooming of private schools, foundations, independent institutes and associations after 1992 and especially in 1993 (Fialová 2002c: 15).²¹¹ Fialová argues that in contrast to other Central-European post-communist states, where the Intelligentsia played a major role in opposing the communist regime, intellectuals in Slovakia only took up that role after 1992/93. In previous years, Slovak intellectuals were hardly visible in the public scene and if so rather as part of Czech-dominant dissident circles. Moreover, Slovak intellectuals gained little esteem among the

211 For example, future prime minister Miklas Dzurinda founded with 9 other dissidents (four of which became ministers after 1998) the economic think tank MESA 10.

Slovak population with its belief in equalitarianism and its distrust towards any kind of elite (ibid: 13). Only with the establishment of several oppositional NGOs and the transformation of Slovak intellectuals into civil society leaders, the Slovak intelligentsia started to play a major role in the restructuring of the country. By these means, an oppositional movement formed in Slovakia under the label “Third Sector”.

The Mečiar government answered the burgeoning oppositional stance of the NGO sector with containment, attacks and repression. The government denied the largely oppositional oriented NGOs any right to a say in a matter.

“...the struggle by NGO leaders to gain the attention of policy makers has been particularly difficult since the Slovak elections in 1994 that resulted in the ... coalition government headed by Prime Minister Mečiar” (Bútora / Demeš 1998: 2).

The conflict came to a climax when the government passed three laws on NGOs which were highly criticized by leading NGOs: the law on foundations in 1996, the law on non-investment funds, i.e., charity organizations that do not have an endowment (1997), and the law on Nonprofit Organizations Providing Beneficial Public Services (1997). In particular the law on foundations, which required the re-registration of all existing foundations under conditions most foundations could not fulfill, was regarded as a major attack on the NGO sector. Leading NGOs launched in response a campaign called “Third Sector SOS Campaign”. The campaign, which involved intensive media coverage, aimed to inform the public about NGOs and the negative consequences of the law. Despite several lobbying activities the law nonetheless passed (see in greater detail chapter 8.4.4).

The hostile attitude of the government was further visible in various attacks by governmental representatives and politicians towards single NGOs or the NGO sector. One parliamentarian declared

“There is a burning need to introduce order into the non-transparent jungle of the 10000 clubs, civil associations and foundations in Slovakia whose activities are in conflict with the interests of the citizens of this country” (Hofbauer 1995 cit. in Bútova / Demeš 1998: 9).

Especially the international financial support to civil society organizations raised criticism of HZDS politicians as the following quote depicts:

“... foundations represent the most generous flow of uncontrolled and uncontrollable finances of a controversial nature and unknown usage ... also for purposes discordant with state interests and the interests of our citizens ... it seems that in the name of plurality, democracy and freedom has grown something (that is, NGOs) that has almost nothing in common with these noble concepts “ (cited in Vašečka 2002b: 6).

A further attempt of the government to contain NGO activities comprised various activities that aimed to install a “parallel structure” of government-friendly NGOs. For example, at the

beginning of 1997 a new umbrella organization named “the Union of Civic Associations and Foundations” was founded. It was clearly an attempt of the government to install an alternative to the Gremium of the Third Sector and thus to undermine its legitimacy (Bútora / Demeš 1998: 19). The Union publicly condemned the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98”. However, the success of the “OK ‘98” campaign and the positive public opinion of NGOs in Slovakia demonstrate that this attempt largely failed (see chapter 8.4.4). Its chairman abandoned the Union of Civic Associations and Foundations at the beginning of 1999. Afterwards it showed its willingness to cooperate with the G3S and participated in the sixth Stupava conference (Demeš 1999: 356). However, in 2000 it reduced its activities (Demeš 2001: 472).

Relations between NGO and governmental representatives improved clearly after the 1998 elections. The new government expressed its desire to “fully develop civil society” as the seventh main goal of its governmental program, and several ministries invited representatives of NGOs to join advisory bodies (Richterová 2000: 49).²¹² Prime Minister Mikláš Dzurinda met in 1999 with representatives of the G3S and offered partnership between government and NGOs. Several meetings between NGOs and parliamentarians organized by the Slovak Humanity Council (SHR) followed. The Environment Ministry created a liaison officer for relations with NGOs in 1999. A Cabinet Council for NGOs consisting of representatives of the state administration and NGOs was established with the aim of supporting NGOs. Moreover, state authorities started to contract out services to NGOs (Demeš 2001: 480), and governmental funding for NGOs rose from 864 million crowns in 1999 to 978 million crowns in the year 2000 (ibid: 478).

One has to note, however, that the cooperation with the government did not completely fulfill the expectations of NGOs that were convinced that they ensured the electoral victory of the government. NGO activists perceive the progress on NGO legislation as slow and unsatisfactory. The foundation law was reformed only in 2002. The required start-up endowment is perceived by parts of the NGO sector as far too high.

212 For example, representatives of G3S and the Slovak Youth Council became members of the newly created Consultation Committee for European Integration of the Slovak Government's Ministerial Council. The Environment Minister signed an agreement on co-operation with an environmental NGO and the Minister of Labor, Social Affairs and Family appointed independent NGO representatives to the ministry's grant-allocation commission. The Agriculture Minister assigned an NGO representative to the commission for the Rural Development Plan. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created an advisory group consisting of foreign affairs experts from NGOs. The Education Minister invited representatives of the Youth Council to the ministry's grant-allocating commissions, and the Ministry of Justice included NGO representatives to the foundation law drafting commission (Vašečka 2002a: 18p).

The Law on Non-Investment Funds adopted in 1997 will not be re-defined, and the public benefit status of NGOs is still not clearly defined (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 6). The limited public funds are criticized, as well as the non-transparent and unclear grant policies (Vašečka 2002a: 12). Nonetheless, in comparison with the relationship between NGOs and the previous government, and even in comparison with other CEE countries, one can state that the government accepts NGOs in Slovakia as useful and welcome partners, whose voice is heard in policy making. As Katarína Košťálová from SAIA pointed out:

“The government understands that a partnership between NGOs and the government is important. And this is already a big step forward” (interview with the author).

The development of organized civic activity in Slovakia during 1994-1998 demonstrates how governmental repression may be answered by increasing cooperation and public involvement. The question arises, however, whether civic involvement continues once the threat of governmental interferences is lifted. Evidence suggest that the Third Sector in Slovakia was by the time of government change consolidated enough to continue its activities despite the fact that the major objective of a change in government has been achieved:

“Intense Third Sector development and cooperation continued following 1998 elections ..., which proved false the notion that cooperation and solidarity in Slovakia’s Third Sector was a reaction to the previous administration’s aversion to the Third Sector” (Demeš 2001: 471).

The various activities of NGOs in the area of NGO training, counseling and public awareness-raising continued. Along with that, Slovak NGOs sustained their public policy orientation and uphold their willingness to play a role in the political and social development of the country. Several new topics and objectives arose on the agenda. A major theme was the advancement of NGO law, but also other legislative initiatives in certain issue areas, such as social assistance, waste recycling, or the freedom of information, were put forward. Further issues at the beginning of the new millennium were decentralization and public administration reform, anti-corruption and transparency, minority problems especially Romany initiatives, and the integration of Slovakia into the European Union.²¹³

8.2.7 Summary: The Belated Rise of Civil Society in Slovakia

Ten years after the demise of communist rule in the Slovak lands and seven years after independence civil society in Slovakia is visible, despite a pronounced lack of historical and cultural preconditions. Numerous associations and organizations sprang up that aim to

represent citizen's interests and that provide social and other services. In addition to trade unions and sport clubs already in existence during communism, newly founded NGOs mainly focused on education, human rights, the environment, children and youth, and social services. The NGO sector is firstly characterized by relatively strong NGOs focusing on advocacy, the environment and human rights issues. Secondly, NGOs dominate in urban areas. Besides these "structural" features of civil society in Slovakia, progress is also visible in what has been called the "cultural dimension" of civil society. The relationship between NGOs is characterized by a strong cohesion and cooperation especially during the Mečiar years. The fragmentation of the sector along regional and issue-oriented cleavages, which started in 1998, is less the result of a growing animosity inside the sector but the outcome of NGOs representing various interests. In opposition to the Mečiar regime a small but highly active group of about 2000 NGOs developed that strives for an active citizenry, for public participation in political decision-making, and for the respect of civic and human rights and democratic principles. With campaigns such as the "Third Sector SOS Campaign" in 1996 and the pre-election campaign "OK' 98" in 1998 this active group of NGOs raised public awareness and succeeded in overcoming a prevailing political hopelessness mainly among the youth and oppositional voters. After the electoral victory of the opposition over the nationalist-populist left-right wing coalition of Vladimir Mečiar, NGOs continued to watch democratic principles, consulted and cooperated with the new government in various issue areas, and continued their approach of transparency and openness towards other social groups.

The Slovak case provides an example how authoritarian tendencies in a political system, which allows for a rudimentary degree of free association and free speech at least, may result in the emergence of civil society. One may argue that between 1994 and 1998 Slovak civil society has been catching up with a development that started already in the 1970s in Poland. A dissident and oppositional movement evolved which Slovakia lacked during communist times. Moreover, a dichotomy between state and society evolved, which often proved to be an important element of liberalization and civil society development in Central and Eastern Europe. Unlike other CEE states, Slovakia did not experience this division in the past (Vašečka 2002a: 1; Fialová 2002c).²¹⁴ Henceforth, Slovakia experienced a belated liberalization in the 1990s.

213 See ETP/Ekopolis (2002: 7,11); Demeš (2001: 486).

214 For the importance of a state-society divide as a precondition for democracy, see: Rustow (1970).

Having clarified the state of civil society roughly 10 years after transition, the question arises: what are the driving forces behind the rise of civil society in Slovakia described above? It was demonstrated that the authoritarian stand of the Mečiar regime that left enough room for dissident activities triggered opposition and contributed to the unity and cohesion among Slovak NGOs. But to what extent did external civil society assistance enable and shape the belated rise of civic activity in Slovakia? To answer this question the next section illustrates civil society assistance to Slovakia in the 1990s. This description is followed by an analysis of the output and the outcome of external assistance in the form of main recipients, their sustainability, legitimacy and effectiveness as carriers of civil society.

8.3 The External Push – Forms and Types of Civil Society Assistance in Slovakia

The following portrays civil society assistance to Slovakia in the period under investigation. Unlike the illustration chosen in the Polish case, the following does not proceed in a chronological order. Instead the section first pinpoints main donors active in Slovakia and their interests. Secondly, the quantity and timing of assistance to civil society in Slovakia is assessed. Finally, the section highlights donor strategies. It will be evident that civil society in Slovakia resembles civil society assistance in Poland in many respects. However, some important differences can be identified: Civil society assistance in Slovakia started at a later point in time than in Poland, but was more massive in scale. The strategies of donors were more fine-tuned from the beginning, as they were shaped by learning experiences made in other cases. And finally, the assistance was more political in character, leaving little doubt that its major target was a change in political leadership and an integration of Slovakia into Western security structures.

8.3.1 Main Donors and their Interests

As in other countries of CEE, a multitude of state and non-state donors have been providing civil society assistance to Slovakia. The following will give a brief overview of the main donors of civil society assistance in Slovakia with a special emphasis on the four donors mentioned above. This section will end with a brief assessment of donors' interests and aims.

The most important private foundations in the country have been American philanthropic organizations such as the Open Society Foundation of George Soros, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers fund, and recently the Trust for a Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, a grant-giving organization funded by five American foundations that was established in 2000 with the aim of easing the withdrawal of

foreign funds in the region. Moreover, independent but state financed democracy promotion foundations were prominent, most importantly the US National Endowment for Democracy, the Co-operative Dutch Foundations for Central and Eastern Europe, the British Westminster Foundation, the Japanese Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Nippon Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Additionally, Slovak NGOs turn to foreign governments for assistance. Various states established small grant schemes administered by their embassies. Prominent examples are the British “Know How Fund” that earmarked 2.9 million GBP for Slovak NGOs in 1999. The “MATRA KAP Project” of the Dutch Embassy gave 300.000 Dutch Guilders to Slovak NGOs in 1999 and the Canadian Embassy's “Canada Fund for Slovakia” distributed 80,000 Canadian Dollars to Slovak NGOs between April 1999 and March 2000 (Demeš 2001: 476). The four donors illustrated in this work have been active in Slovakia too, although their programs and projects are largely the same than in Poland with slight administrative differences due to local needs.

European Union

Similar to Poland, the Phare national program includes a program scheme supporting NGOs labeled “Civil Society Development Program” (CSD). This program together with the micro grants of Phare democracy, Phare Lien and Phare Partnership are administered by the independent non-governmental organization “Civil Society Development Foundation” (NPOA), specially founded in 1993 with the aim to administer the Phare CSD program and to support civil society development (see appendix 3, portray 7). NPOA is highly active in strengthening NGOs and the Third Sector. Following the major discussions on the Stupava Conference in 1997, NPOA included a democracy component in the CSD program. In consequence it was able to finance 50% of the projects supporting the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98”. Furthermore, NPOA is a founding member of the Donors’ Forum, an informal group of donor organizations that regularly meet with the aim of improving the effectiveness of assistance. They coordinate grant-giving, identify recipient needs and demands, exchange information on supported projects, and communicate with other donor organizations.

United States Agency of International Development (USAID)

USAID started its operation in former Czechoslovakia in 1990.²¹⁵ Slovak NGOs benefited from USAID financing in various issue areas.²¹⁶ Moreover, like in Poland the NGO support

215 Between 1990 and 2000 \$180 million in SEED Act financing has been provided with the aim of promoting and protecting democracy, facilitating political and social change, and assisting the shift to a market economy based on a strong private sector. In order to enhance democracy, USAID’ activities focused on the establishment of free and fair elections, party formation, local government and public administration, education, labor issues, regional development, rule of law, democratic pluralism and a vital NGO sector (see also appendix 2, table 5, and aooebdux 5, table 12).

program “DemNet Project” operated in Slovakia from 1996 to 1999. It has been implemented by the NGO “Foundation for a Civil Society”. To smoothen the process of donor withdrawal for NGOs, USAID launched a successor program called “Your Land” administered jointly by Ekopolis Foundation and ETP Slovakia.²¹⁷

National Endowment of Democracy (NED)

The NED spent approximately 4.7 million US\$ in direct project grants in Slovakia between 1990 and 1999.²¹⁸ If one focuses on the areas of NED assistance, a remarkable difference to the Polish case is visible. The largest share of grants was spent in favor of Third Sector development (25%), followed by electoral assistance (20%) and assistance to economic think tanks and economic assistance (12%). In comparison to Poland, support for trade unions ranks rather low with 9% of grants. However, comparatively great attention was dedicated to projects for civic education and awareness-raising as well as media assistance, which received 7% and 6% of grants respectively. Activities that directly aim to sustain democracy received a remarkable 8% of the funds available (see appendix 5, table 14).

German Political Foundations

The German political foundations started their operations in 1990 in the former Czechoslovakia with local offices in Prague. The FES additionally opened an office with local staff in Bratislava in 1992. Both foundations stated that the democratization of Slovakia is their major goal. Until 1998 this goal implied the unification of the opposition and a re-democratization. After the electoral defeat of Vladimir Mečiar, the consolidation of democracy as well as integration in EU and NATO were major objectives (see appendix 6, portrayal 13).

216 In several issue areas, projects have been implemented by NGOs, thus strengthening and stabilizing these NGOs. For example, the USAID local government project strengthened the “Association of Towns and Communities”, and founded the “Local Self-government Assistance Center” (USAID 2000b: 12p). Labor related projects implemented by the American Center for International Labor Solidarity largely provided institutional and technical assistance to the “Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions” (KOZ). The Rural Community Capacity Building Program included a small grant scheme to NGOs and led to the establishment of a new NGO called “VOKA” (Vidiecka organizácia pre komunitné aktivity) that continues the work in rural development (ibid: 15). Rule of law projects assisted the “Slovak Judges’ Association”, the “Slovak Lawyers’ Association” and were partly launched by “Transparency International Slovakia” and the “Integra Foundation” (ibid: 16). Finally, media assistance projects supported the “Slovak Syndicate of Journalists” and worked with “Memo ‘98”, an organization specialized in media monitoring (ibid: 17). See also appendix 7, table 24.

217 The “Your Land” program provides project grants to NGOs in the areas of advocacy, rural development, community development, women/minorities/tolerance, and anti-corruption. Your Land is an active member of the Donors’ Forum (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 3pp).

218 Note that this sum includes 1.2 million US \$ support to Czechoslovakia in the years 1990-1992. One also has to note that the financial involvement of the NED in Slovakia is higher due to regional and cross-country programs and projects. The sum above solely refers to the projects reported on the NED homepage.

Open Society Foundation (OSF)

The Open Society foundation (OSF) was established in Bratislava by George Soros in November 1992 under the name "Open Society Fund".²¹⁹ In line with other foundations founded by Soros, the main objective of the OSF is the creation of an open society. Educational activities comprise the core of OSF activities and receive approximately one fourth of the funds. Civil society assistance mainly includes the "Community Program" launched in 1996 that supports community foundations and funds. OSF additionally provides technical assistance to local organizations in cooperation with the organization Partners for Democratic Change. Finally, the "Development of Democracy Program", supports initiatives that foster the cooperation and dialogue among NGOs and between NGOs and local administration and that contribute to the sustainability of NGOs. Despite recent initiatives to support civil society, one can state that the OSF in Slovakia does not have the political weight of the Stefan Batory foundation in Poland in this area. It largely remains a foundation focused on education and research and only recently took steps in advancing a civil society infrastructure (see appendix 4, portray 9).

Interest of Donors

The main interest of donors in civil society assistance becomes obvious in the following quote of the British ambassador to Slovakia:

"Organizations of the Third Sector are the replaceable guarantee of the supervision of decisions of the executive powers and the tyranny of the parliamentary majority, not only in Slovakia, but in all parliamentary democracies of the world. The British government is interested in assisting the Third Sector, not because you are wonderful people, but because we want to see Slovakia in NATO and the European Union" (Peter Harborne cit in: Bútova / Demeš 1998: 16).

The same interest was expressed by a representative of the KAS explaining their support of the monthly economic newsletter of the think tank MESA 10.

"... our major priority was not only the monthly economic newsletter, although we regard professional reports on the state of the economy as valuable and important. However, a further aim was to guarantee persons of the opposition a (material) existence and provide them with a way to make their living" (Reinhardt Stuth, interview with the author, own translation).

We can conclude that until 1998 the common interest of donors in Slovakia was the democratization of Slovakia and the integration of Slovakia into NATO and the European Union. This interest translated into a more precise political goal: the electoral defeat of Vladimir Mečiar and his coalition and thus the election of the opposition. In consequence,

219 The new name was adopted in 1996 after the foundation law required a re-registration of the foundation.

civil society assistance was a tool to build up and empower a counter-elite and subsequently to achieve regime change. And the electoral victory of the opposition in 1998 demonstrated that it was a successful tool. Nonetheless, most donors continued their assistance after this major goal was achieved, as will be shown in the next section.

8.3.2 The Quantity and Timing of Assistance

It has already been pointed out that the support to civil society in Slovakia received over-proportionally more foreign attention than other states in Central and Eastern Europe (chapter 7.3.1.). Whereas in average foreign donors spent 30% of their DPP funds on civil society in CEE, this share is much higher in Slovakia with 42% of all DPP funds. The foreign attention and assistance Slovak civil society received is even more evident if one focuses on the sum per capita: between 1990 and 2000 donors spent 10.3 US \$ per capita with the aim of supporting civil society (Poland: 1.9 US\$) (see table 5, chapter 7.3.1). This special emphasis on civil society assistance in the Slovak case is also confirmed with regard to single donors. USAID for example spent a higher share of its SEED funds on the stabilization of democracy in Slovakia than in Poland (17% of the SEED funds earmarked for Slovakia in contrast to 8% of the Polish SEED funds). Additionally, 20% of US Democracy assistance was used in support of NGOs (in Poland: 16%) (see appendix 5, table 11+12).

The question arises whether the great emphasis on civil society was equally high throughout the period under investigation. The political interest of donors pointed out in the previous section raises suspicions that donors were most supportive to civil society (and the opposition) in the period of Mečiar's radical right-left coalition between 1994-1998 and shortly before the elections in 1998. In this case one could well argue that civil society assistance was nothing more than a subtle form of external intervention, and that it is the key intention of foreign involvement to "make decisions" rather than "rules" (Abele/Offe unpublished manuscript). In order to confirm or falsify this suspicion, the following will focus on the timing of donor support to civil society.

International political assistance to Slovakia was in comparison to the Polish case rather low until 1993, partly as a result of the special status of the Slovak lands in former Czechoslovakia. According to Glenn (1999: 20) international assistance to Slovakia was "*a fraction of the sum provided to the federation as a whole*". The majority of aid benefited Prague and the Czech lands. None of the donors had offices in Slovakia until after the breakup in 1993 (Glenn 1999: 24). Only USAID had opened its office in Bratislava by January 1992, a whole year before other donors settled in the Slovak Federation (USAID 2000b: 5). The situation changed tremendously with the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993.

Afterwards donors were eager to equally benefit both new countries and not to raise doubt that one may be preferred (interview Mansfeldová).

Nonetheless, civil society assistance only gained momentum in 1995. If one focuses on USAID annual contributions to Slovak NGOs the following tendency is visible: Until 1995 USAID invested approximately 150,000 US\$ per year in NGO development. Moreover, NGO development investments primarily benefited the civic movements Civic Forum and VPN (*Verejnost' Proti Nasili*, Public Against Violence) and can therefore be regarded as a mixture between civil society and political party assistance. Not until in 1996 when the DemNet project was launched, did support for NGOs reach a high of nearly one million US\$ per year. After DemNet came to end in 1999, USAID assistance to civil society remained higher than in the years 1990-1995. Until 2002 USAID benefited NGOs in the country with half a million US\$ annually via its Your Land program.²²⁰

With 1.2 million US \$ NED assistance was the highest in 1990 when it fully administered the SEED sums in favor of democracy (Glenn 1999: 29, see appendix 5, table 16).²²¹ Until 1996 the funds steadily decreased, a trend that was also visible in Poland (see appendix 5, table 15). In 1997, however, they increased again and reached a new high of 760 thousand US \$. Moreover, from 1995 onwards all grants benefited exclusively NGOs active in different issue areas (Third Sector development, human rights, business), except for one grant to the trade union KOZ in 1998. In 1998 half of the funds were used for electoral assistance, however, unlike in other cases this does not imply party assistance but solely voter education, monitoring or surveys conducted by NGOs. Also in 1999 the majority of funds (64%) goes to NGO projects in various issue areas. Firstly, these figures demonstrate that the NED increased its commitment in 1997/1998 in preparation for the elections. Secondly, we can note that the NED predominantly focused on NGO development and civil society assistance in Slovakia, quite in contrast to its activities in other CEE countries where it largely focuses on political party, labor and business assistance.

The EU Phare democracy micro-grants have been distributed rather equally over the years (appendix 3, table 7). The Civil Society Development Program, in contrast, is marked by a tremendous increase in financial resources in the year 1997. From 1993 when the program started to operate until 1996, it supported civil society with an average of 0.45 million ECU per year. In the years 1997 and 1998, however, 1.5 million ECU were earmarked for the same objective (see appendix 3, portray 7). Since 1999 Slovak NGOs have additionally had

220 Own calculations based on USAID (2000b: 40p).

221 According to Glenn this early commitment was mainly dedicated to electoral assistance (Glenn 1999: 21pp). After the 1990 elections the assistance declined dramatically (ibid). As a result, we observe comparatively little funding in 1992.

the possibility of drawing on EU structural funds (Demeš 2001: 481). We thus witness a shift from horizontal programs to pre-accession funds similar to the Polish case.

In summary, we can identify three periods of foreign assistance to civil society. Until 1995 Slovak civil society only received little foreign attention, in particular with regard to governmental support. In contrast, Slovak civil society organizations immensely benefited from international financial support between 1995/96 and 1999. This peak is followed by a decrease and slow withdrawal of funds by 2002. Can we thus confirm our suspicion that civil society assistance in Slovakia was nothing more than political intervention with the sole goal of “making decisions”? Two observations contradict this argumentation. Firstly, one has to note that this “attention curve” corresponds with the sequencing of civil society assistance in the Polish case where no similar single event can be pointed out that donors aimed to influence. Civil society assistance simply did not become “en vogue” until the middle of the 1990s. Secondly, although the intensive financial support diminished after 1999, donors did not withdraw from the scene after this objective has been achieved. On the contrary, donors were aware of the fact that democratic procedures in Slovakia required time and practice to consolidate and that the non-governmental organizations in existence were not able to sustain themselves. Foreign donors continued to support Slovak NGOs especially via the provision of grants. Support to civil society in this third period still remains on a higher level than in the first period and is longer than e.g. in the Polish case.²²² The Phare CSD program for example launched a further round in 1999. USAID continued its support to NGOs after DemNet came to end with an additional program (Your Land Program).

8.3.3 Strategy of Assistance

As already pointed out in the previous section, civil society assistance to Slovakia did not start until the middle of the 1990s, and thus at a later point in time than e.g. in Poland. This later start largely prevented failures and mistakes. One may argue that civil society assistance in Slovakia benefited from the learning experience of donors in other countries as e.g. Poland. The following will briefly highlight the major strategies applied that partially correspond with civil society assistance to Poland in the second half of the 1990s.

222 This observation holds not only true for the donors mainly covered by this study. The British Department for International Development (DFID) still supports Slovakia in 2002 with 3 million £ (1999: 2.9 million £; 2000: 2.8 million £) (DFID 1999: 12). Moreover, the sums earmarked for NGO and civil society development increased in this period from 0.27 million £ in 1999 to 0.75 million £ in the year 2002. A small grants scheme operating since 1995 further supports NGOs. In its country strategy review from 2000, the DFID names as one of its priorities for the coming year “*We will initiate debate on NGO/Government partnership and seek ways of encouraging greater involvement of the Third Sector in policy planning, implementation and monitoring*” (DFID 2000: 13).

In Slovakia donors generally dedicated great attention to assistance to civil society and thus responded to the situation in the country and to local needs. In this regard, the focus of democracy and civil society assistance was slightly different than the Polish case, as the example of USAID demonstrates. In Poland USAID's emphasis on democracy assistance was largely placed on institution building. For example democratic governance and public administration projects received 22% of total DPP funds. In contrast, in Slovakia USAID took a more political approach with a higher focus on political and social processes. Democratic governance and public administration ranks low with only 0.4% of DPP funds. In contrast, NGO assistance (21%, Poland: 17%), assistance to political parties and elections (6%, Poland: 1%), media (6%, Poland: 3%) and rule of law (4%, Poland: 1%) received proportionally more assistance than their Polish counterparts (see appendix 5, table 11+12).

Civil Society Assistance drew heavily on local intermediaries and local expertise. Most of the NGO support programs were implemented and administered by local organizations and with involvement of local staff. Examples are the Civil Society Development Foundation founded in 1993 with the aim to implement the Phare Civil Society Development Program, the Foundation for Civil Society in charge of the USAID funded DemNet program or the Ekopolis/ETP Slovakia foundations that implemented the USAID funded Your Land program. Other donors such as the FES run a local office with local staff. The positive effect of the use of intermediaries is an increase in flexibility and a quick responsiveness to local needs, as was the case in 1997 for example when NPOA adjusted the Phare CSD program in order to support democracy projects or in 1996 when NPOA installed legal counseling centers for NGOs to ease the effects of the foundation law (see above).

Civil society assistance programs mostly involve small grant schemes. Several embassies run additional small grant schemes for NGOs (e.g. Great Britain, Canada, Denmark). The negative aspect of this development is that most large grant-giving foundations that play a vital role in the development of Slovak NGOs merely re-distribute funds from abroad. Local foundations with an endowment registered in Slovakia are rather rare (Demeš 2001: 475).

As a consequence, the question of sustainability is high on the agenda of donors and recipients. Most NGO support programs involve "capacity building" measures to raise the professional standard of NGOs. Like in Poland, the establishment of community foundations that support local initiatives is a further objective. The community foundation of Banská Bystrica, for example, started to build an endowment in cooperation with foreign sponsors (OSF, USAID). One has to also note that some donors chose to stay in Slovakia longer than expected in order to ease the shift to local or EU structural funds (see above).

If one focuses on the thematic orientation of the support programs one can ascertain that most programs distributed their grants among thematically different NGOs. In case of the Phare CSD program for example, in the period 1992-1999 the majority of grants went to NGOs providing social services (23%), followed by volunteer development (16%), the environment (13%), health (12%), and education (11%). 9% of the grants were awarded to NGO projects aiming to promote democracy. However, if one focuses on the regional distribution of NGO grants, a major emphasis on NGOs in Bratislava is visible. Between 1997 and 1998 the majority of grants (48%) benefited organizations located in the capital, followed by Košice (13%), Prešov (8%) and Banská Bystrica (5%) (own calculations based on Demeš 2001: 477).

A further sign of donor learning experiences is the institutionalized cooperation among some donor organizations. In 1997 grant-giving organizations created an informal association called the Donors' Forum with the aim of improving the support to Slovak NGOs and further enhancing the funding situation in Slovakia. Members include the OSF, the NPOA, the Ekopolis foundation and ETP Slovakia. While the founding members were mainly intermediaries re-distributing foreign funds, the trend is to increasingly involve local foundations and grant-giving organizations.

In sum we can conclude that civil society assistance in Slovakia was more political, strategic and focused than in Poland. Moreover, it was more massive in quantitative terms at least if the sum per capita is concerned. All this is partly due to the late start of civil society assistance at a time when donors already learned their lesson in other CEE countries. The turn civil society assistance took in Slovakia is, however, also heavily influenced by the political situation in the country and by the anti-democratic setback in Slovakia under Mečiar. This political situation created both the local demand for foreign assistance for the opposition and the political interest of donors in supporting civil society. As a result, civil society assistance in Slovakia was carried by interests on both sides.

8.4 The Output and Outcome of Civil Society Assistance in Slovakia – Recipients in Focus

The following investigates the output and the outcome of civil society assistance in Slovakia by placing a special emphasis on recipients. In this regard, five questions are of major concern. First, what types of non-governmental organizations receive foreign attention? Second, are such "main recipients" self-sustainable in the long run? Third, do their constituencies and the population at large accept them as legitimate domestic actors? Fourth, do main recipients contribute to the advancement of civil society on the structural or

cultural dimension in Slovakia? In other words, can they be labeled “carriers of civil society”? And finally and most importantly, to what extent does foreign support assist main recipients in fulfilling their role as carriers of civil society (see for a detailed description of these questions: chapter 5.3.)?

It has been pointed out that the selectivity and lacking legitimacy of foreign assistance may result in negative effects such as envy and resentments among NGOs or lead to the establishment of DONGOs (donor driven NGOs) that lack a domestic constituency and fail to sustain themselves once foreign funding comes to an end (see chapter 3). This problem is even more salient in the Slovak case where the massive inflow of aid ahead of the elections evokes suspicion of external intervention. Is such clearly interest-driven assistance that aims to “make decisions” rather than “rules” (Abele/Offe unpublished manuscript) suitable to transplant democratic and civic values and to trigger a civic culture based on tolerance and trust? Or is it not more likely to deepen already existing cleavages in society, such as the cleavage between the predominantly Mečiar-friendly rural population and the predominantly Western oriented urbanized areas (see chapter 8.2.4.)?

The aim of this section is to clarify whether this has been the case in Slovakia. As in the previous case study, this will be done by concentrating on major beneficiaries of assistance, who are presented in the first sub-section. It will be evident that the typology of “main recipients” given above (chapter 7.4.1) is also applicable in the Slovak case. The section further tackles the questions of recipients’ sustainability, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Thereby, special attention is given to the benefits of foreign assistance in order to answer the key question of research: Did civil society assistance alter the capabilities and orientations of civil society actors and make an impact on social and political change by means of empowerment and learning?²²³

223 The following is based on the field research of the author in Slovakia. The sample includes examples of large recipient organizations that sometimes even directly evolved from donor programs and that are still visible in the Slovak civil society sector today. What the “main recipients” of each group have in common is that they received assistance from at least three of the main donors covered by this study, i.e., the EU, American donor organizations (NED; USAID), the OSF, and the two largest German political foundations. Additionally, the chosen NGOs are frequently supported by Western funds and their budget relies on foreign sources to at least 30%. The selection was based on a systematic analysis of available material on donor programs and on available recipient lists (see appendix 7) and was the result of a “snowballing process”. One has to note that the described organizations provide no exhaustive list of “main recipients” but are only typical examples. Other examples could also be found.

8.4.1 Types of Main Recipients

As in Poland, in Slovakia we also find NGOs that started their activity as implementers of international democracy and civil society development projects, or more specifically civic education projects. The creation of such “democracy promoters” is clearly influenced by international actors; their main statutory objective is the promotion of democracy and civil society.²²⁴ One can note, however, that democracy promoters in Slovakia quickly focused on the advancement of civil society and the “Third Sector”, thus shifting closer to the second group of NGOs, the “infrastructural” NGOs. An example of this type of recipients is the NGO “Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia” (PDCS).

Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia (PDCS) is a non-governmental, non-profit educational organization that works within an international network of likeminded organizations in 12 countries called Partners for Democratic Change.²²⁵ The mission of PDCS is “*to help develop and promote culture of democracy, expand democratic approaches and mechanisms for dialogue and conflict prevention*” (website). PDCS stemmed from an international educational program “Partners for Democratic Change” which was created and developed in the USA, and which developed conflict management curricula within CEE universities. In Slovakia PDCS thus began as the Center for Conflict Prevention and Resolution as one of the projects at Comenius University in Bratislava in 1991. In 1994, following the decision of Partners for Democratic Change International, PDCS was founded as an independent NGO. PDCS offers training courses and consultations to various target groups - mainly to NGOs, but also to public administration institutions, social workers, or secondary school teachers. PDCS additionally offers conflict resolution alternatives and mediation.²²⁶

So called “Infrastructural NGOs”, thus NGOs whose major objective is to support civil society and the NGO sector and who aim to install a favorable framework or “infrastructure” for NGOs, were established relatively early in Slovakia, although the focus on a respective infrastructure was no major objective from the beginning.

224 For the distinction of three types of recipients see table 6, chapter 7.4.1.

225 The following is based on information given on the respective websites of each organization, during personal interviews and in annual reports and other materials: PDCS (1997); PDCS (1998); PDCS (1999); PDCS (2000); PCDS (2001), PCDS (2002).

226 In the year 2000 PDCS's activities focused for example on (1) the support to the nonprofit sector including the preparation of strategic planning and trainings for NGOs, (2) on alternative conflict resolution and human rights education in schools, (3) support to ethnic tolerance and (4) support to cross-sector cooperation and community initiatives as part of its joint program with ETP Slovakia “Support to Local Initiatives” launched in 1997.

One has to note, however, that the advancement of the NGO sector is often not the sole operational focus of the organizations. More often than not, they further operate in other issue areas. Prominent examples are the Slovak Academic Information Agency – Service Center for the Third Sector (SAIA-SCTS), and Ekopolis/ETP Slovakia.

The Slovak Academic Information Agency (SAIA) was established through the initiative of Pavol Demeš, a biologist, who was at that time in charge of the Department of Foreign Relations of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (now the Ministry of Education and Science). David Daniel, a historian and a Third Sector enthusiast from the U.S., contributed to the creation of the SAIA. SAIA's stated objective is to assist the development of education in Slovakia and to support civil society in Slovakia.²²⁷ From the very beginning a main field of activity concentrated on facilitating international academic exchange. In this area, SAIA for example provides information for Slovaks interested in studying abroad, organizes scholarship competitions, or administers international educational programs. In 1993 SAIA extended its activities with the establishment of the Service Center for the Third Sector; a sub-section of SAIA that provided programs and services to non-governmental organizations. Since then SAIA-SCTS for example organizes the Stupava Conferences, acts as a secretary for the "Gremium of the Third Sector", provides information and training for NGOs, publishes a monthly magazine for NGOs in Slovakia called *NonProfit*, maintains an electronic database of NGOs in Slovakia, and publishes several directories and other publications of concern for NGOs. SAIA-SCTS also operates NGO service centers in various regions in Slovakia. When asked to what extent the establishment of SAIA-SCTS was influenced by international and foreign actors, the executive director of SAIA-SCTS made the following point:

"Certain organizations proved less important than single individuals, mainly Canadian volunteers or American Third Sector activists" (interview with the author).

The Environmental Training Partnership Foundation (ETP Slovakia) is a non-profit seeking, independent training, research and consulting organization. Registered in 1995, ETP Slovakia developed out of the international USAID funded program "Environmental Training Project for Central and Eastern Europe" managed in Slovakia by the University of Minnesota (CEE), which began in 1992 in 6 CEE countries and finished in 1998. Since 1992, ETP has operated offices in Bratislava and Košice, and in July 2001 a new office was opened in Spišská Nová Ves. ETP Slovakia aims to "*contribute to sustainable development and civil society in Slovakia*" by identifying and implementing "*new models of cooperation and integrated management at the regional / local level that lead to sustainable development and*

227 The following is based on the SAIA website: www.saia.sk; on SAIA-SCTS (1994), SAIA-SCTS (1995), SAIA-SCTS (1996), SAIA-SCTS (1997), SAIA-SCTS (1998), SAIA-SCTS (1999), SAIA-SCTS (2000a), SAIA-SCTS (2001).

to improving the overall quality of life in the community” (website). ETP Slovakia is thus active in two main program areas. Firstly, it focuses on sustainable development and environmental issues. Secondly, it aims to strengthen the non-profit sector in Slovakia. Whereas activities in the first program area include the development of regional development strategies and capacity building in environmental project development, the second area includes lobbying for respective NGO legislation, grant-making to NGOs, and a variety of activities that aim to foster philanthropy in the country.

As in Poland, in Slovakia foreign donors have supported thematically oriented organizations, whose major objective is issue-oriented rather than democracy or Third Sector-oriented. Examples include think tanks and independent research institutions such as the economic think tank *MESA 10 - Center for Economic and Social Analyses*, the *Social Policy Analysis Center* (SPACE), or the think tank *Institute for Public Affairs* (IVO); youth organizations such as the *Youth Council of Slovakia* an association of more than 40 political, religious, ethnic and other youth organizations; thematically oriented foundations such as the *Children of Slovakia Foundation*, the largest domestic grant-making foundation in Slovakia whose endowment was built up with the help of a foreign sponsor (Vašečka 2002a: 13), or the *Milan Simecka Foundation* that promotes education and the extension and establishment of democratic values in society; social organizations such as the *Association for the Assistance of People With Mental Handicaps in the Slovak Republic* (ZPMP), a national umbrella organization that addresses the needs and rights of the handicapped, which received support from the USAID financed DemNet project; NGOs striving for regional self-administration such as the *Association for Supporting Local Democracy*, environmental organizations or human rights and minority issue-oriented organizations (see Demeš 2001: 486p). Like in Poland part of these organizations are connected to well-known figures from the opposition or academic circles. For example, Mikulas Dzurinda the oppositional leader who took office as prime minister in 1998 was one of the 10 founding members of *MESA 10*. One has to note, however, that thematic organizations may also be initiated from abroad. The *Children of Slovakia Foundation*, for example, was established in 1995 by the International Youth Foundation as part of a worldwide network of national foundations. What is most striking about thematically oriented NGOs in Slovakia is their close affiliation with the “Third Sector”. Much unlike in Poland, NGOs in Slovakia see themselves as Third Sector activists no matter in what field they are active.²²⁸ This is demonstrated by the fact that a variety of different

228 This fact became evident to the author by the opposing answers of two organizations in Poland and Slovakia when asked whether they regard themselves as a “NGO”. Whereas the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD) in Poland answered that they are no real NGO (being too professional, too large and too little “grassroots”), the economic think tank MESA 10 in Slovakia insisted that it is a “real” NGO and nothing else.

NGOs were active in the civic campaign "OK '98", for example the *Council of Slovak Youth*, the *Institute for Public Affairs*, the *Association for Supporting Local Democracy*, the *Association of Organizations for the Handicapped Citizens of Slovakia*, but also environmental NGOs such as the *Association for Permanently Sustainable Life* or *Greenpeace* and even the *Slovak Confederation of Trade Unions (KOZ)* to name just a few (Vašečka 2002c: 4).

We can thus conclude that in Slovakia, like in Poland, the previously identified three types of "main recipients" are visible. However, one has to note, that the distinction is not always so clear-cut. Democracy Promoters quickly embraced the concept of a Third Sector; Infrastructural NGOs such as ETP Slovakia or SAIA-SCTS often fulfill a double objective. ETP Slovakia's statutory objective stresses both building a respective framework for NGO activities and tackling issues of sustainable development and the environment. The same holds true for SAIA-SCTS. Initially a thematically oriented organization active in the area of international education, it expanded its activity in 1993 and subsequently was one of the most important Third Sector advocacy NGOs in Slovakia. It is worthwhile to note that SAIA ended part of the third-sector support activities in 2003 and since then sees its major area of activity in the advancement of international educational cooperation. Thematically oriented NGOs finally strongly identified themselves with the Third Sector at least until the elections in 1998.

8.4.2 Sustainability of NGOs in Slovakia

Turning to the question of the self-sustainability of NGOs in Slovakia one limitation is in place. Most donors extended their commitment in Slovakia until the year 2003. The self-sustainability of NGOs and main recipients can therefore be assessed only tentatively. Especially well-positioned organizations that are familiar with international tender procedures still profit from foreign donors. The organization Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia, for example, received institutional support in 2002 from the Trust for a Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe for three years (PDCS 2002). Only after the full withdrawal of foreign donors can the question of sustainability be answered. This even more so since in Slovakia, like in Poland, NGOs consider the lack of financial resources to be the major problem of NGOs in the country (72% of questioned NGOs see this fact as very problematic: see appendix 8, table 26, question 12). This problem is intensified by a lacking philanthropic culture (ibid). With only limited state funds available and few domestic foundations, foreign funds and externally financed foundations remain the main source of income of NGOs.

Despite this pessimistic background, a positive trend is visible. First of all, it can be stated that all interviewees of the author agreed that the sector of NGOs in Slovakia will survive

even after the end of foreign commitment and the stop of foreign funds. Zdenka Mansfeldová points out that people in Slovakia start to organize and that an increased awareness of the possibilities and importance of self-organized action is visible. This is partly the effect of NGOs that built up capacity and act in a professional manner (interview with the author).

Secondly, the problem of NGO financing is addressed from various sides. Public financing is limited but exists. In the year 2000 altogether 978 million Slovak Crowns were allocated to civic associations, foundations, and similar organizations by 10 different ministries and four state funds mainly in the form of direct financial support.²²⁹ However, NGO activists criticize that the transparency of the decision-making bodies allocating the funds remains poor. Clear criteria for the distribution of grants are largely lacking (SAIA-SCTS 2000c: 69). Moreover, the practice of contracting out services is only slowly developing (ibid: 9). A positive sign is the introduction of the so-called 1% law. This law provides possibility for citizens to dedicate 1% of their income tax for NGO operations. Finally there are endeavors to build up domestic foundations supporting NGO initiatives. Examples are the Ekopolis foundation and the Foundation for the Children of Slovakia that have an endowment of 13 and 26 million Slovak Crowns respectively and are thus among the largest domestic foundations in the country. Further examples are so-called community foundations, i.e., community philanthropy organizations “*formed in order to collect, manage and distribute charitable resources*” with the aim “*to improve the quality of life in a geographic area*” (see Sacks 2003). As the third largest endowment of domestic foundations in Slovakia with an endowment of eight million Crowns, the community foundation “Healthy Town of Banská Bystrica” demonstrates that these endeavors bear fruit (Demeš 2001: 475). Nonetheless, one has to admit that the majority of foundations in Slovakia still function as intermediaries that rely on foreign sources.

Although sustainability remains a pressing problem, it can be stated that the main recipients characterized above have few difficulties ensuring their existence. Firstly, they are best equipped to access existing funds. Secondly, like their Polish counterparts, Slovak NGOs whose major objective has been the advancement of democracy and civil society in Slovakia started to export their experiences. Especially the prominence of the “OK ‘98” campaign provides a model eagerly sought and bought abroad. This happened in Serbia where a group

229 The following ministries provided direct financial support to civic associations and NGOs in 2000: The General Treasury Administration (3.2 million Slovak Crowns), Ministry of Education (3.2 million Slovak Crowns), the Ministry of Culture, (1.8 million Slovak Crowns), the Office for the Strategy for Development of Society, Science and Technology (0.75 million Slovak Crowns), the Ministry of the Interior (0.5 million Slovak Crowns), the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, and Family (0.4 million Slovak Crowns), the Office of the Government (0.45 million Slovak Crowns), the Ministry of Agriculture (0.12 million Slovak Crowns), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Health Care, The Slovak Academy of Science, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment, Regional offices (below 0.05 million Slovak Crowns each) (SAIA-SCTS 2000c).

of Slovak NGOs and activists consulted and accompanied a NGO campaign entitled "SOS Serbia" (Demeš 2001: 489). Since 1993 PDCS has been providing training and facilitation services in other countries. According to their annual report in 1997, alone PDCS lecturers and trainers have worked in 22 countries outside Slovakia (PDCS 1997). Some organizations also entered the commercial sphere with part of their activity. PDCS for example established the firm ARK Ltd that provides prevention and conflict resolution seminars to the business sector. MESA 10 became more commercial after the elections of 1998. They provide expertise and political consultancy in the field of economic restructuring, socio-economic reform measures or regional self-administration.

8.4.3 Legitimacy of Main Recipients

According to public opinion surveys the public image of NGOs is prevalingly positive (Bútorová / Gyárfášová, 1997 cit. in: Demeš 1999: 347). In an representative survey conducted in March 2001 NGOs ranked fourth after the church, president, and self-government as most trusted institutions, leaving the police, courts, government and parliament far behind (Focus 2001, cit. in: ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 8). However, the survey further depicts a high level of uncertainty towards NGOs. A substantial share, namely 23%, of Slovaks do not know whether they trust or distrust NGOs (ibid), a figure that reveals that a significant proportion of the population is still uncertain about the basic functioning of NGOs (ibid). NGOs and the Third Sector also gained wide media attention especially during the civic campaign "OK '98". Here the activities of NGOs were prevalingly connected in most newspapers with a vibrant civil society. By contrast, government-friendly newspapers, which described NGOs as intruders under Western influence, had little effect on public opinion (Fialová cit. in Bútorová / Demeš 1998: 14p). All in all, we can state that NGOs and major recipients of aid are largely accepted in Slovak society.

Moreover, evidence suggests that international contacts do not undermine the credibility of recipients. Like in Poland, Slovak NGOs regard contacts to international actors, especially to non-governmental international actors, as valuable and positive. A majority of Slovak NGOs (60%) assesses international cooperation as very important (see appendix 8, table 26, question 10). It comes as a surprise that the positive echo towards international contacts is greater among non-recipients: 80% of the NGOs that had no international partner reported that international cooperation would have been very important. We can conclude that, like in the Polish case, international contacts do not undermine but instead boost the reputation of recipients.

8.4.4 Main Recipients as Carriers of Civil Society?

The following investigates the role of main recipients in advancing the structural and cultural dimension of civil society. The question is to what extent do main recipients act as carriers of civil society in Slovakia triggering the rise of civil society in Slovakia described in chapter 8.2. The section briefly summarizes the services main recipients provide for NGOs in Slovakia, thus contributing to their organizational and institutional capacity, but also to their integration and unity. Secondly, the section highlights the role of Western supported Slovak NGOs in raising civic participation, mainly ahead of elections. And finally, the section investigates the extent to which Western-financed NGOs have been contributing to and succeeded in establishing the NGO sector as a countervailing power and major oppositional force during the Mečiar regime.

Service Provision

Just like their Polish counterparts, main recipients in Slovakia provide services to NGOs. As already indicated by the description of their major activities (see chapter 8.4.1.), “democracy promoters” and “infrastructural NGOs”, in particular, regard the provision of services to NGOs as well as capacity building and institution building of Slovak NGOs as a major objective of their work:

Throughout the years, one major program area of “Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia” (PDCS) has been support to the NGO sector. Activities in this area involved training, consultation and mediation offers to various NGOs and individuals, including ETP Slovakia, the Institute for Public Affairs and the G3S. With the provision of several training courses for NGOs in the area of conflict management, strategic planning, strengthening of organizational capacity and moderation, PCDS contributed to the institutional stabilization and the building up of capacity of these NGOs.

In the case of SAIA – SCTS the service orientation is even indicated by the name of the organization – “Slovak Academic Information Agency - Service Center of the Third Sector”. Just like the Polish organizations KLON or BORDO, SAIA-SCTS provides important information to NGOs on legal issues, funding possibilities and recent developments concerning the sector via bulletins, publications and its monthly magazine *NonProfit*. The Internet plays a major role in the distribution of information. Moreover, SAIA-SCTS informs the public or international actors on the state of the NGO sector via its database on Slovak NGOs and several directories. In doing so, SAIA-SCTS is ready to respond to the needs of NGOs in Slovakia. After the change of the law on foundations in 1996, Slovak NGOs faced the question of re-registration and were in need of legal advice. In response to this demand and the governmental pressure SAIA-SCTS together with the Center for Assistance to Local

Activism and the SPACE foundation established a system of information and legal counseling for NGOs. Legal counseling was provided by the journal *NonProfit*. Moreover, four legal counseling centers were founded (Košice, Banská Bystrica, and two branches in Bratislava) where lawyers assisted NGOs in legal concerns.²³⁰ These immediate measures eased the negative effects of the repressive activities of the government. Michal Vašečka (2002a: 10) makes the point that the quick response of what is called here “infrastructural NGOs” to governmental pressure demonstrates “...that the centralized pressure of the government only had the effect of increasing the level of cooperation and professionalism in the Third Sector”.

As already noted, besides its information and counseling services, SAIA-SCTS also organizes the Stupava conferences (see in detail chapter 8.2.6) and acts as a secretary of the G3S. In this function, SAIA-SCTS coordinated the major campaigns of NGOs in Slovakia.²³¹ Due to these functions, one can say that SAIA-SCTS is the most important NGO active in the area of NGO and Third Sector development in Slovakia in the period under investigation. The Stupava conferences proved to be important platforms for contact and debate where major discussions concerning the future of NGOs in Slovakia, their identity and political role took place (see again chapter 8.2.6.). In doing so, SAIA-SCTS facilitated with its actions the integration and unity of NGOs in Slovakia. Furthermore, with its support for the G3S it assisted an institution that acted as and was accepted as a representative body of NGOs in Slovakia. Nonetheless, the organization was cautious not to call itself an umbrella organization of NGOs. It had no membership but acted solely as an advocacy NGO. As Katarina Košťálová, executive director of SAIA-SCTS in 2000, points out:

“People in Slovakia were still afraid of centralized organizations due to the communist past. Therefore no umbrella organization was founded, but instead the G3S as a representative body of individuals” (interview with the author).

It still remains to be said that at least until 1998 before the process of fragmentation took place the NGO sector in Slovakia spoke with one voice that was legitimated by democratic elections conducted at the Stupava conferences. By these means SAIA-SCTS also facilitated lobbying processes that strove for a new NGO-friendly legal environment.

ETP Slovakia also provides services that support Slovak NGOs mainly by administrating and implementating major donor programs (e.g. “Your Land” from USAID) and by grant- making. Moreover, ETP Slovakia is active in ensuring long-term funding opportunities for NGOs in Slovakia. Just like SAIA-SCTS and the G3S, ETP Slovakia and especially its director, Boris

230 It is worthwhile to note that the set-up of these centers was financed by NPOA with EU funds (see section 8.3.1).

231 The most prominent of them were the “SOS” campaign, the “OK ‘98” campaign, as well as recent campaigns on corruption and volunteerism (Demeš 2001: 484).

Strecansky, have been highly involved in the process leading to the adoption of the 1% law (see 8.4.2) and in lobbying for a new foundation law. ETP Slovakia together with the Ekopolis foundation additionally played a major part in bringing the concept of community foundations to Slovakia. It initiated for example the Community Foundation “Healthy Town of Banská Bystrica”, the largest foundation in Slovakia, and worked on the Community Philanthropy Development Initiative, a joint endeavor of donors and NGOs to promote the concept of community foundations in Slovakia that further assisted the establishment of community foundations in the country (ETP/Ekopolis 2002: 3pp). In doing so, ETP Slovakia acted as an intermediary that passed on and implemented Western funds.

Raising Public Awareness / Mobilizing the Public

Chapter 8.2.4. points out that Slovakia experienced an increase in political mobilization in 1998, which manifested itself in a high voter turnout to parliamentary elections. In addition, starting from 1997 Slovakia experienced a rise in volunteerism and other forms of civic participation (ibid). This rising interest of the public in politics combined with a growing belief that democratic elections and other forms of civic participation can make a difference is widely attributed to the activities of Slovak NGOs during the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98”. The “Third Sector SOS campaign” that responded to the new law on foundations passed in 1996 also proved decisive. In the following both campaigns are briefly portrayed. It will be evident that main recipients were the main driving force behind the campaigns.

The “Third Sector SOS Campaign”

In 1996 the G3S organized the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” in order to oppose the controversial new Law on Foundations, which forced foundations to re-register. This legislative measure was perceived by NGOs as politically motivated with the aim of ending the activity of some oppositional NGOs (see chapter 8.2.6). The campaign, which involved several NGOs among them SAIA-SCTS, ETP Slovakia and IVO, aimed to stop the new law and to stir a public debate on its provisions. Moreover, the campaign aimed to raise public awareness of civic society issues and to stimulate a public debate on the regulative and social context in which NGOs in Slovakia operate. The campaign involved intensive lobbying, the preparation of opposing draft laws, Slovak wide public information meetings and expertise on the proposed law and media coverage.

The G3S as the representation and organ of the Third Sector approached parliamentarians and distributed its critical statement and draft amendments to all deputies in parliament. Additionally, it provided foreign external opinion on the draft law and organized an extensive campaign on the law of foundations that gained Slovak-wide media attention. Despite all these lobbying efforts, none of the proposed amendments found their way into the new

legislation and the whole law has been passed in its original version (see Bútova / Demeš 1998: 9p).²³²

The campaign was the first extensive and systematic public advocacy action in support of civil society since the establishment of the Slovak Republic. It gained intensive media coverage in Slovakia and abroad and succeeded in raising public awareness of NGO activities and civil society issues. Nearly 500 newspaper articles were published concerning the legislation or the campaign during its one month duration (Bútova / Demeš 1998: 4). During the same period over 6000 articles focused on the Third Sector or individual NGOs (ibid). The campaign did not achieve its main goal of stopping the adoption of the new law. The bill requiring the re-registration of foundations was passed.²³³ Nonetheless civil society activists assess the campaign predominantly positive. Thanks to the campaign, the issues of NGOs as well as the term “Third Sector” became known in the wider public. A majority of the population (52%) was aware of the campaign (ibid: 3) Moreover, the participating NGOs developed organizational skills and inter-organizational linkages. The various NGOs proved their ability to gain public attention and to unite against governmental action. The campaign also triggered the foundation of NGO coalitions modeled on the G3S on a regional level.²³⁴ Katarina Košťálová, executive director of SAIA-SCTS in 2000, describes the importance of the campaign as follows:

“Then we learned how to do this; how to reach compromises inside the sector; how to organize publicly. This experience consolidated the role of the Gremium (of the Third Sector). We further learned how to invite international groups to express solidarity with Slovakia” (interview with the author).

The Civic Campaign “OK ’98”

In March 1998 major NGOs launched the Citizen Campaign “OK’ 98” as an open, non-governmental, non-partisan initiative of NGOs in Slovakia with the main objective of ensuring free and fair parliamentary elections.²³⁵ Slovak NGOs thus responded to widespread

232 One has to note, however, that despite the lacking willingness of the government to introduce amendments proposed by the Third Sector into legislation, it could not help to listen. This took place for example at a round-table on tax legislation for NGOs, organized by Europhil Truths, the information center of the Council of Europe and SAIA-SCTS in December 1996, in which lawyers, tax advisors, university experts, representatives of international institutions, NGOs and politicians participated. The government was represented by Katarina Tothova, the Deputy Prime Minister (Bútova / Demeš 1998: 9p).

233 As a result, only 357 of the previous 2634 foundations successfully re-registered as foundations, others transformed themselves into civic associations (259) or became none-investment funds or other legal entities (118) (Bútora / Demeš 1998: 6).

234 During the spring of 1997, the first local gremia (committees) were created in the newly defined administrative regions of Slovakia. By 1998 all eight regions had their regional gremia (see section 8.2.5).

235 For a detailed case study of the campaign see: Vašečka (2002c); see also: (Bútora / Demeš 1998: 4pp, 21p). If not otherwise noted, the following is based on these two sources.

concerns that the government might manipulate the 1998 elections.²³⁶ The campaign had the following goals: (1) to improve voter awareness and information about parliamentary and local elections in 1998; (2) to increase the voter turnout in the 1998 elections; (3) to increase the influence of citizens on the preparation of the election law and to ensure citizen oversight over the fairness of elections. The campaign, which officially ended in December 1998 just after the local elections, combined nearly 60 independent educational and monitoring projects of NGOs. These included e.g. a relay march called "Path for Slovakia" through Slovakia organized by GEMMA 93 during which 300 participants distributed booklets on the importance of citizens' participation in the elections and on fundamental democratic principles and voting procedures; video clips produced by the association "Hlava 98" entitled "I vote therefore I am" shown at cinemas and broadcasted by the only private TV channel then, TV Markíza; or an initiative of the Foundation for Civil Society targeted at young people which entailed a media campaign and several rock concerts. Several NGOs additionally organized discussion forums with representatives of all relevant political parties which took place in all regions of Slovakia. These forums were a novelty in the country. Policy analysis on the performance of the Mečiar administration in various issue areas such as social security, the environment, public transportation or human rights as well as publications on the democratic state of Slovakia were an additional part of the campaign.²³⁷ The campaign also included several monitoring initiatives. The Helsinki Civic Association and the Association for Supporting Local Democracy launched a project called "MEMO '98" which monitored the most significant electronic and print media. The Association for Just Elections organized the participation of domestic observers in the elections (project OKO '98) and the Anton Tunega Foundation trained members of electoral committees.

236 Such fears were based e.g. on the experiences with the the May 1997 referendum on NATO membership and direct presidential elections. The call for direct presidential elections was initiated by opposition parties in December 1996 that launched a petition drive for a referendum, which gained over 500,000 signatures. President Kovač linked this referendum with a referendum on NATO membership called for by the parliament (ignoring the fact that Slovakia had not been invited to join the alliance) on a single ballot. The government opposed this procedure and removed the question on direct presidential elections. In consequence, the opposition successfully boycotted the referendum which was declared invalid due to low voter turnout (less than 10%) (see Bútorá / Bútorová 1999: 86p). Moreover, the amendment of election law following the formation of the Slovak Democratic Coalition in Summer 1997 raised public concern. The amendment stated among other things that each party in a coalition must receive 5% of the overall vote in order to qualify for parliamentary seats. This provision highly limited the chances of the SDC and was criticized by national and international experts (ibid: 87).

237 Numerous expert groups and thematically oriented NGOs were active in this regard, e.g. the Confederation of Trade Unions, the Association for Permanently Sustainable Life, Greenpeace, The Center for Supporting Local Activities, the Association of Organizations for the Handicapped Citizens of Slovakia, the Council for Social Counseling, Freedom of Animals, the G3S, the Forum of Student Solidarity of the Slovak Helsinki Committee.

Main recipients played a major role during the campaign. SAIA-SCTS together with the G3S were among the eleven NGOs that initiated the campaign and coordinated the almost 60 separate activities. PDCS trained moderators of so-called pre-electoral discussion forums to inform citizens, 50 of which took place in Slovakia. Additionally, it provided technical support to the campaign and coordinated the various non-partisan pre-election activities (PDCS 1998). Before the elections of 1998 and as part of its civic campaign “OK ‘98”, the G3S formed a “Democratic Round Table” together with the Confederation of Trade Unions (KOZ), the Union of Cities and Villages, and the Slovak Youth Council. Oppositional political parties joined this informal gathering to prevent electoral fraud and to ensure free and fair elections (Bútova / Bútorová 1999: 89). Several thematically oriented organizations also were active, providing expert analysis on governmental performance, activating the youth or monitoring the media or electoral procedures (see above).

One can state that the campaign reached its major goal: increasing voter turnout. In particular, the high voter turnout of first voters – over 80% compared with 20% in 1994 - is largely attributed to the campaign with its various initiatives targeted at the youth (video clips, rock concerts, marches etc). Olga Gyarfášová makes the point:

“What was exceptional about Slovak parliamentary elections was not only the relatively high overall participation but especially the high election participation on the part of the youngest voters which contributed to the decisive victory of the opposition. The barrier of young people’s apathy was broken by the activities of non-governmental organizations, which did not endorse any political party or candidates, but instead mobilized the young people to take part in the elections by staging very innovative non-partisan campaigns” (cit. in: Vašečka 2002c: 5).

The mobilizing effect of the campaign, which received intensive media coverage, is also evident in the rise of volunteerism to support several initiatives of the campaign. Moreover, the campaign enhanced the unity and cohesion among NGOs. Several NGOs that refused to join the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” were now active (e.g. the Slovak Youth Council).

A Countervailing Power and Major Oppositional Force - The political role of Slovak NGOs

Slovak NGOs developed as a major oppositional force during the Mečiar years (see also chapter 8.2.6). Oppositional Slovak intellectuals drew back from the political scene and took refuge in civil society. While the retreat of dissidents and intellectuals into the NGO sector may be seen as a mere survival strategy in the early years of Mečiar’s rule, in 1997 a process started that can be described as the politicization of Slovak NGOs.²³⁸ Slovak NGOs

²³⁸ Vašečka (2002a: 2p) refers to this period as the “mobilization of NGOs”, as a period when “NGOs became serious partners for democratically oriented political parties” and when “activist potential of NGOs increased”.

increasingly developed a political consciousness, took on a political role and saw themselves as watchdogs of democratic procedures. This politicization process ended a predominant focus on Third Sector issues and complemented a previously dominant service-orientation of Slovak NGOs. This argumentation is supported by several observations:

Firstly, the differences between the two major NGO campaigns, the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” and the pre-election Campaign “OK ‘98” demonstrate the political awakening of NGOs in Slovakia. Although the SOS Campaign has been criticizing governmental action, it was truly concerned with “Third Sector issues” for the most part. The main objective was a change in the legislation concerning NGOs with the aim of ensuring the free activities of NGOs. Single NGOs were concerned with politics in certain issue areas, but no combined action aimed at society at large. While the SOS campaign asked citizens to sympathize and back up the Third Sector, it did not intend to make citizens objects of its campaign. In contrast, the “OK ‘98” campaign had exactly this objective. It aimed to inform citizens, to activate and mobilize citizens. Its major objective was to raise public awareness and to enhance public participation in politics. By doing so, the main objective of the “OK ‘98” campaign, quite in contrast of the “SOS” campaign, was not the sector itself and better conditions for its functioning, but society at large. NGOs demonstrated with the “OK ‘98” campaign that they increasingly comprehended the defense of democratic procedures and values as one of their main missions. The two campaigns thus mark a change in identity of Slovak NGOs from mere service-deliverers to watch dogs of democratic procedures.

That fact that the “OK ‘98” campaign marked a major shift in the identity of Slovak NGOs also became evident in the discussions among NGOs, but also among donors before the campaign. The fourth Stupava Conference in 1996, i.e. the annual gathering of NGOs, was entitled “We serve the citizens”, thus indicating the service-oriented character of NGOs. The fifth Stupava Conference in 1997, on the other hand, was labeled “The Third Sector – Actively Working for Democracy” (see chapter 8.2.5. table 9). At this conference the question whether NGOs should take up a political role or remain non-political stirred intensive debate. Katarína Košťálová, Executive Director of SAIA in 2000 remembered:

“We were aware of the fact that the campaign had to be different than the SOS campaign. It involved the work with citizens and political parties. The question whether NGOs should be involved in such a campaign was discussed heavily. Divergent viewpoints existed on the question whether NGOs should be political or non-political” (interview with the author).

At the end of the Conference, the stand of Slovak NGOs became clear: The final declaration of the conference emphasized the political responsibility of NGOs:

“By increasing the citizens’ participation, we wish to contribute further to the development of democracy in accordance with the principles of a state ruled by law” (cit. in: Bútorá / Demeš 1998: 21).

The participants further stated the need to improve citizens’ information about the upcoming elections in 1998 and called for the presence of international observers during both, the campaign and the electoral process (ibid).

The discussion whether NGOs should take up a political role involved not only NGOs but also the donor community. It was clear to all that without the support of international donors the campaign could not be financed. Donors hesitated, however, to support indisputably political actions of NGOs (interview Katarína Košťalová). The founding of the Donors’ Forum at the 1997 Stupava Conference has to be seen in this light. This informal gathering of foreign and domestic granting and re-granting foundations and foreign governmental giving-programs aimed to coordinate and enhance assistance to NGOs as well as provide a sufficient financial basis for the Campaign.

The shift is further manifested by the fact that even typically service-oriented NGOs that regarded their major objective as the provision of services and training took on a more political role, as demonstrated by the example of PDCS. Moreover, Slovak NGOs also continued their watchdog and advocacy role after the 1998 elections.²³⁹

In sum, it can be stated that main recipients in Slovakia acted as carriers of civil society. They provided several services to NGOs in Slovakia, thus strengthening the capacity and institutional integrity of NGOs. After 1998 they were further successful in advancing the so-called infrastructure of the sector, that is, a respective and favorable legal environment as well as an increase in funding opportunities in form of e.g. community foundations. Moreover, main recipients contributed to the advancement of what has been called the “cultural dimension of civil society”. The annual Stupava Conferences provided not only a platform for debate between NGOs and contributed to the unity and cohesion of the sector. Main recipients also actively searched for dialogue with other groups (trade unions, church organizations, institutes of education), thus establishing further cooperative ties within civil society. Main recipients also contributed to the rise in civic participation in 1997/98. The “Third Sector SOS Campaign” raised public awareness for NGO issues. The pre-election campaign “OK ‘98” went one step further. It mobilized the public and especially young people to go to vote. The resulting high voter turnout helped the oppositional forces to win the elections. Hence, during the “OK ‘98” campaign Slovak NGOs and especially main recipients

239 Examples include the “Civic Initiative for a Respectable Law on Free Access to Information” established by the G3S, ETP Slovakia and others that contributed to the passing of a respective law in May, 2000 (see Demeš 2000: 485). Moreover, NGOs were also active in the elections 2002.

actively took up a political role, developing from mere service-providers to watchdogs of democratic procedures and values.

The following section tackles the question to what extent recipients benefited from and were influenced by Western assistance in their various roles described above.

8.4.5 Recipient Benefits – Did Civil Society Assistance Make a Difference?

It will be evident in the following that the Slovak NGO sector, and especially main recipients, greatly benefited from and were shaped by Western assistance. Conversely, Western assistance was, however, also shaped by the peculiarities of the Slovak case, namely the repressive nature of the Mečiar regime. Three main “benefits” proved decisive for reasons outlined below (1) finances; (2) knowledge, i.e., the provision of information, training, techniques and know-how, and (3) moral support.

Financial Support

The provision of foreign funds was an essential pre-condition for the NGO sector in Slovakia to develop. A major part of Slovak NGOs would not have been able to carry out their various activities if it had not been for external financial support. As Bútorá/Demeš (1998: 13) point out:

“Foreign funds ... represent an invaluable and necessary financial mechanism, without which many projects and NGOs in Slovakia could not continue their existence”.

Still in 2001 Pavol Demeš (2001: 475) jumps to the conclusion that

“(Slovak) NGOs are strongly dependent on funding from abroad”.

Also Michal Vašečka (2002a: 12) makes the point:

“Financial assistance of Western democracies, whether private and public, to NGOs has been instrumental in developing vital civil society in Slovakia.”

The provision of finances thus guaranteed the very existence of NGOs. This point is of special importance in the light of the repressive character of the Mečiar regime. More often than not, foreign financial assistance prevented oppositional NGOs that faced repressive state measures to stop their activities. The experience of SAIA-SCTS is a case in point. In the early years of its existence SAIA-SCTS maintained good relations to the government. In 1994, 22% of the SAIA-SCTS budget was financed by the Slovak government (SAIA-SCTS 1995). In 1996 governmental support ceased due to a growingly hostile attitude of the Slovak government. As a result, SAIA-SCTS had to reduce its activities in 1996. In 1997, SAIA-SCTS's budget nearly reached its 1995 income thanks to foreign support. By these means,

the continuation of the activities of SAIA-SCTS was ensured.²⁴⁰ One can thus conclude that without external financial support, Slovak NGOs would hardly have been able to emerge as an oppositional force as described above.

In equal measure, the activities of main recipients would not have taken shape without external financial assistance. All of the training measures provided to NGO leaders, but also counseling and other services granted to NGOs were financed by Western funds. This holds equally true for the two major campaigns the “Third Sector SOS campaign” and the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98”. All of the 60 activities carried out during the OK ‘98 campaign were fully financed by foreign resources. Vašečka (2002c: 4) makes the point:

“Despite the great amount of voluntary work the financial support was indeed very important for making these projects (of the “OK ‘98” campaign) happen. Campaign financing was secured through the so-called Donors’ Forum that amalgamated various grant foundations supporting OK ‘98.”

One may ask whether the dependence of Slovak NGOs will result in a drop in NGO activity once external donors withdraw from the scene. Donors are aware of this risk. Chapter 8.3.3. already pointed out, that the question of sustainability ranks high on the agenda of donors. As a result, donors did not only finance single projects and NGO activities, but additionally aimed to leave behind domestic foundations that may continue their work. These are on the one hand so-called community foundations such as e.g. the community foundation “Healthy Town of Banská Bystrica” but also other large domestic foundations such as the “Foundation for the Children of Slovakia” or the “Ekopolis Foundation”. In all three cases, the endowments were built up with the assistance of foreign sponsors (see also chapter 8.4.2.). Nonetheless, the prospects for the sustainability of Slovak NGOs would look rather dim, if the provision of Western funds had not been accompanied by the provision of information, training and know-how, which donors usually refer to as “capacity building”.

Capacity Building

Besides money, the provision of information, ideas, concepts, techniques and (expert) know-how proved decisive for the development of the NGO sector in Slovakia on the one hand, and the professionalism of single NGOs on the other. This form of assistance primarily came in the form of training and counseling. However, international role models and expert knowledge also proved decisive.

240 The situation changed again after the 1998 elections. In the year 2000 contributions from the state budget comprised 21% of the SAIA-SCTS budget (without stipends that come primarily from the ministry of education) (SAIA-SCTS 2001: 38).

One can argue, that the service orientation of main recipients made evident above is highly influenced and assisted by Western actors. Main recipients learned the methods and techniques they apply from foreign donors. This is especially true in the cases where the establishment of single organizations was highly influenced and shaped by foreign actors (e.g. PDCS, ETP Slovakia, see chapter 8.4.1.). Yet the personnel of other organizations also benefited from Western training. According to Zdenka Mansfeldová the transfer of know-how was very important. People lacked the fundamental knowledge as to how to run a non-governmental organization, how to raise funds or how to approach the government with legislative questions. In all these fields there was a great need to extend knowledge which was met by various ways of training donor organizations (interview with the author).²⁴¹ This assessment is confirmed by the DPP survey among Slovak NGOs. The majority of NGOs that received training assess it as very important (57%).²⁴²

Experiences with Western experts and the consultancy and counseling they provided have been less positive. According to Mansfeldová, Western experts were often of little use (interview with the author). Again this assessment is confirmed by the DPP survey. Only 36% of NGOs that received counseling and that were consulted by Western experts viewed it as important (see appendix 8, table 26, question 15). However, this does not imply that Western role models were irrelevant. Private contacts to Western NGO activists or volunteers proved more important than official experts, though. Single individuals often functioned as bridgeheads of foreign concepts and ideas and as role models and trainers. According to Katarína Košťálová, Executive Director of SAIA-SCTS, single individuals and especially Canadian and American volunteers were decisive in the early years of SAIA-SCTS's existence as "*mentors and suppliers of ideas and inspiration*" (interview with the author). In this regard, the Stupava Conferences once again played an important role. Each conference had not only domestic but also foreign participants. The conferences thus provided a platform for the transnational exchange between Slovak and foreign like-minded civil society activists that share values or "principled ideas". It thus acted as a platform for debate between transnational "principled issue-networks", which according to Kathryn Sikkink (1993) is a precondition for the circulation of ideas and transnational learning (see chapter 4.4.2.).

241 Also other interviewees, especially from recipient organizations, report that they had very positive experiences with the training they received.

242 See appendix 8, table 26, question 15. It is worthwhile to note that NGOs who did not receive training regard its importance even higher. 61% of NGOs who did not receive training report that it would have been important. In sum, 67% of Slovak NGOs assess it as very important regardless whether they received training or not.

Finally, the provision of expert studies and reports contributed to the development of the NGO sector. In particular, legal expertise provided during the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” is a case in point.

“Representatives of non-governmental organizations, legal experts, and diplomats from the United States and European Union member states not only lent moral support, but also provided essential background information on nonprofit law and, in some cases, even met personally with members of the government and National Council to discuss the role of foundations in their countries” (Vašečka 2002a: 7).

Critiques and expert reports on the controversial Law of Foundations have been provided among others by the Washington-based International Center for Not-for profit Law, and the Brussels-based European Foundation Centre (EFC). A detailed analysis conducted by experts from the EFC identified the law’s most important inconsistencies and recommended several amendments (see Bútorá/Demeš 1998: 3). External support also played a role in the legislative process on a new NGO law, the “Law on Nonprofit Organizations Providing Beneficial Public Services”, starting in 1999. Throughout the legislative process the Third Sector worked together with the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law in Washington. While the Slovak Parliament discussed the new law, the G3S distributed to all deputies in parliament its critical statements as well as a statement by the International Center for Not-For-Profit Law in Washington, which had been requested by the ministry of justice (Vašečka 2002a: 9).

Moral Support

Besides money and knowledge Slovak NGOs received a further form of external assistance that has been labeled above as “moral support” (see chapter 5.3). Starting in 1995 and especially during the campaigns in 1996 and 1998 international actors frequently expressed their solidarity with the Slovak Third Sector. Hillary Clinton, for example, conducted a roundtable discussion with Slovak NGO representatives during her July 1996 visit to Bratislava and sent a welcome note to the 1997 Stupava conference. USAID and the German Marshall Fund of the United States honored Juray Mesik, Pavol Demeš and Peter Huncik, each the head of one of the NGOs coordinating the “OK ‘98” campaign for their commitment during the campaign. The European Union and the USA awarded the “Democracy Award” to the G3S (Europäische Kommission (European Commission) 1997a: 19).

Starting in 1995 the ambassadors of the European Commission, the United States of America, and Great Britain to Slovakia never missed participating in and greeting the annual Stupava conferences.²⁴³

The various symbolic gestures and expressions of international solidarity made clear that international actors accepted and perceived Slovak NGOs as valuable international partners. This symbolism should not be underestimated. The evaluation of the Phare democracy program to Slovakia comes to the following conclusion:

“... the PTDP (Phare Tacis Democracy Program) plays a very important role in Slovakia today in helping to support and develop ... the NGO sector. ...It is important for both financial and political reasons... the EU remains a crucial source of financial support. Politically the support is crucial for several reasons – EU grants give NGOs greater prestige and legitimacy vis-à-vis both the public, the government and potential sponsors, EU support exercises a restraining influence on the government, and EU support provides the sector with a vital perception that whatever the government’s standing with the EU they are part of the European project” (European Commission 1997c: 160).

Thus, the legitimacy and credibility of a donor seem to make a difference. The evaluation further makes the point:

“Phare has much greater legitimacy than the Soros Foundation for instance as far as local private sponsors and other foreign foundations are concerned. Phare also has a greater political weight with the government” (European Commission 1997c: 159).

Domestic observers also stress the importance of Western solidarity and Western contacts:

“The fact that the democratic community in Slovakia had maintained communication with Western democracies during the Mečiar years also played a role in the political change ...For civic activists in Slovakia, the identification with “global civil society” was no mere phrase. They had their natural partners abroad, and exchanged skills, technical advice, and moral encouragement with them. They also learned how to seek international support, including financial assistance from the United States and the EU countries designed to promote democratization ... The West’s open emphasis on the need for democratization was of great importance in shaping public opinion. ... a substantial segment of the population considered the criticism from abroad to be justified and saw democratization as a prerequisite for the integration of Slovakia into Euro-Atlantic structures” (Bútorá / Demeš 1998: 89p).

243 For example, in 1995 the Stupava conference was greeted by the Ambassador of the Delegation of the European Commission in the Slovak Republic, G. Zavvos and the Ambassador of the USA, T.E. Russell. In 1996 the conference was greeted by G. Zavvos, by the Ambassador of Great Britain in Slovakia, P. Harborne, and by P. Lerner, the director of USAID. In 1997 the conference was greeted by two representatives of the Embassy of the USA and the Delegation of the European Commission. Also in 1998, ambassadors from the USA, Great Britain and the Delegation of the European Commission participated in the conference (see www.saia.sk/stupavska_konferencia/indexe.htm).

The DPP survey confirms this point. More than any other form of assistance, Slovak NGOs appreciated the importance of international networks and contacts. 61% of NGOs that report to have international contacts regard them as very important. In total, 67% of respondents stress the importance of international contacts and networks. Moral support is also viewed positively. 52% of respondents regard this form of assistance as valuable. Moreover, Slovak NGOs greatly appreciate the willingness of Western donors to act “*as a partner that strives for the same goals*”. 72% of all respondents indicate that this facet of external assistance has been very valuable (see appendix 8, table 26, question 15).

8.4.6 Summary

This section addresses the question of the output and the outcome of civil society assistance in Slovakia. It has been shown that civil society assistance in Slovakia made a difference. Firstly, it provided the financial resources necessary for NGOs to carry out their activities and thus contributed to the rise of NGOs in Slovakia. Secondly, it enabled oppositional NGOs to become a power countervailing the government, stirring civic participation, and acting as watchdog of the repressive Mečiar government. In this way, civil society assistance contributed to the structural and the cultural dimension of civil society in Slovakia.

One has to note, however, that international support and in particular the provision of finances opened the door to harsh critic by governmental officials and government-friendly media that aimed to trigger animosities towards NGOs in the rural HZDS electorate. During the election campaign “OK ‘98” the HZDS friendly daily “*Slovenská Republika*” continuously attacked single NGOs and the Third Sector and saw them as puppets of Western (and Jewish) capitalists (Vašečka 2002b: 6):

“The ”OK ‘98” project is an example of a coarse interference from abroad in domestic affairs of a sovereign state through Slovak non-governmental organizations. This project embodies the power interest in the elections on the part of the USA, while organizations from Great Britain and the Netherlands also participate in the project” (Article ”How to Assassinate Slovakia”, Slovenská Republika, July 21, 1998 cit. in: Vašečka 2002c: 5).

As the prevailing positive public image of NGOs depicted by public opinion surveys demonstrate (see chapter 8.4.3.), such attacks did not bear fruit though. The wide media attention NGOs gained during the campaign and the frequent connection of NGO activities and a vibrant civil society prevented a negative image of NGOs in the public. Furthermore, the prospect of EU enlargement, the desire to “return to Europe” on the one hand, and the fear of dropping out of the “Visegrad four” group, on the other hand, ensured a positive image of international and especially European actors.

One can thus conclude that international assistance supported and strengthened Slovak NGOs. The provision of money, knowledge and moral support enabled main recipients to assume their role as carriers of civil society described above. All three forms of assistance translated into political bargaining power in the domestic political struggle. Financial support guaranteed the existence of (oppositional) NGOs and enabled NGOs to provide services for the NGO sector and to act as watchdogs of an increasingly repressive government. Capacity building provided necessary techniques, concepts and role models to teach main recipients how to fulfill their tasks, and moral support and international solidarity enhanced the standing and legitimacy of NGOs in the domestic setting.

8.5 Conclusion: Civil Society Assistance in Slovakia: Western Political Intervention From Below?

The introduction to this chapter stressed the “deviant” character of the Slovak case. This character is grounded in the unfavorable historical pre-conditions of civil society development in Slovakia. The late national awakening and independence, the belated modernization as well as a repressive communist regime that did not leave much room for free spheres of civic activity prevented the evolvement of a respective cultural basis of civic activity, i.e. a “civic culture” or “civic ethos”. Slovak history largely lacks experiences with liberalism and democracy. Neither did the feeble national movement in the 19th century incorporate liberal trends nor did Slovakia experience a vibrant associational life throughout its history. On the contrary, authoritarian regimes prevailed each time Slovakia gained independence, as was the case between 1939 and 1945. Throughout the communist period an opposition was basically non-existent. Even the few liberal trends such as e.g. the Prague Spring or the Charter 77 were dominated by Czechs. The oppositional movement “Public Against Violence” that evolved during the velvet revolution of 1989 also included not only anti-communists, but also reform communists and former party apparatchiks. Keeping this historic development in mind, it hardly comes as a surprise that a populist-nationalistic right-left wing coalition came to power in 1994 in Slovakia. Ruled by the populist Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar, it increasingly embodied repressive and authoritarian tendencies, and found its loyal electorate of a steady 20% among the rural population.

Despite these unfavorable historical pre-conditions the 1990s witnessed a rise in civic activity and associational life in Slovakia. Numerous NGOs sprang up in various issue areas, while civic participation increased and strong and cooperative bonds developed among NGOs. Moreover, a core of approximately 2000 highly committed NGOs evolved that actively strove for the strengthening of civil society and the protection of democratic procedures and values.

Campaigns such as the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” and even more so the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98” aimed to raise public awareness, to mobilize the public, and to trigger an understanding of democratic rules and procedures. The NGO sector, commonly referred to in Slovakia as the “Third Sector”, provided a platform for open debate and a refuge for political opponents and thus evolved as a countervailing power and major oppositional force during the Mečiar regime. This is demonstrated among other things by the fact that the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98” is widely perceived as a major contribution to the electoral defeat of Vladimir Mečiar in 1998. For all these reasons the NGO sector in Slovakia has been characterized as a “*civil archipelago of positive action*” that stands in stark contrast to the “*islands of positive deviants*” as independent civil activists were called by Slovak sociologists in the late 1980s (Vašečka 2002c: 2).

It became clear that the rise of civil society in Slovakia has been greatly assisted and supported by external actors. Slovak NGOs have been receiving massive international support that augmented civil society assistance in other CEE countries. Whereas in Poland democracy assistance largely involved institution building measures, in the Slovak case donors placed a greater emphasis on the assistance to civil society in their endeavors to assist democracy. Without external financial assistance, a large part of NGOs would not have been able to carry out their various activities. Neither the “Third Sector SOS Campaign” nor the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98” would have been feasible without external funds. Not only the provision of financial resources, but also the provision of ideas, concepts, knowledge and techniques, international solidarity and moral support were important benefits of civil society assistance that enabled recipient organizations to fulfill their roles as public awareness raisers and watchdogs of democratic procedures outlined above.

The question arises, however, whether civil society assistance to Slovakia is actually worthy of the name. Critics may point out that the massive inflow of international funds shortly before the elections of 1998 was aimed less at triggering civic activities than bringing about a change in government widely desired by Western actors. The objective was thus to a lesser extent to transplant long-term structures of civic and associational life but rather to “buy” political decisions. In this measure, civil society assistance deteriorates to a subtle form of (illegitimate) external intervention in the domestic affairs of a country, and the supported NGOs constitute neither a “*civic archipelago*” nor “*islands of positive deviants*” from which civil society can develop, but instead a politically motivated counter-elite that will enter the new government and leave NGOs without a mission, objectives and human resources. Empirical evidence outlined above suggests that these fears cannot be confirmed. Firstly, it is correct that donors supported the pre-election campaign “OK ‘98” and other oppositional activities of NGOs. However, they hesitated to do so. The decision to sponsor politically

motivated projects was only made after intensive debate between recipients and donors. Furthermore, although civil society assistance experienced a peak in 1997/98, donors continued and even intensified their commitment after the 1998 elections. Finally, and most importantly, the NGO sector in Slovakia did not evaporate after 1998. The sustainability of NGOs is guaranteed in the short run and is also an issue that is addressed from various sides. NGOs are regarded as legitimate domestic actors and are widely trusted by the population. Additionally, NGOs continue their activities and maintain their willingness to play a role in the political and social development of the country. Several new topics arose, spanning from the advancement of the NGO law, the freedom of information, anti-corruption, public administration reform to EU enlargement. Finally, the process of fragmentation and decentralization of the NGO sector is a signal that the dominance of Bratislava-based NGOs has come to an end and that rural NGOs have gained in weight. Secondly, the fragmentation demonstrates that the unity of an oppositional front "against" something (in this case Mečiar) has been replaced by thematically oriented issues and debates "for" something.

Nonetheless one should not fall victim to the fallacy that roughly ten years after transition a vibrant and strong civil society is fully established in Slovakia. The above mentioned historical legacies are still visible in Slovak society: the rise in public participation in 1997/98 quickly dwindled, and the optimistic expectations of the population evident in 1998/99 have been replaced by dissatisfaction and a disappointment of citizens with politics in face of political struggles inside the ruling coalition and a growing unemployment rate. Moreover, the social gap between a pro-democratic urban population and a conservative rural population and the socio-economic disparities between Western and Eastern Slovakia continues to exist. Having said this, we still must stress that NGOs in Slovakia act as carriers of civil society that continue to strive for the social and political development of the country.

"Slovakia's NGOs now constitute a vibrant and efficient "civil archipelago", whose potential will be equally important in the near future as the society starts to deal with the problems inherited from Mečiar's government. They will be a partner that the new government will have to reckon with, both as a prospective collaborator and as a potential opponent" (Bútorá / Bútorová 1999: 89).

To sum up, Slovakia is a case that suggests that democracy assistance from below, i.e., direct assistance to civil society, can make a difference. Moreover, civil society assistance seems to be a more successful strategy to support democratization than top-down approaches and a "carrot and stick" diplomacy. At a joint conference of the Munich-based Center for Applied Policy Research and the Institute for Public Affairs, Bratislava on "Early Lessons from the Post-Cold War Era: Western Influences on Central and Eastern European Transitions" Martin Bruncko pointed out that the *"erroneous belief (of the Mečiar administration) that the West could not afford to let Slovakia fall into the Russian sphere of*

influence, rendered Western diplomatic pressure and the enticement of Western integration fruitless." In contrast, he concludes, the attempt to support transition from the bottom up proved more successful in the Slovak case.²⁴⁴ This case study supports this view.

One must note, however, that the effect of civil society assistance in the Slovak case depended on several factors (see also appendix 6, portray 13):

Firstly, civil society assistance in Slovakia was not successful despite the repressive nature of the Mečiar regime, but instead thanks to the regime's character. Chapter 8.2.6. points out that the establishment of the Third Sector as a major oppositional force was largely a response to the repressive nature of the Mečiar regime. Without the Mečiar regime, intellectuals and dissidents would not have felt the need to withdraw from politics and seek refuge in the NGO sector. Nor can we expect that the close unity and cohesion of the NGO sector to have developed if it had not been for the need to install a united front against a common enemy. Even the openness and eagerness with which Slovak NGOs sought Western partners was partly a result of their oppositional role. Not only were Slovak NGOs in need of allies against Mečiar, they also quickly learned the importance of international contacts as an effective way of enhancing their standing and applying pressure on the government. Slovak NGOs thus highly demanded civil society assistance. In contrast, the interest of international actors in a political change in Slovakia that enabled Slovakia's integration in EU and NATO resulted in a massive level of civil society assistance.

Secondly, although top-down measures of democracy assistance such as diplomatic pressure and the prospect of EU integration might have been fruitless in counteracting Mečiar's policy, it did not fail to reach the population. If it had not been for the prospect of European integration, NGOs and the opposition movement in Slovakia would have been deprived of a major comparative advantage against the Mečiar administration. NGOs convincingly presented themselves as partners accepted by international and European actors, and the opposition parties were widely accepted as the guarantors of European integration. Without a basic consensus among the Slovak public about the desirability of Western integration, this strategy would have failed. The public desire to "re-join Europe" ensured that the several expressions of international solidarity with Slovak NGOs and the international contacts of Slovak NGOs resulted in a boost of legitimacy and ensured that the endeavors of the Mečiar regime to unveil Slovak NGOs as internationally directed intruders failed. Thirdly, one must note that a large part of the Slovak population may be labeled as democratically oriented "silent opponents" that positively assessed NGO activities. It has

244 See Miller, Jeffrey, Bücherl, Wolfgang, 1/2001: Conference Summary: www.ivo.sk/sho_print.asp?id=188

been pointed out that the electoral victory of Vladimir Mečiar in 1994 was less due to a strong backing in the population but rather to a disunited opposition and a high percentage of uncast votes and invalid ballots. In 1994 over 20% of votes were lost as they represented parties that did not pass the 5% threshold. This implies that the percentage of democratically oriented voters that critically assessed the Mečiar government augmented the number of the HZDS-SNS supporters.²⁴⁵

Finally, the type of relationship between donor and recipient has been decisive. Slovak NGOs widely perceived their donors as “*partners that strive for the same goals*” (80% of respondents to the DPP survey agree with this point). Much more than their Polish counterparts, Slovak NGOs thus perceive foreign donors as equal partners that are informed about the social and political problems in the country.²⁴⁶ We must note that in the case of Slovakia, donors applied a more fine-tuned and political approach to civil society that relied on local intermediaries, micro-grants, a broad thematic focus, and a long-term commitment (chapter 8.3.3.). Decentralized donor strategies that relied on local organizations and local staff that implemented their programs, and individual personalities that involved in long-term contact with recipient organizations, proved to be of special importance. What evolved was a close network of donors and recipients that perceived each other as partners striving for the same goals. Regular contacts and cooperative ties among “partners” as well as a frequent debate and exchange at the Stupava conferences were important factors that ensured the exchange of ideas and triggered learning. This assessment is confirmed by the interviews of the author. All interviewees stress the point that Slovak NGOs did not see international assistance as indoctrination from above or as illegitimate interference in domestic affairs. On the contrary, Slovak NGOs are internationally oriented.

In sum, Slovakia is a success story of civil society assistance. However, the success depended on both domestic as well as international factors. On the one hand, we have a domestic political constellation that stimulated a demand for external civil society assistance and a pro-European outlook, on the other hand, we observe a symmetric relationship between donors and recipients as well as a favorable international environment and a profound interest of donors resulting in a high level of assistance. Without these facilitating factors external donors may not have been able to call Slovakia their “success story”.

245 One should note that in absolute numbers the HZDS-SNS even improved slightly in 1998 in comparison with 1994. Due to a higher voter turnout and fewer uncast votes, the HZDS fell from 25.9% in 1994 to 22.5 percent of votes in 1998, whereas the SNS improved from 4% in 1994 to 7.6% in 1998 (see Krivý 1999: 66p).

246 In the DPP survey the majority of NGOs attest donors a good local knowledge (63%), and only 11% of respondents blame donors for their lacking credibility (see appendix 8, table 26, questions 16 and 17).

9 Conclusion

This dissertation investigated the phenomenon of civil society assistance. It focused on the various efforts of external actors to trigger and support the development of civil society in the democratizing states of Central and Eastern Europe from the outside. Starting slowly in the 1990s, civil society assistance became a major area of concern of development agencies in the middle of the 1990s. Until now it is and continues to be a prominent issue among actors that assist the political and economic development of states in East and South.

To what extent were the efforts to assist civil society fruitful, were external actors able to contribute to a vibrant civil society or did their activities and applied strategies even hinder civil society development and what conditions of “successful” transfer could be identified were the main questions that inspired this dissertation.

Critics doubt that external actors can contribute to civil society development in democratizing states. According to them, the deliberate, direct and explicit involvement of external actors into the domestic affairs of a country with the aim of strengthening civil society is bound to fail or may even yield unintended negative effects that hinder instead of triggering civil society development. Two main objections against civil society assistance have been made from differing standpoints.

First, critics point to the cultural prerequisites of civil society. Civil society is visible in voluntary, independent and self-organized forms of social interaction such as non-governmental organizations or associations. More important for civil society to flourish and to stabilize democracy are, however, moral qualities and patterns of behavior that ensure tolerance and mutual trust, peaceful conflict resolution among social groups, and an active citizenry capable and eager to participate in politics and to stand up for their rights. However, such a “*civic ethos*” (Offe 2000a), or “*civilizational competence*” (Sztompka 1993) is not open to deliberate design rather develops during long historical processes and is shaped by culturally defined habits and cognitive scripts. Consequently, civil society must be an indigenous product, embedded in the cultural and historical roots of a country and cannot be transplanted into settings that lack or even contradict this necessary cultural basis. Post-communist states, however, often lack this spirit. The cultural heritages of the communist past left their mark on political traditions, attitudes and behavioral patterns apparent in post-communist societies and are widely believed to inhibit the upspring of self-organized social activity. Piotr Sztompka (1993) even argues that state socialism not only hinders the emergence of “*civilizational competence*”, but results in the reverse, “*civilizational*

incompetence". In particular the image of social homogeneity and a resulting lack of interest differentiation and representation, a thoroughly discredited image of associations, citizens' passivity tied with exceeding claims toward the state as protector and care-taker, and a deep state-society divide have been identified as the major factors deterring civil society. Following this line of thought, civil society assistance cannot work in CEE. Civil society assistance will result into nothing more than a supplementary stratum of "donor-driven" NGOs that lack domestic constituencies. Such "DONGOs" do not respond to local needs but solely satisfy donor's wants. From this perspective, civil society assistance is thus not a suitable instrument to facilitate democratization. No matter what concept, strategy or program donors employ, recipient responses and domestic settings will determine the success or failure of external assistance.

In contrast to this first group of critics, scholars working on international assistance to democracy and civil society believe in the capacity of external actors to assist transformation processes abroad. They criticize donors, however, for their lack of concepts and inappropriate strategies. Mainly the overemphasis on institution building and a strong focus on project specific support yield unintended and even negative effects. More often than not, donors preliminarily conceive civil society as a plurality of non-governmental organizations. NGOs are thus supposed to be established, supported and institutionally strengthened. Thereby, donors neglect the fact that the support to single NGOs generates often envy and fierce competition among domestic NGOs. As a result, ties between NGOs and inside society are weakened instead of strengthened. Capacity building, i.e. the provision of training and know-how is part of donor strategies though, however, mainly in order to teach NGO activists how to do their job best. Additionally, project-specific support generates excessive dependence of local NGOs on donors and donors' wants. Local NGOs often aim to satisfy donor rather than domestic needs. Moreover, there is a high risk that foreign assistance will have negative consequences, as it faces the problem of selectivity and legitimacy. Civil society assistance is not guided by altruism, but satisfies rational interests. The intention of donors is not to install and support civil society as a good in itself but as an instrument to achieve other ends such as democracy, peace and external stability. More often than not, donors thus deliberately pick recipients, which they assume to serve their interest best. The interest-driven and selective character of civil society assistance raises doubt about the credibility of the donor. International assistance is thus easily perceived as illegitimate interference into the domestic affairs of a country.

This dissertation followed the first line of thought with regard to the importance of domestic settings and responses to international assistance. Like scholars of international assistance, it is however more optimistic with respect to the possible outcome of assistance. Rather than

questioning whether civil society assistance can contribute to civil society development at all, the dissertation investigated the conditions of successful transfer. When and how can external actors effectively support and assist civil society? In order to answer this question the study analyzed civil society assistance in Poland and Slovakia. Main recipients of international assistance, their activities and achievements were the main focus of research.

9.1 Core Conclusions and Results

Is it possible to promote and strengthen civil society from abroad? And is it feasible despite an interest-driven and selective approach of donors? Having examined civil society assistance in Poland and Slovakia, I can now answer this question with yes. In both cases, external assistance contributed to the development of civil society. External actors triggered the rise of non-governmental organizations, empowered non-state actors, transported ideas about the importance and role of civil society and assisted their recipients in acting as carriers of civil society. One must note, however, that in both cases certain conditions such as a favorable international environment, a domestic willingness to accept international assistance and long-time partnerships between donors and recipients based on trust were crucial.

Both case studies reveal that donors are selective as the Polish case demonstrates in particular. Only 16% of Polish NGOs state that they benefit from foreign funding (BORDO 1998). Donors thus do prefer certain recipients and leave others with little chance to receive funding. Three main types of major beneficiaries of aid have been identified in both cases, known as “*thematic organizations*”, “*democracy promoters*”, and “*infrastructural NGOs*”. In the early years of assistance in particular donors supported some “*favoured cliques*” (Wedel 1998), i.e., thematic organizations of well-known personalities of the Solidarity movement that received large scale funding.²⁴⁷ The supported organizations thus received a head start that ensured their privileged position in the domestic sphere. Donors additionally focused on “*democracy promoters*”, i.e. NGOs whose primary aim is the promotion of democracy. Civic education projects as well as training for NGO leaders are their major activities. In the middle of the 1990s donors widened their scope and increasingly focused on what has been called “*infrastructural NGOs*”, namely NGOs whose major aim is a vibrant civil society and a favorable environment for civil society activity.

247 Examples of such thematically-oriented “main recipients” are the Helsinki Foundation of Human Rights (HFHR); The Foundation in Support for Local Democracy (FSLD) but also various think tanks such as the Institute for Public Affairs (ISP, *Instytut Spraw Publicznych*) or the Institute for International Relations (CIM).

This focus follows the insight that a vibrant civil society consists of more than a set of non-governmental organizations. What is needed is a favorable environment, an “infrastructure” of civil society that consists of a respective legal framework, a supportive state policy, as well as networks of NGOs.

Despite the selective approach of donors, the suspicion that civil society assistance will result in nothing more than a supplementary stratum of donor-driven NGOs could not be confirmed. In both case studies main recipients are rooted in domestic structures. One must note that main recipients live from the implementation of donor projects and have been highly influenced by donors especially if skills and applied techniques are concerned. Nonetheless all organizations under investigation have their own interests and agendas, are regarded as legitimate domestic actors, are sustainable in the long run, and act as carriers of civil society.

In both cases main recipients are driven by domestic concerns. The NGO sectors additionally reflect country specific characteristics. In Poland nearly all of the examined organizations have roots in the Solidarity movement. Either main activists were already concerned with the statutory objective of their organizations throughout the 1980s²⁴⁸ or they have their roots in the civic committees initiated by Lech Wałęsa in 1989. And a further fact reveals that the Polish NGO sector is shaped by domestic concerns: The majority of registered NGOs in Poland are active in the area of social service provision. Especially in the early years of assistance such organizations hardly gained foreign funding. Rather than being donor-driven, they are the result of a strong charity tradition in catholic Poland. In order to receive funding, such organizations often took up the activities of what has been called ‘infrastructural organizations’. As a result, most infrastructural NGOs are not artificially created by external actors but are often aligned with and respond to the needs of social service oriented NGOs.²⁴⁹ In Slovakia as well, “democracy promoters” and “infrastructural NGOs” are not exclusively concerned with the promotion of democracy and civil society, but often have a second major objective such as education or the environment.²⁵⁰ In contrast to Poland, social service oriented organizations play a minor role in Slovakia, as the Mečiar government largely maintained the social security system of the communist state. As a result, there was no need for private organizations in this area. Instead organizations concerned with

248 Such is the case e.g. with the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights but also with several environmental organizations or the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy that was founded by a couple of Solidarity members who applied the concept of the “self-administrated republic” to local democracy.

249 For example: BORIS, SPLOT, WROSZ.

250 For example SAIA-SCTS, the main organization working for a favorable environment for NGO activity is also active in the field of international scholar exchange. ETP Slovakia, as second main infrastructural NGO works additionally for a sustainable environment.

education and research sprang up as the NGO sector served as a refuge for oppositional intellectuals.

Bearing the domestic roots of main recipients in mind, it comes as no surprise that according to opinion polls such organizations are not perceived as puppets of alien influence but as legitimate domestic actors. Furthermore, international contacts and assistance did not undermine but instead boost the credibility and reputation of recipients. In both countries, international contacts are highly valued. The very fact that an organization has international partners is often taken as proof for its experience and competence.

The domestic rooting of main recipients is also made evident by the fact that all of the main recipients under investigation succeeded in ensuring their existence after donor funding ended. Democracy promoters often started to work abroad where their experience with democratization was eagerly sought. International donors stopped funding in Poland and Slovakia, but they are more than willing to do so in countries further East such as Byelorussia or Ukraine. Other organizations commercialized part of their activities and sold their services to enterprises or to public administration. Moreover, in both countries public and private domestic funds are increasingly available. In this regard, the activities of main recipients have been decisive. In both countries various efforts have been made to establish community foundations. Finally, with the membership in the European Union NGOs from both countries can draw on structural funds of the EU. The withdrawal of American donors is thus partially absorbed by additional European funds.

Furthermore, it became clear that the activities of main recipients contribute to civil society development. In both countries, main recipients provide services to other NGOs with the aim to facilitate NGO activities. A large share of NGOs benefit from training courses conducted by infrastructural NGOs and democracy promoters that impart skills in management, fund-raising or lobbying. In both countries, infrastructural NGOs run an internet platform with NGO relevant information reporting on new legislation, new funding possibilities and major events. Moreover, main recipients struggle for a respective legal environment and funding possibilities. In Poland it took a long battle and intensive debate between NGO activists and governmental representatives until after several years a law on NGOs, the "*Public Benefits Activity Act*" was finally adopted in 2003.

Beforehand, public benefit oriented activities of NGOs were severely constrained by unfavorable tax regulations, an unclear legal situation, the coexistence of old and new legal regulations, and bureaucratic procedures.²⁵¹ In Slovakia main recipients started a country-wide campaign in response to a new law on foundations proposed in 1996. The law was widely believed to be a repressive measure by the Mečiar government aiming to oppress oppositional NGOs. The so-called “*Third Sector SOS Campaign*” failed to prevent the new law. Nonetheless, NGO activists point out that the campaign contributed to NGO development. The campaign raised public awareness for NGO issues and the importance of non-state activity. Moreover it proved that NGOs in Slovakia were capable of common action and unity against the government. Katarina Košťálová, executive director of SAIA-SCTS in 2000, describes the importance of the campaign as follows:

“Then we learned how to do this; how to reach compromises inside (the) sector; how to organize publicly. We additionally learned how to invite international groups to express solidarity with Slovakia” (interview with the author).

Funding was a further pressing problem addressed by main recipients. Some of the organizations under investigation managed externally financed NGO support programs. They thus acted as intermediaries that passed on external civil society assistance and were recipients and donors at once.²⁵² After the support scheme came to an end, they used their gained expertise and continued to work for the provision of funding to local NGOs. The establishment of domestic foundations (partially with the help of foreign donors) and community foundations that finance local initiatives were the result.

Main recipients, however, did not restrict themselves to improving the structural conditions for NGOs. Besides the provision of services and the struggle for a better legal environment and funding possibilities, they sought to raise civic participation, develop ties and networks among NGOs and to act as a watch-dog of government. This has been especially the case in Slovakia. In contrast to Poland, non-governmental organizations, associations and foundations developed in Slovakia in face of an increasingly repressive government. In response to the repressive nature of the nationalist-populist coalition under Vladimir Mečiar elected in 1994, the NGO sector in Slovakia took up a political role and evolved as a major oppositional force.

251 The new law regulates the cooperation between public administration and NGOs and makes it possible for the state administration to contract out the provision of public services. Additionally, it increases the possibility for NGOs to engage in economic activities that are still tax-free and allows for the possibility of transferring 1% of the personal income tax to public benefit organizations. The law thus increases the chances of NGOs receiving funding, a further pressing problem that has been addressed by main recipients.

252 Examples are the “Academy for Philanthropy” in Poland, and ETP Slovakia in Slovakia.

In 1997 oppositional NGOs that largely received funding from abroad launched the pre-election campaign "OK 98" with the aim of informing citizens about democratic procedures, increasing voter turnout, and ensuring the fairness of the 1998 elections. The campaign, which was fully financed from abroad, included almost 60 different NGOs and initiatives such as monitoring projects, video and television spots, rock concerts or a relay march. The campaign can be labeled a success: At 84% the voter turnout was high, especially among first voters (80% in comparison to 20% in 1994). Moreover, the campaign mobilized the public as manifested by the raise in volunteerism that supported several initiatives of the campaign. For all these reasons, the campaign largely contributed to the electoral defeat of Vladimir Mečiar in 1998. We can thus conclude that main recipients in both countries act as carriers of civil society.

Despite everything said above, one may still doubt that external civil society assistance made a difference. Question arises with regard to the extent to which external assistance enabled main recipients to carry out the various activities summarized above. Did donors simply support organizations in doing what they had done anyway? In other words, was the apparent success of civil society assistance a success by accident or skill? The Slovak case raises a further suspicion. Critics may point out that the massive inflow of international funds shortly before the elections of 1998 aimed less to trigger civic activities than to bring about a change in government widely desired by Western actors. The objective was thus not so much to transplant long-term structures of civic and associational life, rather to "buy" political decisions. An analysis of the ways recipients benefited from external assistance quickly reveals that civil society assistance made a difference: Firstly, the provision of funds contributed to the rise of NGOs. More importantly, international assistance empowered democratically oriented NGOs that contrast with the strong organizations that already existed during communism. Secondly, civil society assistance transported ideas about the importance of civil society and the role of NGOs and triggered not only recipient but also donor learning.

Without the massive inflow of Western funds, the rapid rise of non-governmental organizations would hardly have been feasible. Domestic funds were rare in the face of economic repression following economic transition. There was neither a philanthropic culture in existence, nor was the state willing to and capable of supporting citizens' initiatives. After transition, state authorities and political elites largely lacked an understanding for the importance of civil society. Non-governmental organizations have been regarded as unwelcome and unnecessary competitors. The political will on behalf of the political elites to stimulate civil society development was widely lacking. In Poland state policy toward NGOs was ambiguous and often contraproductive for civil society development. In Slovakia, the

government suppressed the self-organization of society if it stood in opposition to the state. With the provision of financial means civil society assistance thus enabled NGOs to run their various activities. In the Slovak case, external support additionally protected oppositional NGOs and guaranteed their existence. External assistance thus stabilized new democracies by supporting the burgeoning rise of NGOs. The provision of funds is even more important if one focuses upon the peculiarities of post-communist countries. Alexander Smolnar (1996) pinpoints the fact that *“the most extensive, strongest organizations, associations, cooperatives, political parties and trade unions come from the ancient regime”* as one major obstacle of civil society development in post-communist countries. Also in Poland and Slovakia non-governmental organizations that already existed during communism are strong in the sense that they still have financial resources as well as contacts to authorities. The case studies revealed that these “old features” of self-organized social activity have been supplemented by “new features”. On the one hand, we have a rather limited number of financially powerful organizations, namely sports clubs, trade unions and other non-state organizations that were already active during communism and fall back on the assets accumulated during communist times. On the other hand, we observe a large number of newly created organizations whose objectives lie in areas such as environmental protection, human and minority rights, development or women issues as well as social services or education. These organizations who count themselves as belonging to the “Third Sector” or *“the movement of non-governmental organizations”* (Gliński 1998: 31) are influenced by ideas and concepts previously developed in the “new social movements” of the West, involve mainly young people (Gliński 1998: 31), largely rely on volunteers, and are financially supported by Western sources. Whereas the “old” features of the NGO sector have money and informal networks to administrative personnel, the “new” strand has the youth, volunteers and Western support. With the help of external assistance, the continuing existence of old structures is thus countered by the development of a variety and exceeding number of new organization established after the changes of 1989/1990. Furthermore, external support and international contacts empowered these new organizations. In consequence, NGOs gained political influence. This is demonstrated e.g. by the example of the legislative process in Poland leading to the new law on NGOs. In their attempts at creating a clear legal situation for NGOs, NGO activists had international allies and could e.g. draw on gratis expertise ordered by several donor organizations such as USAID or the EU-funded Phare Civic Dialogue Program. The Polish government that desired EU membership found it difficult to ignore the expertise financed by EU money. In equal measure, it could not deny negotiations with NGO representatives on a new law that was initiated by a US-American NGO. This example demonstrates how international support increased the visibility and political bargaining power of NGOs.

Civil society assistance additionally transported new ideas and an understanding of the functions and merits of NGOs and a vibrant civil society. The point has been made that NGOs in CEE face an identity crisis (Kuti 1999: 53). NGOs lack an understanding of their interests and needs, and for their position vis-à-vis the state and vis-à-vis other civil society organizations. They are often not willing to join forces or cooperate even if they have the same interests. Instead distrust and conflict between the various organizations is still deep (ibid: 54). The cases of Poland and Slovakia demonstrate that external assistance helped to overcome this identity crisis. In particular single individuals, continuing exchange and debate and what has been called “local donors” have been decisive in this regard. The Slovak NGO SAIA profited in its early years highly from American and Canadian volunteers that were “*mentor and supplier of ideas and inspiration*” for its founding members, as the Executive Director of SAIA Katarína Košťálova, puts it. This example demonstrates that especially in the early years international actors functioned as bridgeheads of foreign concepts and ideas and as role models and trainers. Regular debate and exchange of ideas was also important. This took place in long-term partnerships between donors and recipients but also at annual gatherings of NGOs such as the Slovak Stupava Conferences. Each year the conference addresses a different major issue of concern for NGOs.²⁵³ Having domestic as well as foreign participants, the conferences function as platform of debate and exchange between Slovak and foreign like-minded civil society activists. The Stupava Conferences play an important role for the development of the identity and self-image of Slovak NGOs. For example, the idea for the pre-electoral campaign “OK 98” was born at the Stupava Conference in 1997. The Slovak and international NGOs intensively debated whether Slovak NGOs should take on a political role and play an active part in the elections. Domestic organizations with local staff that implement donor projects also triggered the circulation of ideas and the development of NGO identity. Starting in the middle of the 1990s donors decentralized assistance and increasingly relied on local expertise and local staff. What evolved were “local donors” which implement donor programs.²⁵⁴ The local administration of the programs ensured close cooperation with domestic NGOs and their needs. This is even more so the case, as the NGO support programs and main recipients cultivated close personal links, which is demonstrated by the fact that staff of the former are often board

253 Conference topics were for example: “Present and Future Perspectives of the Third Sector in Slovakia” (1994); “The Third Sector and Civil Society” (1995); “The Third Sector – We Serve the Citizens” (1996); “The Third Sector – Actively Working for Democracy” (1997); “Third Sector for Decentralization and Transparency” (1999).

254 Examples include the Polish “Cooperation Fund” and the Slovak NGO “NPOA” that managed the Phare NGO support programs of the European Union; or the Foundation for Civil Society and ETP Slovakia who managed USAID NGO support programs. The Batory Foundation and the Open Society Foundation are a special case. Although financed from abroad by the billionaire George Soros, both foundations are domestic and run with local staff.

members (or even founding members) of the latter or vice versa. Instead of strictly divided “donors” and “recipients” we thus observe a group of domestic and international activists that work together in order to advance civil society. Such transnational “activist networks”, or in the words of Kathryn Sikking (1993) “principled-issue networks” were a source of impetus and inspiration. Like that, donors impacted upon recipients’ orientations, and triggered learning process. It must be noted, however, that not only recipients benefited from the experience of donors and adopted Western concepts and ideas. Likewise, recipients impacted upon grant schemes and strategies of donors. This is demonstrated for example by the difference in strategies applied in the Polish and the Slovak case. The early period of civil society assistance to Poland was marked by a lack of strategy and a tremendous ignorance towards domestic contexts. Only in the middle of the 1990s did donors change their approach to civil society assistance in Poland and applied a more fine-tuned strategy. They became aware of the shortcomings of selecting a few recipients and increasingly provided small grants to a wider spectrum of NGOs active in a variety of thematic areas. Additionally, donors placed greater emphasis on “capacity building” with a focus on training, network building and a favorable regulatory environment for NGOs. Most importantly, donors learned that local knowledge and initiative was important to ensure success. In Slovakia, where civil society assistance started at a later point in time than in Poland, donors applied a more fine-tuned approach from the beginning. Civil society assistance in Slovakia thus benefited from the lessons-learned in other cases as e.g. Poland. The discussion preceding the “OK 98” campaign in Slovakia further points to the learning processes of donors. Donors hesitated to support political actions of Slovak NGOs. Donors were eager to appear as neutral and unpartisan, and feared that the fact that the campaign was financed from abroad might undermine its credibility and effect. This has not been the case. Attempts by the Mečiar government to discredit Slovak NGOs as externally-driven traitors failed. Additionally, the close cooperation between donors and recipients ensured that the massive funding did not end after the electoral defeat of the Mečiar government. On the contrary, donors prolonged their assistance in order to stabilize the NGO sector. The continuing existence and activities of Slovak NGOs and main recipients demonstrates that the massive inflow of funds shortly before the elections did not target at a single event, but also stabilized the structures and rules of civil society.

We can thus conclude that civil society assistance empowered and shaped Polish and Slovak NGOs and subsequently contributed to civil society development. However one must state a further point in conclusion. In both case studies facilitating factors were at work without which external assistance may not have contributed to an advancement of civil society. The following conditions were crucial:

First, the domestic context, and especially the existence of a “domestic pull” played a role. In both cases international assistance was highly welcome and eagerly sought. In the Slovak case, civil society assistance was successful not despite the repressive nature of the Mečiar regime, but thanks to the regime’s character. The establishment of NGOs as a major oppositional force was largely a response to the repressive nature of the Mečiar regime. The oppositional role of NGOs explains the openness and eagerness with which Slovak NGOs sought Western partners. Not only were Slovak NGOs in need of allies against their government, they also quickly learned the importance of international contacts as an effective way to apply pressure on the government. Slovak NGOs thus highly demanded civil society assistance. In Poland foreign support was largely perceived as legitimate and acceptable assistance. Based on the strong belief that Poland would have been a democratic and wealthy country similar to its Western neighbors if it had not been for the Soviet occupation, Western assistance was demanded by the Polish people as a way to re-install normality. Aid was not regarded as a pittance but as assistance to which Poland is entitled.

Second, in both cases the international environment has been favorable to democratization processes. Multilateral or bilateral pressures did not counteract, rather supported civil society assistance. Civil society assistance benefited in particular from the prospect of EU membership. In Poland, the desired EU membership was an important leverage of NGO activists who were not tired of reminding their government of the importance of a vibrant civil society for EU entry. Thanks to European enlargement, the adoption of a new NGO law came in the range of appropriate policy options to governmental representatives. In the Slovak case, the prospect of EU membership had little influence on the Mečiar government. Diplomatic pressure remained largely without effect (Samson 2001). Although the attempt to stabilize democracy from the top down failed to influence Mečiar’s policies, it did reach the population. If it had not been for the prospect of European integration, NGOs and the opposition movement in Slovakia would have been deprived of a major comparative advantage against the Mečiar administration. NGOs convincingly presented themselves as partners accepted by international and European actors, and the oppositional parties were widely accepted as the guarantors of European integration. Without a basic consensus among the Slovak public about the desirability of Western integration, this strategy would have failed. The public desire to “re-join Europe” ensured that the various expressions of international solidarity with Slovak NGOs and their international contacts established Slovak NGOs as reputable domestic actors. As a result, the strategy of the Mečiar regime to unveil Slovak NGOs as internationally directed intruders failed. Moreover, the interest of external actors in political change in Slovakia and in Slovakia’s integration into EU and NATO resulted in a massive level of civil society assistance. In other words, in both cases civil society

assistance was carried by an interest of donors and recipients alike. The domestic pull was supplemented by an international push.

Finally, the type of relationship between donor and recipient has been decisive. Both case studies depict that long-term partnerships based on trust, ongoing communication, and a “core consensus” are more promising than ready-made short-term measures. “Local donors”, as well as single individuals that entered in long-term partnerships with recipient organizations, proved to be of special importance. Moreover, the credibility and esteem of the donor was significant. In both cases, donors were widely regarded as trustworthy and credible partners. In Slovakia, recipients widely perceived their donors as “*partners that strive for the same goals*” (80% of respondents to the DPP survey agree to this point). In Poland, in particular American donors were highly appreciated thanks to the massive support they granted already during the 1980s.

In sum, civil society assistance is a valuable tool if it comes to promote or protect democracy from below. In both cases external assistance contributed to the development of civil society. Without external financial assistance the rise of non-state activity taking place in both countries after 1989/1990 would hardly have been feasible. Civil society assistance thus fostered “new” features of organized civil activity in post-communist countries that supplemented the various organizations already in existence in the previous regime. Part of these newly established organizations, namely what has been called “main recipients” acted as intermediaries that ensured that a wider range of NGOs benefited from Western support in the form of finances, training and a favorable environment. In the Slovak case, civil society assistance additionally supported and strengthened a counter-elite that opposed the populist-nationalist government, and acted as a watchdog for democratic procedures. International assistance and solidarity increased the political bargaining power of these actors. Furthermore, transnational networks between donors and recipients resulted in cognitive convergence and learning processes on both sides. In other words, external assistance contributed to the development of civil society via the mechanisms empowerment and learning.

This is not to say that the cultural legacies of communist rule such as a passive citizenry, a deep state-society divide, and prevailing distrust leave no marks. In Poland distrust between NGO activists on the one side and politicians on the other is still visible. NGO activists often regard politics as something dirty; politicians see NGOs as superfluous and a waste of money. In Slovakia civic participation that rose enormously in 1997/98 quickly dwindled afterwards. The optimistic expectations of the population evident in 1998/99 turned into dissatisfaction and disappointment among citizens with politics in the face of political struggles inside the ruling coalition and a growing unemployment rate. Furthermore, the

social gap between a pro-democratic urban population and a conservative rural population and the socio-economic disparities between Western and Eastern Slovakia continue to exist. Having said this, though in both countries a group of highly motivated and active NGOs still are in existence and continue to strive for the social and political development of the countries. These organizations critically watch the continuation of democratic reforms and the compliance with newly established democratic rules. They strive for the expansion of citizens' rights, and the inclusion of marginalized groups into politics. Additionally they trigger public debate. Finally, they raise political awareness and activism especially among young people. For all these reasons, these NGOs that flourished with the assistance from abroad contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Poland and Slovakia.

9.2 Implications for Practitioners of Civil Society Assistance

What lessons can be drawn from the conclusions above? First and foremost, this study suggests that civil society assistance is not a waste of money, rather a valuable and important contribution to democratization. Nonetheless, donors still should keep certain factors in mind while devising programs of civil society assistance.

First, donors will need to restrain from selecting recipients. Instead, donors should support a broad spectrum of thematically oriented organizations, no matter how convinced they are that certain organizations are better suited to advance civil society than others. Civil society consists of more than public policy-oriented advocacy groups. Civil society relies on active citizens that learn how to organize and represent their interests. This point is especially salient in post-communist states where the omnipresence of the state and the homogenization of societal interests suppressed citizens' activity. Democracy is not the main issue of concern of ordinary people, at least not in the long run. The daily little problems are often of greater importance, be it a new schoolyard, better working conditions, adequate public transport. Active citizens cannot only be found in human right groups or environmental organizations, but also in parent organizations, trade unions or sport clubs. Moreover, in different domestic contexts and circumstances different NGOs assume an oppositional role. Likewise, no society is confronted with the same given needs and interests. Depending on the domestic context, different issues are of importance. For example in Poland, the majority of newly founded NGOs are active in the area of social service provision. In Slovakia, organizations dedicated to the promotion of science and education play a leading role. In Hungary, environmental organizations directed public dissatisfaction with the ruling elite in 1989/1990. For all these reasons, donors should not restrict their support to certain groups but assist existing organizations. More often than not, these are the ones that are triggered by domestic concerns.

Second, donors need to understand civil society assistance as a political undertaking. This involves acknowledging power relations and domestic actor constellations. Civil society assistance is always political as it empowers certain domestic actors and thus alters domestic actor constellations. This point seems obvious, if the paramount goal of civil society assistance is to stabilize a certain (namely democratic) political system. One must note, however, that donors often seem unaware of this fact or at least behave as if civil society assistance were politically neutral.

“Traditionally, democracy aid has operated ignoring the realities of power and the intricacies of politics. It has relied on technical solutions to address political problems, adopting somehow a “therapeutic approach” and “benign idealism”” (Santiso 2001: 11).

Non-governmental donors, in particular, are often eager to appear non-partisan and apolitical. McMahon (2004: 260) points out that non-governmental American donors even discourage their recipients from getting involved in politics. The reason lies in US tax regulations that prohibit charity organizations and philanthropic foundations from assisting political organizations. Similarly, the German political foundations are prohibited from (financially) supporting political parties. More important for explaining the neutral facade of donors is, however, the fear of donors that political action and partisanship will be rejected as external manipulation and illegitimate intrusion. For this reason, donors prefer to support organizations or actions that serve the public good or strive for mutually accepted and ethical objectives. Subsequently, donors either support the provision of services especially for the underprivileged, or they target advocacy groups or watchdogs of democratic procedures. More often than not, donors restrain from assisting political interest representation though. And if donors get involved in ‘dirty politics’, they avoid publicity. The German political foundations, for example, prefer not to publicize all their activities exactly for this reason. Despite the risk of rejection, donors need to adopt a transparent and open approach to this issue. They lose credibility if they demand transparency from recipients but fail to comply with the same standards. Moreover, donors need to be aware of the importance of politics. The case studies above made clear that the outcome of civil society assistance depends among other things on domestic actors and actor constellations. Donors thus can neither neglect the importance of domestic power struggles, interests and strategic options of political decision-makers, nor can they distinguish between NGOs that are public-policy oriented and monitor the compliance with democratic procedures and other NGOs that exclusively provide services. If they do so, the former might have political influence but no constituency whose view they advocate, whereas the latter will have the constituency but no power. In this way, recipient organizations will fail to act as an effective means of civic participation.

Third, donors will need to decentralize their assistance and rely on local know-how and expertise. Local management of NGO support programs ensures a greater flexibility and

responsiveness to local needs. Moreover, local administration results in local ownership. As a result, the effects of civil society assistance are not regarded as externally imposed but as domestic achievements. The theoretical chapter of this dissertation referred to the problem of re-designing institutions (chap. 4.3.). Institutions are man-made, but they derive the support and loyalty of their members and their legitimacy from tradition, habits, and convention. Deliberate design raises the suspicion of individual interest, manipulation, enrichment or imperfection. This even more so if the designers are foreign, and thus not connected to the domestic society by bonds of solidarity or trust. External assistance thus always risks being perceived as illegitimate intrusion, no matter how skillful and thought-through civil society assistance might be and how genuine the motives of donors are. People doubt that external donors are altruistically motivated, and fear external manipulation. Consequently, they may refuse external assistance and advice. For this reason the involvement of local actors in the implementation of civil society assistance is not only important because local know-how will increase the appropriateness of external assistance and ensures responsiveness to local needs. New structures and ideas are also more easily accepted and adopted if they are put forward and carried by domestic actors.

Fourth, donors need to invest in trust-building measures and long-term partnerships without expecting immediate results. Civil society assistance is an endeavor with an uncertain outcome. There is no guarantee that the support to non-state actors will translate into stable democracy. Whether civil society assistance will contribute to democratization depends first and foremost on recipient organizations. If donors fail to find trustworthy and reliable domestic partners who are driven by domestic concerns, civil society assistance will have little impact. And even if such partners have been found, the outcome of assistance is still not certain. Domestic actor constellations as well as the strategic options and interests of other actors in the political game decide whether major recipients and their orientations find their way into the decision-making arena. Donors might support NGOs in an authoritarian state for years without any liberalization tendencies in sight. Nonetheless, civil society assistance is not a waste of money, rather an investment whose return comes at an indefinite point in time. As made clear by the case of Slovakia, civil society assistance protects, strengthens and empowers a democratically oriented counter-elite. Moreover, it prevents the emigration of dissidents. If democracy takes root in a country, this is of utmost importance. The availability of educated and skilled people that are willing to assume political responsibility may decide whether newly established democracies will actually consolidate. For this reason civil society assistance is a rewarding long-term investment. Fifth, national donors will need to resort to NGOs of the donor country as implementers of assistance. Civil society assistance granted by non-state actors and NGOs is more effective than assistance implemented by state agencies. For this reason, NGOs of the donor country should carry out civil society

assistance measures and not specialized “democracy promoters” or developmental agencies. The analysis revealed that the type of relationship between donors and recipients decides upon the effectiveness of civil society assistance. A long-term partnership that is based on a core consensus and a common understanding ensures that learning can take place. In this way, ideas about the importance and the role of NGOs and civil society in a democratic system shape recipient organizations. Additionally, the assistance itself improves. The ones best suited to evaluate civil society assistance are recipients. The constant dialogue between donors and recipients ensures permanent feedback about the relevance, significance and appropriateness of strategies, programs, projects and instruments of civil society assistance. In this way, donors improve their instruments at hand. Moreover, close cooperation between donor and recipient ensures that civil society assistance meets local demands. For all these reasons, like-minded organizations that are active in the same issue area are best suited to assist their counterparts abroad. Organizations that share professional backgrounds or principles generally also share a system of beliefs and the above cited “core consensus” which facilitates communication as well as the transfer of values and ideas. State agencies should therefore rely on NGOs as civil society promoters.

Sixth, donors will need to appreciate that their own credibility is decisive. This entails sensitivity for the common history of the donor and recipient country and the history of assistance. More often than not, donors are not aware that their credibility and reputation in the recipient country shape the way in which assistance is perceived and accepted by recipients and the population alike. What recipients expect from donors and from external assistance is dependent on past experiences with donors and former donor activities. Both case studies demonstrate that external assistance is largely accepted by the population and also highly welcomed and eagerly sought. International contacts even raised the esteem of recipients rather than undermining their credibility. In both countries these perceptions have been shaped by the feeling of belonging to Europe and thus to the Western world. In Poland, American donors in particular enjoy an excellent reputation. This is largely due to the massive support the Solidarity movement received from the USA in the 1980s. Furthermore, one has to keep in mind that the Polish people predominantly regarded communism as the result of Soviet occupation. The USA as the main opponent to the Soviet Union was thus seen as an ally. In both cases, previous experiences with donors and major donor countries were thus favorable to civil society assistance. In other countries the history with donors might not be seen in such a positive light. If donors are regarded as former aggressors or previous enemies, civil society assistance will not be taken as genuine assistance but rather as subtle form of manipulation and intervention. This is not to say that civil society assistance in countries that had negative experiences with donors is bound to fail. However, donors need to recognize the importance of previous experiences and past contacts and need to

plan the assistance accordingly. In such cases it might be decisive to be especially sensitive to national feelings, extend the time-horizon of assistance and place greater emphasis on trust-building measures.

Seventh, the credibility of donors is not only dependent on past experiences but also on the current bilateral relations between the donor and the recipient country. For this reason, donors may need to lobby for a respective foreign policy of their own governments in order to bring top-down pressures on recipient countries in line with bottom-up measures of civil society assistance. Although the dissertation focused on transnational relations and bottom-up measures aiming to support civil society, this does not imply that multilateral and bilateral relations and top-down measures are without any effect. On the contrary, both case studies revealed that a favorable international environment and especially the prospect of EU membership were salient factors that facilitated civil society assistance. One thus has to note that state to state relations and transnational relations are mutually dependent and may reinforce or counteract each other. Top-down measures to democratization such as conditionality or sanctions impact upon the orientations of domestic actors. As a result, recipients may be more willing to take part in civil society support programs. Along with that, recipient governments may be more open to the demands of non-state actors, as has been the case in the process leading to a new NGO law in Poland. This example demonstrates that domestic decision-makers are more open to the advice of external experts if they already decided to adapt to international standards, in this case, the standards put forward by the European Union. Furthermore, the integration into international institutions and regimes stimulates the establishment of transnational partnerships and networks and thus leads to a rise of transnational forms of civil society assistance. Bearing this interdependence in mind, one has to conclude that bottom-up approaches to civil society assistance are more likely to be fruitful if they are escorted by respective top-down measures. Along the same lines, state-to-state relations may hamper transnational activities to foster civil society. For example, economic sanctions that put pressure not only on the governing elite but also on the population may counteract efforts to strengthen a domestic opposition. Bottom-up efforts to assist civil society are thus highly affected and often facilitated but also nullified by state-to-state relations and the foreign policy of the donor state. We can thus conclude that transnational relations are most effective if they are embedded in a coherent multilateral framework.

Donors need to be aware of this fact and lobby their governments for respective foreign policies toward recipient states if they do not want to lose credibility.²⁵⁵

Finally, donors should not lose sight of other forms of democracy assistance. A stable democracy consists of more than a vibrant civil society. Political parties, an effective executive branch, a parliamentary system and state of law are other important features. As donors are under pressure to present immediate results, they often lack the patience needed for democracy assistance to be effective. As a consequence, democracy assistance tends to be subject to trends and fashions. In the early 1990s donors placed major emphasis on institution building and the assistance to parliaments, administration, political parties or courts. The disillusionment with these measures led to a shift to non-state actors as the main recipients of assistance and to the rise of civil society assistance. This is even more so the case when compared to institution building; civil society assistance seems to yield more immediate results. Finding a group of young people, convincing them to establish a NGO, and filling them with enthusiasm for moral issues such as human rights, democracy or the environment is a more easy undertaking, than reforming existing institutions and administrations that have been shaped by communist practices for a long time. Replacing an initial emphasis on institutions with an exclusive focus on civil society actors is, however, the wrong approach. A mix of different forms of assistance that supports the various features of democracy is better suited to promote and protect democracy in a given country.

9.3 Research Outlook

Civil society can be nurtured and strengthened from abroad through the direct, deliberate and explicit involvement of external actors. This is the main result of this analysis.

Past experiences shape the orientations of actors. For this reason the development of civil society is constrained in countries that suffer from the legacies of communism. Communism might have failed to build a “new socialist man”. However, it was surprisingly successful in bringing about passive citizens who retreat to private life, have little hope for change and who regard “those above” as the ones responsible for everything, and the scapegoat for all evil. Nonetheless the cases of Poland and Slovakia demonstrate that civil society took root in post-communist settings. This is most surprising in the case of Slovakia, where historical pre-

255 The fact that actors are influenced by activities taking place on supra-national, national and sub-national levels and that state-to-state relations and transnational relations are mutually dependent has been described in the international relations literature as “two-level games” (Evans et al 1993) or – in the context of the European Union – “multi-level games” (Jachtenfuchs / Kohler-Koch 1996).

conditions for civil society development were highly unfavorable. Factors such as a late national awakening and independence, a belated modernization, and a repressive communist regime that left little room for free spheres of civic activity largely hampered the upspring of civil society. Nonetheless, this study revealed that self-organized forms of civic activity play a decisive role in present Slovakia, as the elections of 1998 and the pre-election campaign of Slovak NGOs for free and fair elections demonstrated in particular. More importantly for this study is the insight that external actors assisted and contributed to the rise of civil society in both countries. In contrast to assumptions of critics inspired by a sociological understanding of institutions who assume that external involvement and intentionally driven transfer cannot effect domestic transformation processes or even expect outright rejection and nationalistic backlashes, external actors thus can make a difference.

However, one may critically question to what extent Poland and Slovakia have been lucky cases whose favorable circumstances enabled civil society assistance to work. Is it not so that the prospect of EU membership, in particular, enormously facilitated transnational efforts to strengthen civil society? And here, the author has no other option than to answer "further research is needed". As made clear in chapter five, the research design chosen for this study limits the comparability of its findings. In order to hold the influence of top-down pressures on democratization constant, a most similar systems design has been chosen. In other words, since both cases under investigation face similar international adaptation and integration pressures, the findings are only valid in cases that depict multilateral and bilateral pressures impacting on the domestic system in a way similar to the EU integration process. If we want to test to what extent the findings are valid beyond the range of countries facing such a favorable international environment, additional research in countries where international pressures to democratize are more ambiguous, e.g. in the former Soviet Union, is necessary. The recent events and the so-called orange revolution in Ukraine give hope that civil society assistance can also contribute to democratization in countries without the prospect of EU membership. Such cases need to be carefully evaluated and assessed.

In doing so, scholars and donors alike can draw on further insight from this study. A respective evaluation and assessment of civil society assistance needs to focus on recipients. Did donors choose the right partners? To what extent did recipient organizations change during the partnership? Is a change in behavior and orientation observable? To what extent did recipients benefit from external assistance? Did external assistance meet domestic demand? These are questions that donors and scholars interested in the outcome of assistance need to raise. An assessment of civil society assistance needs to grasp the peculiarities of domestic settings just as much as the peculiarities of external involvement. For this reason, evaluations of civil society assistance need to investigate the impact of

assistance without looking too closely at differences in donor strategies and techniques. Even more important than this are recipient responses. The outcome of assistance is always the result of a magnitude of different projects conducted by various donor organizations. Additionally, the outcome of assistance is often only visible after a certain time period has passed. What is thus needed are evaluations and case studies on civil society assistance that focus on the combined efforts of international actors in certain issue areas some time after donor activities came to end.

A further point can be stated regarding the validity of the findings summarized above. Although the empirical findings of this study are not valid for cases that lack an international environment favorable to democratization, this conclusion does not hold for the further likely influence on civil society development: the necessity of respective cultural and historical reconditions of civil society. As pointed out in the methodology of this study, a most different systems design helps to reject systemic explanations if similar processes of change can be identified in dissimilar cases. In other words, since the cultural and historical preconditions of civil society differ in Poland and Slovakia, this factor cannot be responsible for the rise of self-organized forms of civil activity in both cases. This is not to say that institutional legacies, informal rules and culturally defined cognitive scripts do not play a role. However, such factors do not determine the fate of a country in transition. History matters but it does not determine our future. Agency and even externally driven agency can trigger change if certain conditions apply. The answer to transforming societies asking for advice is thus not “get a history” but “get fruitful partnerships”.

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Web-portal for Polish NGOs; www.ngo.pl

Appendix to the Dissertation

Appendix 1 The German Political Foundations

Portray 1 The Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

The FES focuses on economic and social policy (social aspects of a market economy, effective social security systems), the creation of decentralized administration, and trade union cooperation. It applies the instruments of civic education and management such as seminars, round-table talks, conferences, publications but also technical assistance and political advising. The projects are drafted in the head quarter in Germany in close cooperation with the field offices. Project management is left to the field offices. The projects are implemented in cooperation with domestic partners. Main partners are trade unions, social-democratic parties, research institutes, administrative bodies and NGOs. One can conclude therefore that the strategy is interactive with an elite focus. The FES is active and runs field offices in all the respective countries with the exception of Slovakia where only an office with local staff exists.

Portray 2 The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

The KAS focuses on economic policy and development (in particular small- and medium enterprises), legal assistance, decentralization and local self-administration. The project management is carried out in the same manner as in the FES. Partners are the church, parties, administrative bodies, research institutes, universities. The instruments applied resemble the instruments of the FES. The strategy has an elite focus, and is proactive. The KAS runs field offices in all the respective countries, with the exception of Slovakia where only a field office with local staff exists.

Portray 3 Hans Seidel Stiftung (HSS)

Besides the activities of civic education the HSS mainly focuses on institution building and administrative reform. Main instruments are training of civil servants and other usual instruments (technical assistance, seminars, conferences). Partners are administrative bodies (regional and local administrations, interior ministry, the police), research institutes, universities and to a lesser extent NGOs (foundations, associations). The projects are carried out in close cooperation with the respective partners which are chosen according to the projects. The HSS is active in all of the respective countries with the exception of Poland (closed the office in 1995 due to financial reasons). In contrast to the FES and KAS, the HSS was not active in the region before 1990.

Portray 4 The Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung (FNS)

The priority areas of the FNS are centered around the topics: decentralization / local government, the role of the state in the economy, human rights and the rule of law and civic culture. The projects are drafted and coordinated from the regional office in Budapest. Domestic project-partners are NGOs, liberal research centers and organized liberal forces. Main instruments are seminars and conferences but also the creation of 'liberal forums' or 'liberal academies' in order to foster liberal forces. In the 1990s the FNS changed its strategy, in particular in the Czech Republic and in Hungary. While the FNS previously exclusively cooperated with one (liberal) party, this approach has been given up as liberalism is not deeply rooted in CEE. Liberal parties either ceased to exist or changed into conservative and Christian-democratic parties. In response, the FNS concentrates on the support to think tanks and the establishment of liberal forums in order to bring together liberal persons from different parties. The FNS is active in all of the respective countries but only runs offices in Prague (responsible for Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia), Budapest (main office), Poland and Sofia (Bulgaria and Romania).

Portray 5 The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung (HBS)

The HBS differs from the other German foundations in many respects. First, the areas of the projects are different. The HBS carries out projects in the following fields: support of democratic women movement, environment, human rights. The partners of the HBS are exclusively NGOs, in particular NGOs striving for women rights and sustainable environment. The HBS thus aims to build democracy from the bottom-up. The HBS is active in Poland (5 projects), Rumania (2 projects), Slovakia (1 project), Czech Republic (3 projects). The projects are coordinated from the only field office in CEE located in Prague.

Appendix 2 Overall Assistance to Poland and Slovakia: Selected Donors

Table 1 Distribution of the German Transform-Program by country in 1998

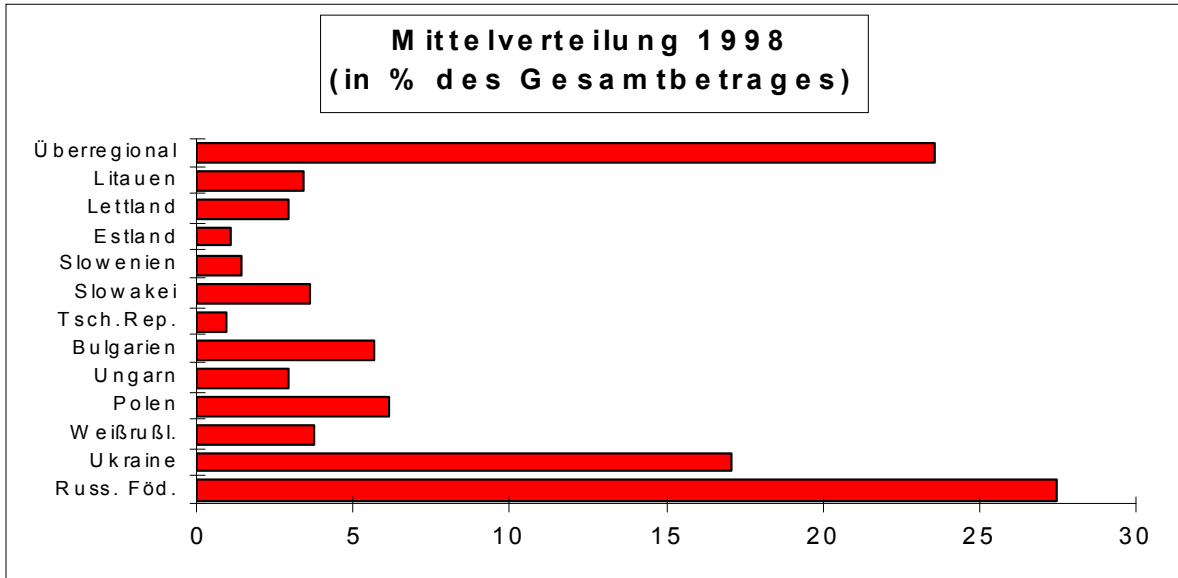
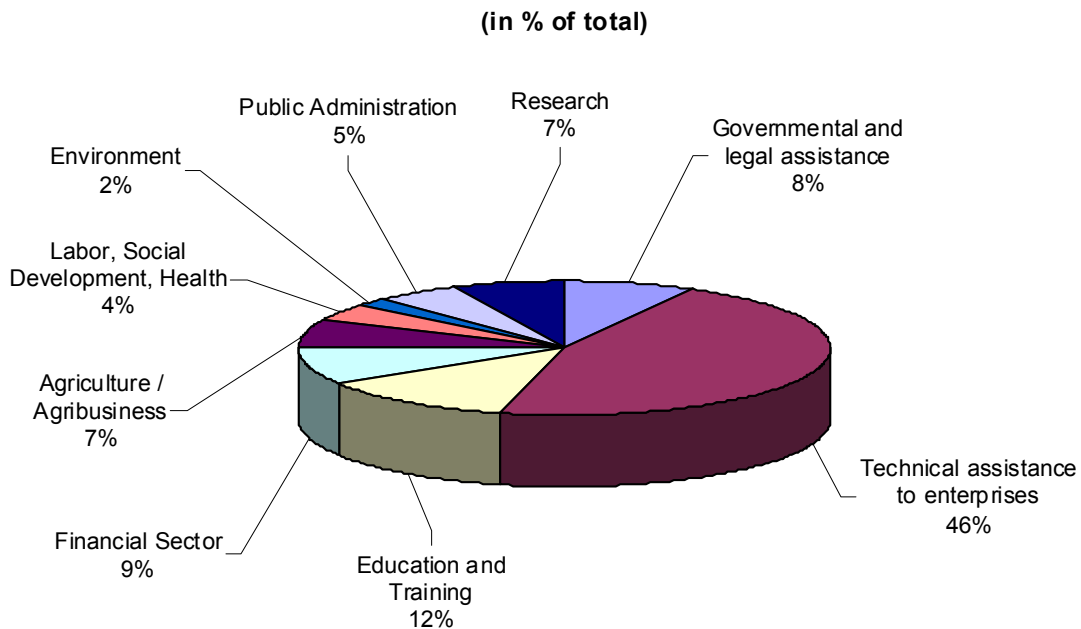


Table 2 Distribution of Transform Allocations by Area of Assistance, 1998



Source: Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft (BMWi), 1998: Das Transform-Program der Bundesregierung für Osteuropa, p. 23

Table 3 Phare Funding by Area in Poland, 1990-1997

Financial Aid 1990-1997 (Mio. ECU)	1990- 93	1994	1995	1996	1997	in total	% of total	per capita
administrative reform, public sector, consumer protection, legal homogenization	58,6	21,5	2	0	35,5	117,6	8%	3 ECU
civil society and democracy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0 ECU
education and research	104,3	39	37	30	20	230,3	15%	5,9 ECU
restructuring of agriculture	165	2,5	13	14	8	202,5	13%	5,2 ECU
urgent aid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0 ECU
environment and nuclear security	75	12	22	5	0	114	7%	2,9 ECU
infrastructure (energy, transport, telecomm.)	105,4	93,8	91	117	69,4	476,6	31%	12,2 ECU
private sector, financial sector, regional measures	219,2	31	9	37	15	311,2	20%	8 ECU
social development, employment, public healthcare	45,2	9	0	0	0	54,2	4%	1,4 ECU
others (general, multidisciplinary and technical assistance)	30	0	0	0	0	30	2%	0,8 ECU
in total	802,7	208,8	174	203	147,9	1536	100%	39,4 ECU

Source: The European Commission, 1997: Phare Annual Report 1997

Note: The figure for civil society and democracy is misleading as it neglects the contributions of the Phare "Civil Dialogue Program" and the Phare horizontal programs "Democracy", "Lien" and "Partnership" (see table 6).

Table 4 Phare Funding by Area in Slovakia, 1990-1997

Financial Aid 1990-1997 (Mio. ECU)	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	in total	% of total	per capita
administrative reform, public sector, consumer protection, legal homogenization	0	4	5,3	0	0	9,3	5%	1,9 ECU
civil society and democracy	0	0	0,5	0	3	3,5	2%	0,7 ECU
education and research	5	9	5	4,5	4	27,5	16%	5,5 ECU
restructuring of agriculture	3	5	2,6	0	4	14,6	8%	2,9 ECU
urgent aid	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0 ECU
environment and nuclear security	0	0	1	0	0	1	1%	0,2 ECU
infrastructure (energy, transport, telecomm.	5	6,5	8,2	0	0	19,7	11%	3,9 ECU
private sector, financial sector, regional measures	19	5	18,7	0	25	67,7	39%	13,5 ECU
social development, employment, public healthcare	3	5,5	4,4	0	6	18,9	11%	3,8 ECU
others (general, multidisciplinary and technical assistance)	5	5	0,3	0	1	11,3	7%	2,3 ECU
in total	40	40	46	4,5	43	173,5	100%	34,6 ECU

Source: The European Commission, 1997: Phare Annual Report 1997

Table 5 USAID Overall Assistance by Area in Poland and Slovakia, SEED Program, 1990-2000

Area of Assistance	Poland		Slovakia	
	in Mio US\$	% of Total	in Mio US\$	% of Total
Stabilization Fund	199,1	20,7	-	-
Polish-American / Slovak-American Enterprise Fund (SME support)	254,5	26,5	53,6	28
Economic Restructuring / Enterprise Development	256,2	26,7	65,6	35
Social Sector / Improvement of the Quality of Life (Health Sector, Housing, Environmental Measures)	140,9	14,7	11,0	6
			19,4	10
Democratic Institutions	77,8	8,1	32,3	17
Cross-Sectoral Activities / Multisector Support	31,8	3,3	7,0	4
Total	960,5	100	188,9	100

Source: Own calculations based on USAID (2000a: Projectlist), USAID (2000b: 40p)

Appendix 3 Phare Civil Society Assistance to Poland and Slovakia

Table 6 Phare Programs in Favor of Civil Society Development in Poland and Slovakia (in MECU)

Program	Poland 1992 – 1997	Slovakia 1992 - 1999	Source
Partnership	6,9	4,0	Own estimation based on the involvement of Polish and Slovak NGOs in Partnership (PPP) projects as partner or lead organizations as named in the PPP Evaluation (European Commission 1998:31,37pp)
Democracy (Macro and Micro grants only)	8,3	3,9	The evaluation of the Phare Democracy Program notes that 18% of all PHARE Macro Project grants (56 Mill. ECU) went to Poland (7,1 MECU), and 9% to Slovakia (3,5 MECU) (European Commission 1997b: 36). Micro grants in Poland amount to 1,2 MECU, in Slovakia to 0,4 MECU (see table 7).
NGO / LIEN	4,6	0,29+?	1 million micro grants (Mendza-Drozd 2000:29). An estimated 3,6 million for NGO / LIEN partnership programs (27 projects were selected from Polish project proposals between 1993-1997; a project was supported with an average grant of 133,5 thousand ECU (see homepage of the European Volunteer Center that administered the Phare, Tacis Lien Programme (http://www.cev.be/lien/what_is_phare.htm)) Unfortunately no figures could be found on NGO/LIEN partnership projects in Slovakia
Civil Dialogue / Civil Society Development	5	4,9	see Table 6 and 7
Total	26,2	13,1+?	1,7% of total Phare allocations to Poland (estimation)

Source: Own calculations. One must note, that the sums are rough estimations based on various sources (PPP evaluation (European Commission 1998); information of the European Volunteer Center that administered the Lien Program, and table 7). Unfortunately no clear figures on civil society assistance can be found.

Table 7 Allocations and Number of Phare Democracy, Lien and Partnership Micro Grants Awarded in Poland and Slovakia (in 1000 Euro)

Program	Poland		Slovakia	
	Amount	No. of grants	Amount	No. of grants
Democracy 1993	200	29	70	14
Democracy 1994	320	42	100	17
Democracy 1995/96	350	45	110	21
Democracy 1996/97	360	49	110	15
LIEN 1995/96	400	90	120	30
LIEN 1996/99	449	64	170	27
Partnership 1999			100	10
Total	2 079	484	780	134

Source: Mendza-Drozd (2000: 29), Richterová (2000: 47)

Table 8 Civic Dialogue Phare Program (Poland) – Allocations and Number of Grants Awarded (Implementation Period 1992-1998)

Program	Total Amount in Euro	Amount for Grants in Euro	No. of Awarded Grants
Civil Dialogue Program 1991	3 000 000	1 300 000	302
Civil Dialogue Program 1994	2 000 000	1 000 000	242
Total	5 000 000	2 300 000	544

Source: Mendza-Drozd (2000: 29)

Table 9 Regional Disparity of NGO directed Phare Programs in Poland in 1996/97

Voivodship	awarded grants (% of total)	registered NGOs (% of total)
Warsaw	27,0	17,0
Wrocław	6,7	3,9
Gdańsk	5,9	5,5
Katowice	5,7	7,2
Lublin	5,7	2,8
Łódź	3,8	4,1
Poznań	3,8	3,9
Białystok	3,3	1,6

Source: Own calculations based on: Cooperation Fund (1998: 12+14)

Note: NGOs in the following voivodships received less than 3,3% of total awarded grants: Bielsko Biała, Bydgoszcz, Częstochowa, Elbląg, Donorzów, Jelenia Góra; Kielce, Konin, Koszalin, Krosno, Legnica, Leszno, Łomża, Nowy Sacz, Olsztyn, Opole, Ostrołęka, Piła, Piotrków, Płock, Przemysł, Radom, Rzeszów, Siedlce, Skierniewice, Słupsk, Szczecin, Tarnobrzeg, Tarnów, Troruń, Wałbrzych, Włocławek, Zamosc, Zielona Gróra. NGOs in the following voivodships had not been awarded any grants: Chełm, Ciechanów, Kalisz, Sieradz, Suwałki.

Portray 6 Activities of the Cooperation Fund – Local Implementation of NGO directed Phare Programs in Poland

The Cooperation Fund was founded by the Polish government in 1990 with the aim to administer various foreign assistance programs. Since 1992 the Fund is also responsible for the implementation of the Phare Civic Dialogue Program, launched at the end of 1991 following an agreement between the European Commission and the Polish Government. Polish NGOs participated in the preparation of the program. The program had two rounds, the first starting in 1992 equipped with ECU 3 million, the second starting in 1994 with a further 2 million ECU. Its basic objective was to *“provide support for civil society by means of help for NGOs that are recognized to be the manifestation of civic activity and the inevitable part of any modern democratic society”* (Mendza-Drozd 2000: 31). Additionally the Delegation of the European Commission to Poland that was appointed to administer the micro grants of the Phare Democracy and the Phare Lien Program handed the administration of the micro grant schemes over to the Cooperation Fund. The following gives an overview of the main activities of the Fund in the area of civil society assistance.

Major Activities of the Cooperation Fund

Grant-making	<p>Civil Dialogue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ no restrictions as to thematic scope ▪ selective criteria focused upon <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ substantive content ▪ economic viability ▪ possible impact on organization, NGO sector, local community ▪ three types of open contest (theme projects, projects regarding the financing of administrative costs; projects of newly established organizations (draft projects))
	<p>Democracy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ thematic scope restricted to activities aiming to support democracy, civic participation and human rights ▪ competitions operated according to the procedures of Civic Dialogue Program
	<p>Lien</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ thematic scope restricted to social activities ▪ competitions operated according to the procedures of Civic Dialogue Program
Development of the third sector infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ support to first national forum of Non-governmental initiatives held in Warsaw in September 1996 ▪ discussions about issues of concern for the third sector ▪ exhibition fairs ▪ over 800 participants ▪ support to regional NGO support centres (see appendix 7, table 19) ▪ advancement of legal environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provision of research and analysis (legal expert group preparing analysis of legal situation plus study draft of the legal act on non-profit organizations) ▪ education and promotion ventures (provision of legal advice, lawyer at BORDO office); project of FIP "NGOs and legal regulations", support to conference of Helsinki foundation on the subject
Training activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ awarding grants to organizations running training programs for foundations and associations ▪ awarding grants for publications intended for NGOs ▪ publishing materials for training purposes ▪ support to the post-graduate studies "Management of Self-Government Institutions and NGOs" at Warsaw university ▪ Training of trainers activities
Information and Legal Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ establishment of BORDO - an Information Center for Non-governmental organizations in 1993 ▪ publications and brochures addressed to NGOs (provided and conducted by BORDO) ▪ library at BORDO information center (Polish and foreign publications related to NGO activities), ▪ information on potential funding possibilities ▪ support to Klon/Jawor database

Source: Own illustration based on: Cooperation Fund (1998), Mendza-Drozd (2000)

Portray 7 Implementation of NGO directed Phare Programs in Slovakia - Activities of the Civil Society Development Foundation and Phare Macro Projects²⁵⁶

The Civil Society Development Foundation (Nadácia pre podporu občských aktivít, NPOA) is a non-governmental grant-giving organization established within the framework of the European Union's program Phare. Its aim is to foster civil society development in Slovakia and to build partnerships among Slovak NGOs and their counterparts in CEE and European Union member states. Since its foundation in 1993 the foundation administers the Phare Civil Society Development Programs in Slovakia (FM 1992, 1995, 1997, 1999), and focuses on the development of a wide spectrum of Slovak non-governmental non-profit organizations. Moreover, NPOA administered the micro-grant schemes of Phare democracy, Phare Lien and Phare Partnership. Overall objectives of the CSD include: strengthening of NGOs, enhancing qualification of NGOs, promoting mutual co-operation of NGOs, improving the role of umbrella organizations, increasing political participation of NGOs, and improving the public awareness of NGOs. NPOA is also a founding member of the "Donors' Forum" a monthly gathering of donor organizations that aims to improve the effectiveness of assistance (see appendix 3, portray 7).

NGOs interested to obtain funding from the CSD Programs can apply for a grant in the following six categories: human rights and minorities, social services, health, volunteer development, environment, education. In light of a growing hostile attitude of the government towards NGOs this list was extended in 1997 by the categories "democracy" and "culture". In the period 1992-1999 the majority of grants went to NGOs providing social services (23%), followed by volunteer development (16%), the environment (13%), health (12%), and education (11%). 9% of the grants were awarded to NGO projects aiming to promote democracy. Considering the fact that this category was only installed in 1997, this is a substantial share.

²⁵⁶ The following is based on Richterová (2000: 50pp), and NPOA (2000)

The following gives a brief overview of major objectives and activities of the CSD Programs

Program, Amount	Objectives and Activities
CSD 1992, 1,36 Mecu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support to NGOs (229 grants) • improve the working environment of NGOs • training of NGOs • promote mutual co-operation of NGOs
CSD 1995, 0,4 MECU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support NGOs (100 grants) • support NGO political participation and advocacy • support infrastructure of NGOs • installment of four permanent legal counseling centers (provision of legal assistance to NGOs) in response to new foundation law of 1996 (co-funded by US funded NGO "Foundation for a Civil Society") • support to Stupava Conference
CSD 1997, 3 MECU	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion of a democracy component to program • support to NGOs (397 grants) • improve public awareness of NGOs • enhance qualification of NGOs • improve role of umbrella organizations • support electronic massmedia network in order to promote NGO sector • support to civic campaign "OK 98" (NPOA supported 50% of the 57 projects of the campaign)

Phare Democracy Macro Projects

The Phare Democracy Macro Projects are administered by the European Human Rights Foundation (EHRF) a Brussels based NGO which has a regional office in Prague. The contact person of the EHRF in Bratislava, the head of the Gremium of the 3. Sector until 1999, Pavol Demeš, ensures the responsiveness of the program to local needs. In result, the administration of the Phare programs in Slovakia has been considered as working extremely well (European Commission 1997c: 156)

Appendix 4 The Stefan Batory Foundation and the Open Society Foundation

Portray 8 History of a Local Donor with Foreign Funds – The Development of the Stefan Batory Foundation, 1988-2000

The Polish Stefan Batory Foundation was established by George Soros in 1988 with the objective to support science and education in then communist Poland. At that time, it was already a breakthrough that the monopoly of the state was given up in the area of education.²⁵⁷

Already one year later in October 1989 the Foundation broadened its objective in result of the new political situation. The new objective was to support the political, economic and social transformation in Poland. Nonetheless, the emphasis was still placed on support to education, research institutions and science. A couple of other programs such as Commission for Education on Alcoholism and other Addictions and the Central and East European Forum bringing together Politicians from the region were launched. Besides grant-making, and the provision of scholarships, major activities were and continued to be the organization of conferences and workshops, training of journalists and the publication of books.

The first years of the 1990s marked a period of rapid growth for the foundation in terms of areas of assistance, finances, operational rules and regulations, and cooperation partners. Each year the foundation launched several additional specialized programs thus steadily advancing its scope of activities including support for media, women, and NGOs. Culture and activities advancing international cooperation and East-East relationships became further major areas of assistance. Thereby the vast majority of programs were grant-making programs (60 – 80% of the annual budget). In 1992 the foundation established transparent and open grant-making procedures. Additionally, the foundation steadily increased its network of cooperation partners. Thereby several partner organizations were offspring of the Batory foundation. Several organizations have been established with financial support from the foundation as e.g. the Institute of Public Affairs or the Forum of Polish Foundations. The Batory foundation also increased its sources of financing. It received grants not only from the

²⁵⁷ From the start, the foundation was run by a group of Polish sociologists that were affiliated with the oppositional movement Solidarity. The first board members were George Soros, Zbigniew Pelczynski, Roman Ciesielski, Marcin Krol, Henryk Wozniakowski, Grzedonorrz Bialkowski, Antonina Kloskowska, Aleksander Koj, Klemens Szaniawski and Tadeusz Syrczyk. In 1989 the new board members were: Zbigniew Bujak, Jozef Chajn, Krzysztof Michalski, Adam Michnik, Andrzej Rychard, Ryszard Stemplowski and Andrzej Ziabicki. Starting from 1991 Alexander Smolnar was president of the foundation.

Open Society Fund but also from other donors such as the Ford Foundation, the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, the German Marshall Fund, the Foundation for Poland, or the World Bank.

In the second half of the 1990s the foundation underwent a process of consolidation and concentration. This process was marked by a shift in priorities from education and culture to civil society and NGO support, and a focus on key priorities.²⁵⁸ While in 1992 the majority of funds still benefited education, science and research, support to civil society and especially to NGOs steadily increased, and became the largest area of contributions by 1995. Although education and science as well as culture remain important issue areas of the foundation, the NGO support program is by far the largest program of the foundation, what makes civil society assistance a top priority of the foundation. Moreover, NGOs were recipients of most of the grants awarded by other Foundation programs. This is evident in the following figures. In 1999 66% of recipients were NGOs that received 77% of the total grants awarded by the Foundation (Stefan Batory Foundation 1999: 11). The shift from education to civil society and NGO support is also evident in the stated objectives and priority areas of the foundation, which name the support of civil society and civic initiatives a top priority before international cooperation, education and culture in 1999.

The second half of the 1990s is also marked by a conceptualization of the support to civil society and NGOs. In 1995 the institutional grants have been introduced, with the aim to strengthen the professional standard of recipients. Since 1997, the foundation places special emphasis on advancing the infrastructure of the NGO sector (Stefan Batory Foundation 1997:10). In 1998, the foundation introduced an award for organizations that contribute to civil society development (Stefan Batory Foundation 1998: 26). Additionally, it launched a community foundations project in collaboration with the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland. The aim is to guarantee financial support to local civic initiatives and NGOs and to establish a national network of community foundations by 2001. In 1999, launches a program that aims to facilitate the relationships among NGOs and local government and other important partners such as the media or businesses: “.. *the principle*

²⁵⁸ Four priority areas have been identified: (1) democracy, justice, and civil society; (2) education; (3) international cooperation; and (4) culture. Several programs and activities have been reduced or closed Other activities have been outsourced and transferred to close cooperation partners. Already in 1994 the foundation transferred certain programs and initiatives (including funds) to other organizations cooperating with the Batory foundation such as the Center for Further Education of Teachers, the Jozef Mianowski Fund, the Foundation for the Support of Science, or the Challenges Foundation. This process continued with the transfer of the public administration and social policy program to the Public Affairs Institute in 1995. In 1997 the educational programs operated by the foundation were absorbed by the Center for Youth Entrepreneurship which was granted a status of a national, non-public teachers' training establishment. In the same year, the competitions of youth projects were ceded to the Polish Children and Youth Foundation and the Challenges Foundation. The program assisting scientist and research workers on trips abroad has been transferred to the Warsaw Scientific Society.

objective of this Program is providing support to initiatives aimed at institutional and structural strengthening of Polish NGOs and promoting higher professional standards within their operation, establishing a representation within the third sector advocating its rights and developing strategic cooperation with their potential partners, including local self-governments, the media, universities and commercial enterprises” (Stefan Batory Foundation 1999: 11). In order to advance the relationship among NGOs and other organizational bodies, the foundation also launched the “Let’s Act Together” competition with the aim to support the horizontal cooperation of the third sector.

To sum up, throughout the 1990s the Stefan Batory foundation steadily evolved as a major player in the NGO sector in Poland. It was a major sponsor of NGO activities but also acted as a platform of discourse and stimulus of ideas through conferences, networks and initiatives. Thereby an initial focus on education and science was slowly replaced by a major emphasis of civil society development and NGO support. Most programs in the area of education, science and the youth were assigned to other foundations. From the very beginning the foundation was managed by Polish representatives. In result the first years did not only witness a focus on science and education because this was the only area possible on the start. This emphasis was also in line with the Polish sociological tradition and with the number of Polish social scientists in the board. The major asset of the Batory foundation throughout its history has been its human resources, networks and contacts.

Table 10 Objectives and Priority Areas of Assistance of the Stefan Batory Foundation, 1988 – 1999

Year	Objectives, Areas of Activity	Funding in 1000 US\$
1988 - 1989	Support of Science, Education Scholarships for studies at Oxford and Cambridge; Assistance to universities and research institutions Provision of equipment (printers, photocopiers) and literature	500
1989 - 1990	Support of political, social and economic transformation processes and cooperation in CEE (10/ 1989) Establishment of first operational programs (Commission for Education on Alcoholism and other Addictions, CEE Forum) Establishment of first grant-making programs (Eastern Europe Research program (until 1992), Program for Economic Research in CEE) Grants to 125 beneficiaries; Financial aid to 44 institutions	750
1991	6 programs (see above + Media Program; + East East Program) + first summer school of Economics Grants to 172 individual beneficiaries, 68 institutions and organizations;	1600
1992	11 programs (see above + Contemporary Arts Center (until 12/1994)), + Higher Education Support Program; + Library Program (until 12/1994); + NGO Support Fund, NGO Support Program; + Social Reform Program; + Support for international conferences organized in Poland program) + Summer School Grants to 228 individuals and 198 institutions and organizations, 36 regional projects Largest share of allocations granted in the field of science (25% of budget); culture second largest share (24%)	1650
1993	16 programs (see above, + Women's Aid Program; + Youth and Education Program; + Publishing Program; + Program facilitating Training of Polish Professionals Abroad; + Scholarship Scheme for CEE Scholars + Summer School Grants to 445 individuals and 334 institutions and organizations	3000
1994	18 programs (see above + Cultural Program; + Supplementary Grants Program + Public Administration Reform Program; + Medical Program and Health Education Program + International Summer School of Political Science, + Summer School of Young Social and Political Leaders 793 scholarships and 658 grants	3500

1995	<p>24 programs (see above + Internet program; + Students Initiatives Support Program + Training for Social Workers + Karl Popper Scholarship Competition + Summer Schools)</p> <p>Grants to 900 individuals and 920 institutions and organizations (including first institutional grants. The foundation also took part in the establishment of the Public Affairs Institute, the Social Policy Reform and Public Administration Programs became part of this new unit)</p> <p>28% of grant budget allocated for support for NGOs; 27% to higher education, culture 20%, youth education 10%. Other areas (women, charity program, media and internet) < 5% each</p>	7000
1996	<p>Identification of 4 priority areas: (1) democracy, justice, and civil society; (2) education; (3) international Cooperation; (4) culture.</p> <p>Integration of programs Outsourcing of some programs to cooperation partners (e.g. all programs targeting at scientists, researchers and students integrated in Academic Program)</p> <p>Grants to 800 individuals and 1000 organizations and institutions; The Batory Foundation received a grant of 2,5 mio US\$ from the Ford foundation for organizational development (over a period of 5 years).</p>	8000
1997	<p>14 programs (+ Internet for Physicians Program; + Intervention Program at repairing flood damage; + Program for assistance to Belarus (substituting the closed Belarusian Soros foundation)</p> <p>Grants to 690 individuals, 1080 institutions and organizations</p> <p>26% of grants to NGO support program. 18% to academic program, 11% to cultural program, 9% to Youth and Education; Internet (8%), Publishing (7%), Women and Flood program (each 6%)</p>	10500
1998	<p>16 programs (+ Legal Program + Center of Youth Entrepreneurship as independent program)</p> <p>450 scholarships and 1180 grants awarded</p> <p>24% of grant budget to education; 23% to NGO support, culture (13%), International Cooperation (11%); Medicine and Health (9%), Flood (6%), Law and Human Rights / Women / Social Welfare (3% each)</p>	11780
1999	<p>Objective of supporting the development of a democratic, open society: priorities include: (1) fostering civic attitudes and initiatives; (2) increasing cooperation between nations; (3) advancing educational development; (4) supporting cultural activity</p> <p>16 programs in operation</p> <p>Grants to 159 individual and group applicants, 222 scholarships, 1092 grants to institutions and organizations.</p> <p>22% of overall budget was spent for NGO program, 11% for academic program; 10% for cultural program; 9% for Internet program; 8% for Youth program; 7% for Central and East European Forum; 6% for Youth Entrepreneurships Center; others received 5% or less each</p>	10102

Source: Stefan Batory Foundation (1997), Stefan Batory Foundation (1995), Stefan Batory Foundation (1998), Stefan Batory Foundation (1999)

Portray 9 The Open Society Foundation, Bratislava

The main objective of the OSF is the creation of an open society. Its priorities encompass the support of democracy and democratic institutions, education, human rights and minorities, and the sustainability of the third sector and cross-sector cooperation among non-profit and profit organizations and public administration (www.osf.sk). In order to achieve its objectives the OSF provides grants and engages in operative activities via various programs. For example in the year 2002 the OSF run 14 programs: Civil Society Development; Development of Democracy Program; East East Program (Partnership across borders); Education; Internet Program (Internet for High Schools program); Law Program; Library Programs; Media; Partners; Public Administration Reform; Public Health; Roma Programs; Skills Development; Women's Program (www.osf.sk). Educational activities comprise the core of OSF activities with approximately one fourth of the funds (e.g. English language programs, Secondary School Scholarships, Internet Distance Education Program, University Scholarships to Cambridge and CEU). Arts and Culture, Information Technologies, and Public Health were further main areas of activity in the year 2000. Regarding civil society development, the OSF launched a Community Program in 1996. The program supports community foundations and funds and thus aims to foster local initiatives and activities. The program is coordinated with the USAID funded "Your Land" program managed by Ekopolis/ETP Slovakia. Besides the provision of grants to community foundations, OSF additionally provides technical assistance to local organizations in cooperation with the organization Partners for Democratic Change. The Development of Democracy Program, too, has the objective to create and develop civil society in Slovakia. This grant-giving program supports initiatives that foster the cooperation and dialogue among NGOs and between NGOs and local administration, and that contribute to the sustainability of NGOs (fund-raising abilities, strategic planning, quality improvement). The OSF is founding member of the Donors' Forum (see www.osf.sk; Open Society Foundation 2000).

Total Expenditures of the Open Society Foundation Bratislava by types of activities in 2000

Program / Area of Activity	Funding in million SK	In % of total
Education	39,93	26%
Children and Youth	9,31	6%
Public Health	17,6	12%
Law	4,79	3%
Juridical Reform	0,32	0%
National Minorities	0,0047	0%
Roma Program	10,48	7%
Women in Society	4,68	3%
Public Reform	6,08	4%
Economic Reform	1,58	1%
Civil Society	3,82	2%
Others (Institutional grants and miscellaneous)	5,38	4%
Cooperation of East European Countries	5,18	3%
Information and Information Technologies	17,04	11%
Media	3,88	3%
Arts and Culture	22,87	15%
Total	152,95	
Administration Costs	15,89	
Total	168,84	

Source: Open Society Foundation (2000)

Appendix 5 US-American Civil Society Assistance

Table 11 USAID Democracy Assistance per Area in Poland, SEED Program, 1990-2000

Area of Assistance	In 1000 US\$	In % of Democracy Assistance	In % of Overall Assistance
Local Democracy	33479	43	3,5
Democratic Governance and Public Administration	16853	22	1,8
NGO Development	128531	17	1,3
Trade Union Assistance (NSZZ Solidarność)	10141	13	1,1
Media Assistance	2399	3	0,2
Political Party Assistance / Electoral Assistance	750	1	0,1
Legal Assistance / Rule of Law	536	1	0,1
Others	526	1	0,1

Source: own calculations based on USAID (2000a: projectlist)

Table 12 USAID Democracy Assistance per Area in Slovakia, SEED Program, 1990-2000

Area of Assistance	In 1000 US\$	In % of Democracy Assistance	In % of Overall Assistance
Local Democracy	7347	23	3,9
NGO Development	6613	21	3,5
Urban and Regional Development	6526	20	3,5
School Education	3782	12	2,0
Political Party Assistance / Electoral Assistance	2142	7	1,1
Media Assistance	1821	6	1,0
Trade Union Assistance (KOZ)	1585	5	0,8
Legal Assistance / Rule of Law	1421	4	0,8
Others	976	3	0,5
Democratic Governance and Public Administration	126	0,4	0,1

Source: own calculations based on USAID (2000b: 40)

Table 13 NED Funding by Area in Poland, 1990-1998

Area of Assistance	No. of Grants	In 1000 US\$	% of Total
Labor (Trade Union Assistance (NSZZ Solidarność))	13	3847	45
Electoral Assistance	3	1311	15
Economic Associations and Think Tanks	13	1111	13
Third Sector Development (incl. Civic Education)	14	1004	12
Decentralization	3	420	5
Civic education and awareness raising	8	319	4
Party Assistance	5	376	4
Support to Local and Ministerial Administration	5	203	2
Media Assistance	3	140	2
Legislative Assistance	3	79	1
Governmental Assistance	1	128	1
TOTAL	63	8620	100

Source: own calculations based on the publication of NED funded projects on the NED homepage www.NED.org

Note: The above summary does not include regional grants focusing upon several CEE states such as e.g. the NED financed Polish-Czech-Slovak Solidarity fund. In consequence, the actual commitment of the NED in Poland exceeds the above mentioned 8,6 mio US\$. According to Quigley (1997) the NED assisted Poland with 10 mio US\$ until 1994.

Table 14 NED Funding by Area in Slovakia, 1990-1999*

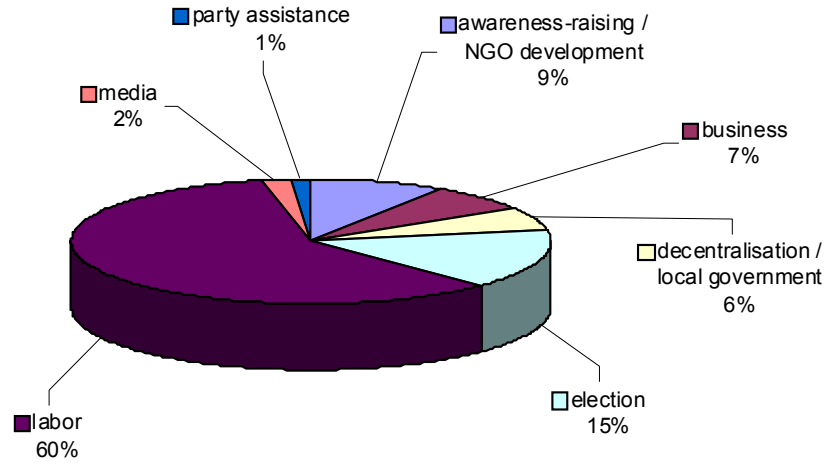
Area of Assistance	No. of Grants	In 1000 US\$	% of Total
Third Sector Development (incl. civic education)	19	1208	26
Electoral Assistance	9	9303	20
Economic Associations and Think Tanks / Business	10	5818	12
Labor	6	4057	9
Democracy	7	3644	8
Civic education and awareness raising	7	3320	7
Media Assistance	6	267	6
Parliamentary Assistance	1	220	5
Human Rights	4	127	3
Party Assistance	2	96	2
Local Governments	1	93	2
Donor Coordination	1	40	1
Academic Elites	1	15	0
TOTAL	74	4680	100

*Note that this sum includes 1,2 million US\$ spent in then Czechoslovakia between 1990-1992

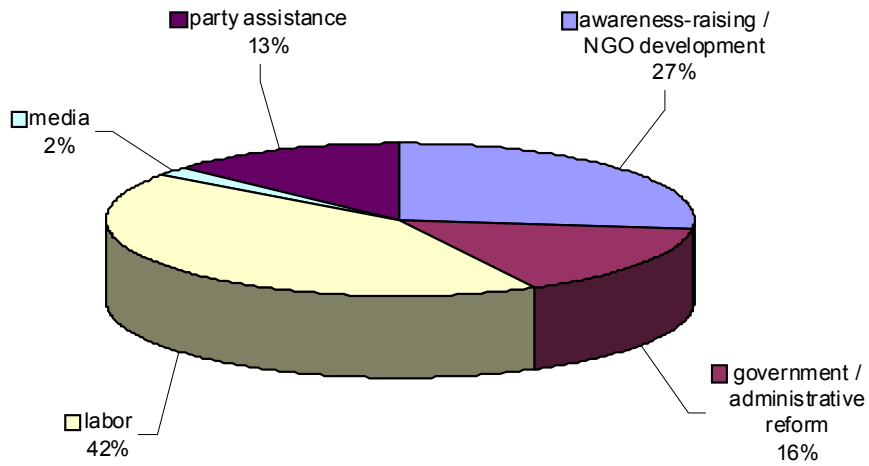
Source: own calculations based on the publication of NED funded projects on the NED homepage www.NED.org

Table 15 NED Grants by Year and Area in Poland, 1990 – 1998

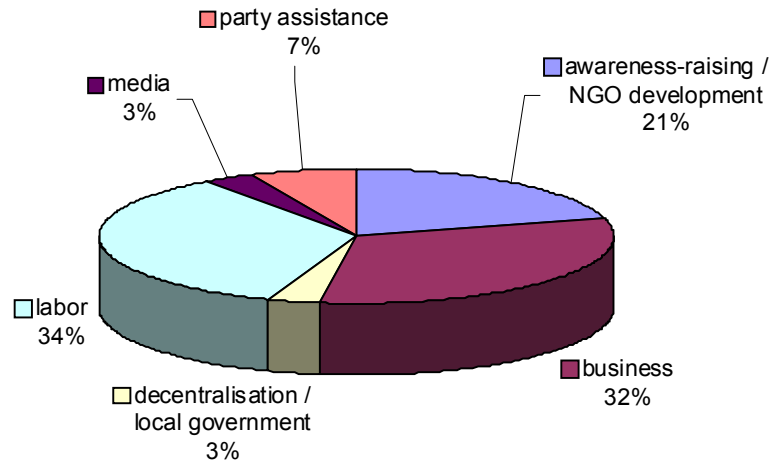
Distribution of NED Grants in Poland in 1990 (\$ 4.568.846 - 15 grants)



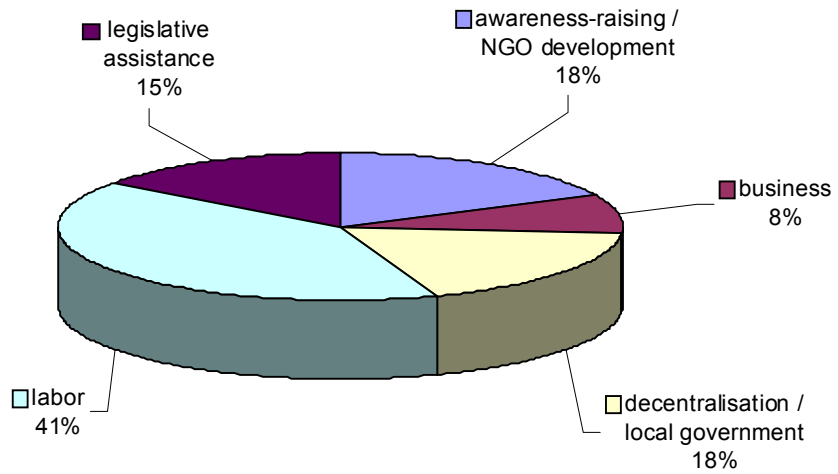
NED Grants to Poland 1991 (820 thousand US\$)



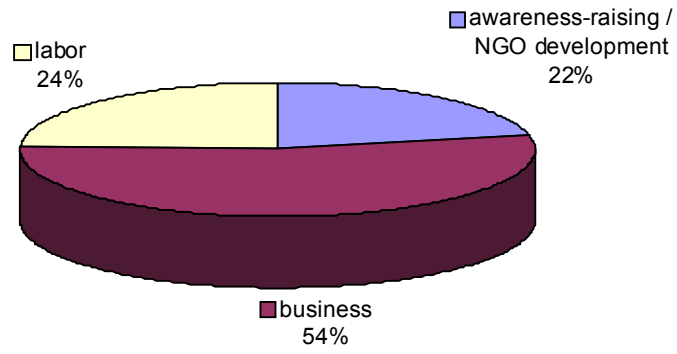
NED Grants to Poland in 1992 (752 thousand US\$)



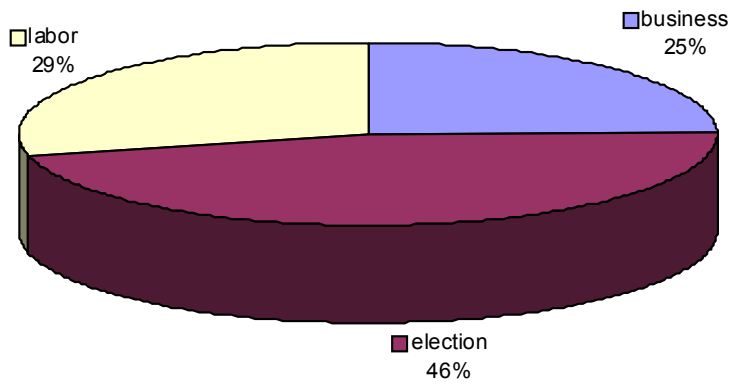
NED Grants to Poland 1993 (417 thousand US\$)



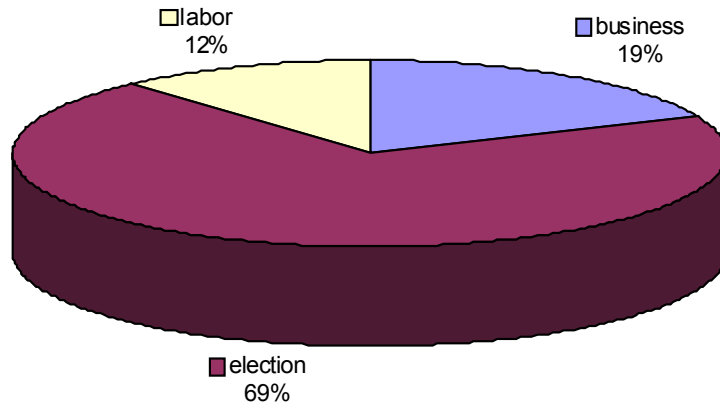
NED Grants to Poland 1994 (529 thousand US\$)



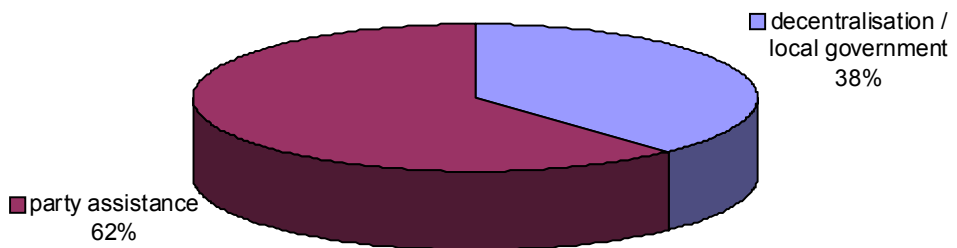
NED Grants to Poland 1995 (623 thousand US\$)

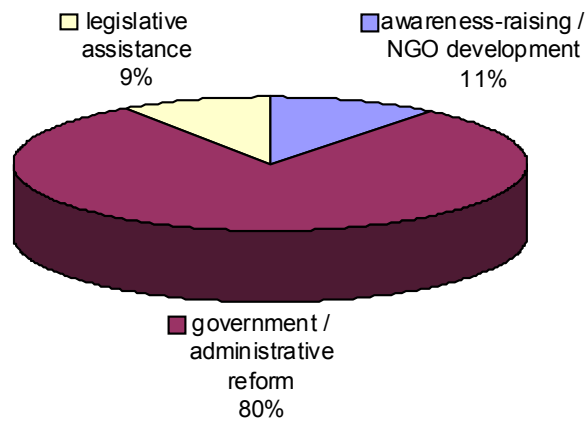


NED Grants to Poland 1996 (463 thousand US\$)



NED Grants to Poland 1997 (261 thousand US\$)

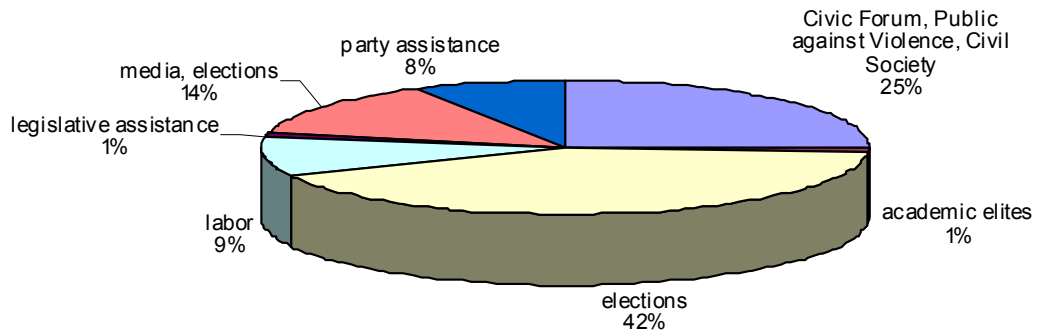


NED Grants to Poland 1998 (186 thousand US\$)

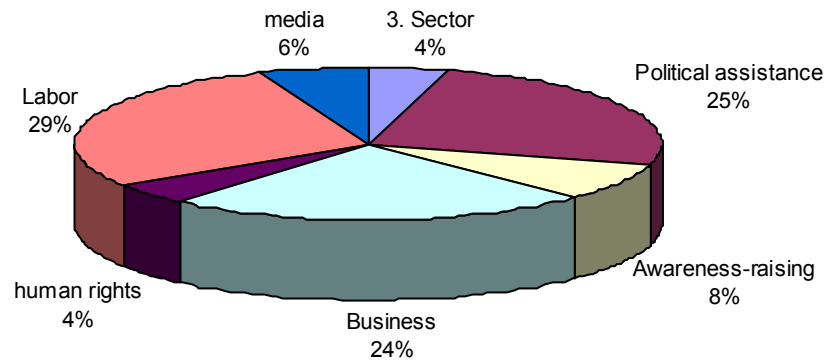
Source: Own calculations based on the publication of NED funded projects on the NED homepage www.NED.org

Table 16 NED Grants by Year and Area in Slovakia, 1990 – 1999

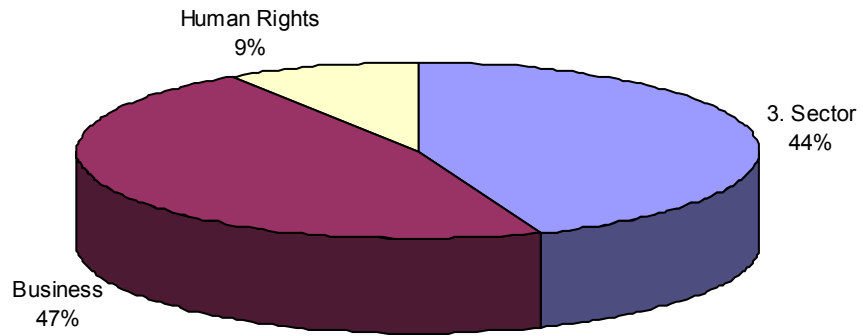
NED Grants to Czechoslovakia 1990 (Total 1, 2 million US\$)



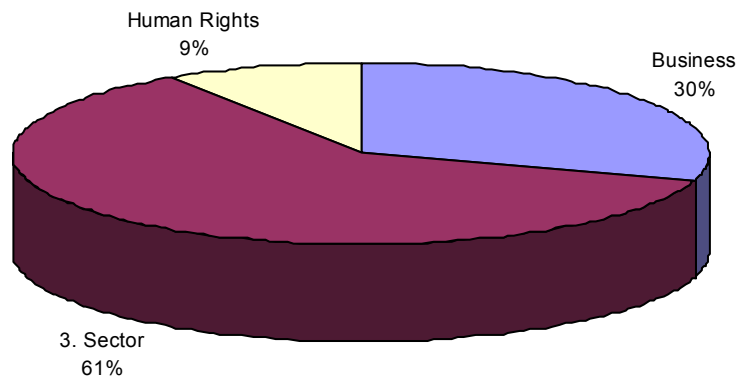
NED Grants to Slovakia 1993 (619 Thousand US \$)



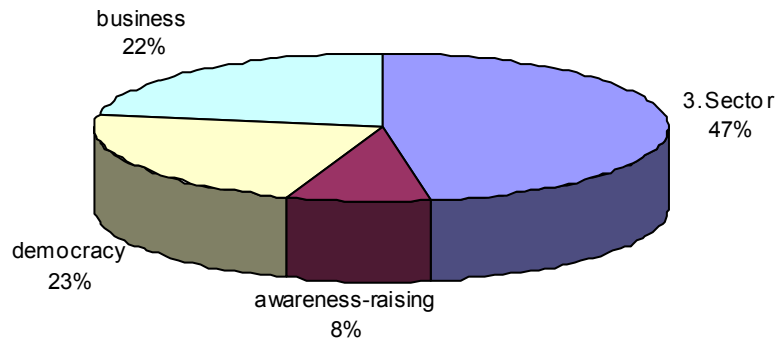
NED grants to Slovakia 1995 (323 thousand US\$)



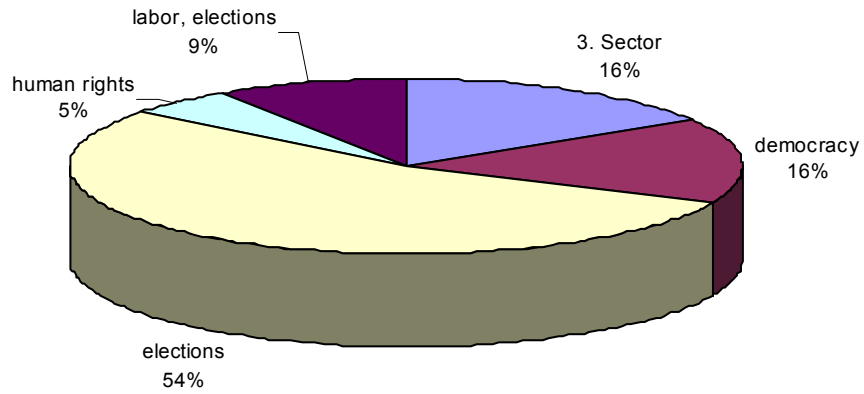
NED Grants to Slovakia 1996 (325 thousand US\$)

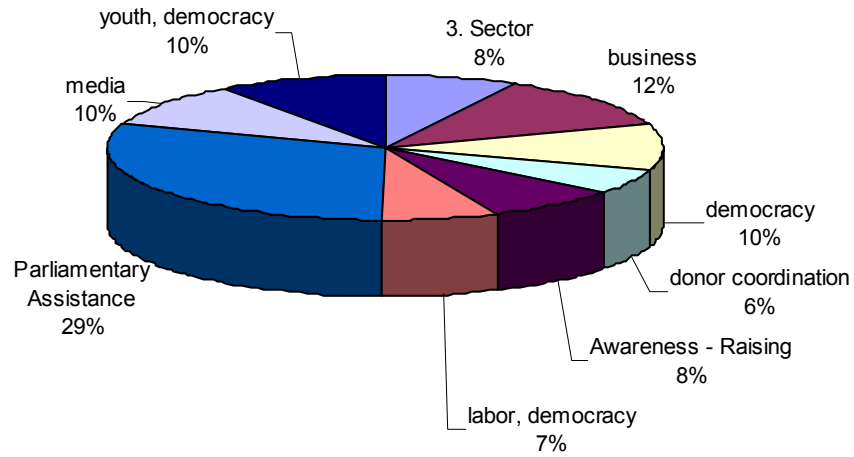


NED Grants to Slovakia in 1997 (447 thousand US\$)



NED Grants to Slovakia in 1998 (760 Thousand US \$)



NED Grants to Slovakia 1999 (724 thousand US\$)

Source: own calculations based on the publication of NED funded projects on the NED homepage www.NED.org

Portray 10 The USAID funded Democracy Network Project (DemNet) in Poland²⁵⁹

The USAID funded Democracy Network Project (DemNet) supported public policy-oriented NGOs in Poland with a technical assistance and grant making program in four priority development sectors: democracy, the environment, enterprise development, and social sector restructuring / safety nets. The project had a duration of three years (1995-1998), its total budget amounts to 4,8 million US\$.

The project intended to ensure long-term sustainability of NGOs, to introduce a public advocacy orientation to organizations whose work previously focused on service provision, and to increase public awareness of the role of the third sector in a democracy. In order to attain the stated objectives the project was active in four different fields:

1. Grant-Making

Throughout its duration the Project provided 1,8 million US\$ in direct grants to 67 NGOs for 91 projects. The majority of grants (48%) were spent in the area of democracy, followed by the social sector with 24% and environmental protection and economic growth with 14% respectively. The initial focus of the project was on public policy oriented NGOs in the four priority areas. However, the project started to broaden its initial scope and concentrated additionally on thematic oriented NGOs in order to bring local and small NGOs into the project. Besides project grants DemNet provided intensive training and technical assistance to its grantees to improve their knowledge and skill in organizational development and management. Moreover the DemNet team provided the NGOs with individual consultation in order to prepare a two-year strategic plan.

2. NGO Support Network

To ensure sustainability DemNet aimed to strengthen NGO intermediary support centers that ought to ensure long term service provision for local and small NGOs. A loose network of already existing support centers, later known as SPLOT was subcontracted to conduct an informational and outreach campaign to help NGOs apply for DemNet grants. Preparation of SPLOT staff by means of training and advice as well as organizational development aimed not only to enhance the campaign but further to strengthen the capacity of SPLOT (USAID, 1999: appendix C).

²⁵⁹ The following is based on the following sources: Academy for Educational Development (1998), USAID (1999: appendix C and D)

3. Raising Public Awareness of NGOs Role in Civil Society

Additionally, DemNet initiated several activities aiming to promote a better public awareness and understanding of NGOs:

DemNet supported the first national NGO conference in Poland, the Forum for non-governmental initiatives in 1996.

In the first year of the program, a promotion and media campaign coordinated with the assistance of a prominent Polish media consultant was conducted to ensure the transparency of the Democracy Network Project, to increase public understanding and appreciation of the NGO sector, and to train NGO leaders in public relations.

To promote better appreciation of the role of Polish NGOs in building a civil society, DemNet cooperated with the largest national daily newspaper and the European Union's PHARE Program to launch a nationwide competition for the best feature articles addressing the role of NGOs in a democratic society. Three hundred articles entered the contest. Three received first place awards and were published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. *Gazeta* also published three additional entries.

DemNet has provided extensive marketing/public relations training to its grantees. It has trained 31 representatives from 17 NGOs in Promotion and Media Relations, providing participants a completely new context for working with the media. The media in turn have praised the training for its practical examples in building an organization's image.

4. Local Government Supported NGO Grant Programs

Finally the Local Partnership Program aimed to increase local government support for local NGOs by instituting NGO grant-making programs at the local level. DemNet staff worked in 15 communities, identified local partners among NGOs and local authorities and aimed to persuade local decision-makers to institutionalize local government approved programs of funding for activities conducted by NGOs by providing information and conducting several seminars. By 1998 DemNet has been successful in establishing such model programs in seven Polish cities. The efforts of DemNet to promote local funding possibilities for NGOs are continued by the DemNet successor organizations the Academy for the Development of Philanthropy that has been founded by former DemNet staff. The Academy is thus headed by Pawel Łukasiak, the former Project Director of DemNet. The main objective of the Academy is to provide support to communities in establishing community foundations, to promote local philanthropy in Poland and thus to ensure sustainability of NGOs.

Portray 11 The USAID funded Democracy Network Project (DemNet) in Slovakia

The USAID NGO support program “DemNet Project” operated in Slovakia from 1996 to 1999. It has been implemented by the NGO “Foundation for a Civil Society”. DemNet aimed to enhance NGO’s willingness and ability to participate in the political process by influencing the formulation or implementation of public policy in the areas of democracy, social sector restructuring, economic development and the environment. In order to do so, DemNet worked closely with a network of 48 NGOs. Additionally, it supported NGO development via the provision of grants, training to NGO leaders and so called organizational development and professionalization grants that were intended to ensure the sustainability of grantees (USAID 2000b: 17p). As in Poland, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL) implemented a project focusing on the legal framework of NGO operations. It prepared a guide for NGOs on Slovakia’s laws and assisted draft legislation. The DemNet program ended in 1999, the project of ICNL ended in 2000.

Appendix 6 The German Political Foundations in Poland and Slovakia – An illustrative Overview²⁶⁰

Portray 12 The Activities of the FES and KAS in Poland

Like other donors the German political foundations quickly responded to the democratization processes in Poland and opened offices in Warsaw in 1989/90 with the aim to support the Polish transformation processes, and to support Polish civil society. Regarding the rapidity of the operational start it comes as no surprise that concepts and strategies on how to assist Poland were largely lacking. Moreover, the foundations found neither their experiences in developing countries nor their activities in industrialized countries applicable to the Polish and in general the post-communist cases. In Poland there was no need to assist the development of basic infrastructure such as radio stations or farm cooperatives as in developing countries. However, it was also not possible to conduct joint activities and enter cooperations with local partners (mainly parties and political elites) as is the case in industrialized countries. Local structures and organizations were constant flux, finding appropriate partner organizations was a major problem. The foundations thus largely relied on individuals, so-called “multipliers” such as scholars or journalists and to a lesser extent on former contacts.²⁶¹ Finding suitable partners and making contacts to members of the elite was thus a priority of both foundations in the initial period. Both foundations restricted from working closely with parties, because the unconsolidated party system hampered long-term partnerships. Instead, they concentrated on reform-oriented politicians and offered advice and training. In the words of Hermann Bünz, head of the Polish office of the FES in Warsaw: *“We trained everything and everybody. Whoever required training got it” (interview with the author, own translation)*. In the initial period of assistance until 1993 the FES shed away from working together with post-communist politicians and only started closer contacts with its sister party, the left-wing SLD in 1993/94. The conservative KAS was close to individual politicians of the AWS and the right-wing coalition ruling until 1993. The new political elite had hardly any previous political and administrative experience and thus eagerly sought information and political expertise. In this period, assistance thus concentrated on

²⁶⁰ The following is largely based on the interviews conducted by the author with representatives from both KAS and FES (see appendix 9), on respective donor material (KAS (1994), KAS (1996), KAS (1999)), and on information provided by the homepages of the two foundations: www.kas.de, www.fes.de

²⁶¹ Both foundations supported Poland throughout the 1980s via scholarship programs. The FES run an exchange and scholarship program targeting Polish journalists, the KAS issued research scholarships to Polish scholars via the Catholic University Lublin. Moreover it held contacts to the Academy for Catholic Theology in Warsaw. The KAS continued its contacts with the two universities, however, ended its cooperation with the Academy for Catholic Theology in 1995.

governmental and parliamentary assistance such as study trips for parliamentarians and experts, reports on reform issues or transnational working groups on reform issues, and training.

If one focus upon the main activities of the foundations one has to note that these are quite similar. Both foundations aim at “civic” and “political education” and largely rely on the provision of information and expertise, on training in specific issue areas, on conferences, seminars and work-shops and to a lesser extent on financial support to non-state actors. Thereby both make use of their contacts to German and European politicians and representatives of interest groups and associations. Moreover, in contrast to American donors or local grant-making foundations the German political foundations do not run grant-making schemes organized by open competitions or tenders. Both prefer close cooperative ties with supported organizations. The KAS and FES thereby traditionally employ two different strategies (see also chapter 5.1.3.). In line with its partner-centered strategy that implies contractual based long-term relationships with local organizations and institutional grants providing for salaries and equipment the KAS prefers to work closely with a few partner organizations (see list of partner organizations, appendix 7, table 17). The FES in contrast focuses on topics rather than partners and runs its activities with changing partner organizations. The FES thus works “*partner-oriented, not partner-tied*” (Bünz), cooperating and assisting a broader range of research institutes, universities, and NGOs. However, also the KAS slightly restrained from its partner-principle at the end of 1993. Since then the foundation also conducts its own activities. This strategic shift was partly due to the change in the Polish government to the post-communist coalition of SLD and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL). In order to continue working on topics that did not rank high on the agenda of the new left-wing government the KAS started to organize conferences and work-shops or issued publications.

Regarding the thematic orientation of assistance the work of the two foundations is largely in line with the stated priority areas of each foundation (see also chapter 5.1.3). From the very beginning until 1995 decentralization and local self-government was the thematic priority area of the KAS. Already in early 1990 the foundation organized a one-week seminar for a Polish drafting-group on community law in St. Augustin at the headquarters of the Foundation. The KAS invited a variety of German experts on constitutional and community law and on local self-government to the event. Two weeks later the Polish drafting-group finished the draft law whose sketch had been developed in St. Augustin (interview Dr. Dill). The provision of expertise on local self-government and decentralization continued to be a major activity of the KAS until the governmental turn in 1993. Afterwards the foundation chose to cover the topic in the form of self-organized conferences and seminars. A further

major topic was the transformation to a market economy in Poland. After 1995 the KAS shifted its thematic priority and increasingly focused on European integration and NATO membership of Poland. The shift in priorities is also evident in the partner organizations of the KAS. Until 1995 the supported activities of the partner organizations largely aimed at the provision of education and training in the area of local and regional policy (University Lublin, FSLD regional center) or economics (University Lublin, Academy for Catholic Theology, Warsaw). Additionally, partner organizations of the KAS provided research and publication in the two priority areas (Gdansk institute of Macro-economics, Foundation "Ius Europae", Warsaw). Since 1995 the KAS built up a different partner structure. In 1999 three out of five partner organizations focused on the thematic priorities international relations and European integration (Center for international relations (CIM), Warsaw; Polish Robert-Schuman Foundation, Warsaw; Konrad-Adenauer Center for European Integration, University Wrocław) (see appendix 7, table 17).

In contrast to the KAS, the FES did not run one „country project“ in Poland, but had four, after 1994 three, distinct projects in the country that also determine the priority areas of the foundation. These were (1) socio-political cooperation (since 1990); (2) economic and social policy (since 1991); (3) trade union cooperation (since 1991); and (4) the regional development of Silesia (since 1993). The first two projects have been merged into one in 1994. Activities in the traditional priority area of the FES “trade union cooperation” are conducted in close cooperation with German trade unions. In the first years the FES worked exclusively with the NSZZ Solidarność. Only in later years, attempts have been made to cooperate with the formerly state run trade union OSZZ. This is, however, a difficult undertaking as it might offend sensibilities of the NSZZ. Trade union assistance initially concentrated on organizational development and capacity building and training. The FES assisted the NSZZ Solidarność to fulfill its new tasks that were rather distinct from the previous activities as an oppositional movement.²⁶² The FES further aimed to strengthen the branch secretaries of the union in existence since 1991, and to intensify social dialogue among trade unions and employer organizations. Both objectives were, however, difficult to attain. NSZZ Solidarność was not only a trade union but also had political ambitions. For this reasons, an organizational structure along regional lines instead of branches was more appropriate for its leaders. The social dialogue suffered from the disparity between a strong and political active trade union on the one hand, and weak and just developing employer

²⁶² Although Solidarność is an exceptional case one has to note that trade unions in communist countries played a totally different role to trade unions in the West. Representing the interests of workers was not the main objective of trade unions, instead the unions ought to ensure the identification of the workers with the ruling regime and ideology (see Ost 1993). For this reason, trade unions in CEE had difficulties to accept their new role after transition.

associations on the other hand. In consequence thereof, the FES started to work with employer associations. Together with the Polish Foundation to promote Small and Medium Enterprises (PFSME) the FES run, for example, several seminars with Polish employer associations and its counterparts from Berlin/Brandenburg and hold seminars on social security systems and Polish SME policy. Also it conducted a study on “employer associations in Poland”.

A further topic of the FES in the first half of the 1990s was regional development and regional policy especially in the region of Silesia. In 1992/93 the FES supported NARDA, the association of regional development agencies. In 1993 the FES started a organizationally distinct regional development project in Silesia equipped with an office and staff in the region. The project worked together with local communities, NGOs and universities in the region. The aim was to create a regional network and to strengthen the standing of the region via Warsaw. Moreover, the transfer of know-how in economic and industrial development was a further priority. In this respect, the project cooperated with a cross-regional project of the Land North Rhine Westphalia and the German association of counties (*Deutscher Landkreistag*).

In the second half of the 1990s, the integration of Poland into the European Union became a thematic priority for the FES, too. Together with national and international organizations the FES, for example, assisted the training of 200 local and regional civil servants in the area of EU funding and regional policy. A further project aimed at the installment of nation-wide Info-points on the European Union in schools, libraries and local authorities.

Both foundations did not leave Poland at the end of the 1990s like other donors. However, the emphasis of their work changed. As already mentioned, in Poland the foundations had to find a middle way between the activities they carry out in developing countries and their activities in industrialized (and democratic) countries, that is, to use the German terminology, a middle way between *Aufbau-* and *Verbindungsarbeit*, a middle way between assistance and cooperation. In Poland, it has always been both, assisting the transformation and reform processes, and entering close transnational cooperation with parties and non-state actors. In the future, emphasis will be less on assistance but more on cooperation with an important member of the European Union.

Portray 13 The Activities of the KAS in Slovakia – A Case Study

‘Slovakia’, was the answer of all persons interviewed at the KAS asked for the greatest success of their foundation in CEE. It can be doubted that the turn-over of government in 1998 and the electoral defeat of the authoritarian government of Vladimir Mečiar was solely the achievement of one foreign foundation. Nevertheless, the prompt answers suggest that

Western donors played a decisive role in the opposition's electoral victory. The following highlights the goals, strategies and measures of the KAS in Slovakia before the elections (promotion) and after the elections (protection). This is followed by a brief assessment of the factors that influenced and brought about this 'success'.

Democracy Promotion

Before 1998 the major goal of the KAS in Slovakia was the return of democracy in the country. This goal translated in four concrete strategies (1) to unite the opposition, (2) to support and strengthen the opposition, (3) to undermine the legitimacy of the authoritarian regime abroad and make the 'Slovak' case public, and (4) to strengthen and support civil society (interview Stuth).

To unite the opposition is in face of clientele parties and personal rivalries that often determine the political scene in CEE not an easy task and it is hard to assess whether and to what extent the KAS influenced the final agreement of the four opposition parties to build a electoral coalition. Also in Slovakia the KAS followed the strategy not to polarize but to offer a neutral platform for discussion. It attempted to bring rivals together by inviting them to seminars or to special work-shops.²⁶³

The KAS aimed to support the opposition in two ways. First, it offered financial support, training and advice to oppositional leaders and organizations. Secondly, it aimed to raise the reputation and recognition of the opposition. In Slovakia the KAS was often confronted with the request of domestic NGOs to put its name on invitation posters, even if the KAS did not provide funding for the event. It was important for domestic NGOs to demonstrate that they were accepted by and worked together with international actors. This international recognition improved the standing of the respective organizations inside the country. Furthermore, the KAS used its European network. High-ranking European politicians gave speeches on events of the partners organizations. The KAS also organized several meetings between the leading figure of the opposition – Miklas Dzurinda – and European politicians and a picture session with Dzurinda and then German chancellor Kohl. As a result, Dzurinda was positioned as the partner not only of the KAS but of Europe.

The KAS further used its contacts and networks both in Germany as well as on the European level to undermine the international recognition of the Mečiar regime.

²⁶³ The FNS, for example, organized shortly before the elections a two-day work-shop with the aim to unite the opposition parties. The FNS claimed that it was the result of this work-shop, and the political consultant running it, to bring about the final umbrella coalition (interview Thebaud).

They prevented, for example, an invitation of Mečiar to Germany. In this question, the KAS stood against the foreign ministry whose foremost priority were good bilateral relations. One can assume that it helped that Slovakia is a small and geo-strategically less important country. Furthermore, at that time the German government was conservative, a fact that resulted in good contacts to government and Chancellor's office. On the European level, the network of contacts was used to make the Slovak case public. Meetings between high level European politicians such as Süßmuth, Jean-Claude Juncker, Wolfgang Schäussel, Wilfried Martens etc. and Dzurinda were organized.

The KAS further aimed to promote and support civil society in Slovakia. Following the 'partner-principal' approach, the KAS cooperates in Slovakia with several organizations (see appendix 7, table 18). Some organizations also were established on initiative of the KAS such as the Center for European Policy. An important partner organization was MESA 10, an economic institute that was founded by 10 leading figures of the opposition including Miklas Dzurinda. The KAS financed the monthly report of the institute and by doing so contributed to its existence.

Democracy Protection

After the change in government in 1998, the KAS identified the following new goals:

- political stability
- consolidation of the coalition
- a strong conservative party
- strong civil society.

The strategy taken to achieve those goals encompassed four points: (1) strengthen the competence of partners in new policy areas, (2) European integration, (3) provide neutral platform for conflicting parties, and (4) continue cooperation with partner organizations and search for new ones (interview Spengler).

Directly after the new government took office the KAS invited a German expert from the German chancellor's office to help organizing the Slovak counterpart. The main task of the expert was to address and answer questions to internal communication, communication with parties and management. A further measure to increase the professionalism of the partners took already place before the elections. 60 young opposition members were identified that were possible candidates for administrative posts in government or parliament. These 60 benefited from an intensive training preparing them for their future work as heads of cabinet, press officer or political advisers. Study-trips to Austria and Germany were organized and

different experts such as the speaker of Vaclav Havel were invited. More than half of the people trained actually entered the anticipated post.

After the election, the new leadership was in need of concrete technical assistance and information. The KAS thus provided technical assistance in on new policy areas of interest such as regionalization and the territorial restructuring of the country. Another important topic was European Integration. The KAS also helped Slovakia lobbying in Brussels. It organized, for example, a meeting in Brussels with Western investors active in Slovakia and assured that a relevant audience was listening. In this sense, the new Slovak leadership still profits from the international contacts of the KAS. A further goal was political stability and the consolidation of the coalition. The KAS provided a platform for discussion, and aimed to moderate in conflicts inside the KDH. This was, however, not always possible. Here the limits of an outside actor without actual powers are visible.

Assessment

The case of the KAS activities in Slovakia demonstrates that donors can play a decisive role in the transition / democratization phase. Especially, four factors can be identified that proved important for the described 'success'.

(1) A good relationship between donor and recipient

The relationship between the KAS represented in the person of the head of the office – Reinhardt Stuth – and the opposition parties, especially the KDH (Christian Democratic Movement) can be classified as extremely good even resulting in a personal friendship between Stuth and Dzurinda. This shall not suggest that DPP can only be successful if close personal relations are involved, however, the question of trust is definitely at stake. Only if the expert – in this case the donor – enjoys the trust of the recipient – trust in his loyalty and competence – a good relationship can be achieved. If DPP requires the recipient's trust in the foreign expertise, areas in which this is the case have to be identified. One can assume that the foreign expertise is more valued and trusted in questions such as EU enlargement or NATO enlargement rather than in 'typical' internal problems that stand outside of the experience and technical knowledge of the donor. Furthermore, a common cultural or ideological background supports a good relationship as demonstrated by the presented case: both sides – the KAS and the KDH - share a Christian-conservative perspective. Again this does not determine per se a good relationship. In the Czech Republic the KAS did not manage to create good relations with the ODS party of Vaclav Klaus. On the contrary, the work of the KAS in Prague extremely suffers from a cumbered relationship.

(2) The political will and interest of the recipient or a stated 'demand'

In Slovakia the opposition obviously had an interest to cooperate with the KAS as it profited from the cooperation in a double way. First, the different NGOs and organizations benefited from the financial support as well as from the technical expertise that was provided. In this way, recipients succeeded in increasing professionalism. Moreover they could guarantee the own existence in face of a repressive government. As some organizations such as MESA 10 faced repressive measures by the government that made it nearly impossible to receive orders, the support of the KAS and other foreign donors was their only financial means. Second, the cooperation with the KAS increased the legitimacy and reputation of the partner organizations and the whole opposition movement. Especially the network of German and European contacts was extremely important for the Slovak partners. Being a small country, it was not that easy to make the Slovak case public and gain international attention. This attention and recognition in turn resulted in a better profile and standing in the domestic public opinion. However, not in every cultural setting and country a pro-international or pro-Western image will be positive for the opposition. In Slovakia the population was increasingly alarmed by the possibility that the Meciar government will prevent a 'Return to Europe' and that Slovakia will 'fall back' in the circle of countries such as Romania or Bulgaria (RFE/RL). The elections of 1998 were as much a vote for or against certain parties as for or against European integration. Without this public perception the strategy to position Dzurinda as a Western partner might not have been so successful or even negative.

The interest of the donor – the supply side

The objectives of the KAS namely democracy, social market-economy and European Integration corresponded with the interest of the Slovak opposition. Moreover, the Slovak case further strengthened the foundation's role as information and contact provider at home. Being geographically close to Germany and a potential candidate for European enlargement Slovakia is an interesting although not extremely important country for Germany. Consequently, good bilateral relations are desirable. For the KAS this fact translates in a demand for foreign policy expertise on Slovakia back home. Furthermore, the activities of the KAS resulted in a network of contacts in Slovakia from which the KAS and the CDU can profit. How important this factor is for the KAS is demonstrated if one imagines that not a right-wing but a left-wing coalition had won the elections. One may doubt that in this case the KAS had ever called Slovakia a success.

(4) Respective Partners

The partner-principle approach that is followed by the KAS is facilitated by the existence of appropriate partner organizations. If few NGOs, institutes or associations exist, the work of the foundations is constrained. Such a 'civic landscape' was present in the Slovak case. As

Reinhard Stuth pointed out: "*In Slovakia civil society is manifold and diverse, much more than in the Czech Republic.*" Consequently, it was possible to find partners and support them. Without at least a basic civic commitment or an emerging civil society, civil society assistance is thus heavily constrained. In Bulgaria the head of the FES office complains that no bridge to the society can be found. The measures only reach a limited number of (mainly already pro-Western, highly educated) people and have no echo in the population (interview Weichert). This is not the case in Slovakia. Discussions organized by the 'Citizen Clubs' of the SKOI are even in small cities attended by up to 50 people (interview Stuth).

To sum up, the stated 'success' of the KAS in Slovakia was possible because of a symmetric interest of donor and recipient, a good relationship based on trust, at least a minimum acceptance of civic rights by the government that allowed organized civic activity to emerge and a pro-European public opinion.

Appendix 7 Polish and Slovakian Recipients of Civil Society Assistance by Donor

Table 17 Examples of Partner Organizations of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Poland

Name	Supported Activities	Year
Catholic University Lublin (CUL) – Foundation for the development of the CUL	Business school Center for Community Policy (provision of training to local civil servants) Seminars, conferences	since 1990-
Foundation of the Academy for Catholic Theology – Institute for Social Market Economy, Warsaw	Institute of Social Market Economy Seminars on social market economy by German professors Publishing house International conferences	1991-1995
Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD) – Center for Local Self-Government, Jelenia Góra	Education and training of local civil servants	1991-1996
Foundation “Poland in Europe”, Warsaw		1992-1993
Foundation “Ius Europae” (FIE), Warsaw	Manual on community policy	1992-1993
Gdansk Institute for Market Economics (GIME)	Public policy oriented research with focus on economic issues	since 1992
Konrad-Adenauer-Center for European Integration, Wrocław	Institute for European Integration at the University in Wrocław	since 1995
Center of International Relations (CIM), Warsaw	Public policy oriented research with focus on international issues	Since 1996
Polish Robert-Schuman Foundation, Warsaw	Establishment of a network of pro-european NGOs, Seminars, conferences	since 1997

Source: Matzke (1997: 36).

Table 18 Examples of Partner Institutions of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Slovakia

Name	Focus	KAS involvement
SKOI (Permanent Conference of the Institute of Education)	Association of regional 'citizen clubs' organizing public political discussions	financial and organizational support
ZEP (Center for European Policy)	'Train the trainer' measures in questions of European Integration	initiated creation of ZEP in order to prepare EU accession; financial and organizational support
SFPA- Slovak Society of Foreign Policy	Civic education measures in questions of foreign policy (seminars, conferences, debating societies in schools)	financial and organizational support
MESA 10	Economic institute	financed the monthly report
University Banská Bystrica	Diplomatic education, used to be pro-Meciar	funding for books, events, KAS insisted that opposition members are accepted as students

Source: Interview Stuth

Table 19 Phare “Infrastructural” Recipients in Poland

Recipient	Project Title, Supported Activity
Foundation for the Development of Civic Society in Gdynia	Subsidies for the project “Creation of Local Infrastructure for Non-governmental Organizations” implemented by the Centre of Support for NGOs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provision of advisory services, training, information and technical knowledge for local NGOs. • advancement of co-operation between NGOs and self-governments
Support Office for the Movement of Self-Help Initiatives BORIS, Warsaw	“Co-operation of NGOs and self-government authorities from the municipality of central Warsaw”. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consultations, advisory services and information to NGOs • working team for co-operation with local self-government, especially in social area
The Central European Center for Behavioral Economic Foundation in Lublin	“Support for Co-operation between NGOs and self-government authorities in Lublin Voivodship” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • aimed to increase the activities of NGOs and • their participation in the creation and implementation of socio-economic policies in local communities
BRIDGE Regional NGO Support Centre in Katowice	“Advice and Information Services for NGOs” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increase of professional standard of NGOs in nine voivodships • publication of the newspaper “<i>Sedno-Most</i>”
The Association for the Forum of Non-governmental Initiatives, Warsaw (FIP)	“Integration and Strengthening of NGOs in Poland” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improve the flow of information between various organizations in the country
ASOCJACJE – The Association of Support for Social Initiatives, Warsaw	Exhibition prepared in cooperation with the Voivodhsip Office in Warsaw. The presentation regarded the cooperation between NGOs and state administration and was entitled “For Common Benefit”.
Civil Society Development Foundation, Warsaw	“Support for Local Communities - GALICJA” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting the region Galicja in the South of Poland • publication of a manual regarding local funding possibilities of social activities • consultation for loca
Regional Information and NGO Support Center in Gdańsk	“The Regional Center – Service Point for NGOs from the Seacoast Region”

Source: Cooperation Fund (1998: 24p)

Table 20 Examples of Phare Recipients in Slovakia

Recipient	Project Title, Year
SKOI (Permanent Civic Institute Conference)	Establishment of democratic civic clubs (1995, Democracy Macro grant)
The Syndicate of Slovak Journalists	Maintain free media, independence of journalists (1995; Democracy Macro grant)
Association of Landowners and Agrarian Entrepreneurs of Slovakia	Reconstruction of social relations in the countryside (1995, Democracy Macro Project)
Slovak Union of Blind and Partially Sighted	Defense of the interests of the blind (1994, Democracy Macro Project)
Milan Simecka Foundation	Assistance to a running civic education program (1994 Democracy Micro Project)
Slovakia Foreign Policy Foundation	Documentation / publication of two seminars aiming to increase public understanding of foreign affairs (1994, democracy micro grant)
A-Project	Centre for the Revival and Development of Mountain Area Resources, Interactive community planning in rural micro-regions Establishment of the rural parliament in Slovakia (1998-2000)
Transparency International Slovakia	Institutional development of the Centre for Economic Development, 1998-2000
Educational Centre	Study program "Economy and Management of NGOs" , 1998-2000
ETP Slovakia	Promotion of co-operation and access to information of NGOs in the process of European Integration in the area of the environment and regional development, 1998-2000
MEMO '98	Monitoring minorities' rights, 1998-2000
New Generation – Youth Club	Service Centre for Minority NGOs
Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia	Training on effective functioning of organizations with programs promoting Roma and non-Roma coexistence, 1998-2000
The Board for Social Work Counselling	Establishing a branch in Kosice, 1998-2000
ROAD	Institutional and staff development, 1998-2000
Trencin Informal Group (TIG)	Several projects and programs, e.g. institutional development of the TIG community fund

Source: European Commission (1997c: 148pp), NPOA (2000)

Table 21 Examples of NED Non-Governmental Recipients in Poland (1990-1998)

Recipient	Area of Activity
Polish Institute of Arts and Science (PIAS)	art and science
Stefan Batory Foundation	civic education
Foundation for Education for Democracy (FED)	civil society, civic education
Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)	civil society, democracy
Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FSLD)	decentralization, local democracy
Foundation for Social and Economic Initiatives in Poland (FSEIP)	economy
Gdansk Institute for Market Economics (GIME)	economy
Foundation for Economic Education (FEE)	economy
Polish Society of Market Economics (PSME)	economy
Polish Council of Economic Societies (PCES)	economy / privatization
Krakov Industrial Society (KIS)	economy / privatization
Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI)	economy / privatization
Institute for Private Enterprise and Democracy (IPED)	economy / privatization
Higher School of Business (HSP)	education / economic
Polish Citizens Committees	election
Independent Center for International Studies (ICIS)	research institute, think tank
Institute for Southeastern Studies (ISES)	research Institute, think tank
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)	trade union
NSZZ Solidarity (Rural branches, Social Fund, economic foundation, abroad)	trade union
Polish Children and Youth Foundation (PCYF)	youth

Source: own illustration based on the information distributed on the NED website: www.ned.org

Table 22 Examples of NED Non-Governmental Recipients in Slovakia (1993-2000)

Recipient	Area of Activity
Jan Hus Educational Foundation	civil society, civic education, academic support
Documentation Center for the Promotion of Independent Slovak Literature	civic education, third sector
Center for Independent Journalism	media
Milan Simecka Foundation	human rights, civic education, third sector
Bratislava Center for Social Analysis	civic education, third sector
MESA 10	business
Foundation for the Upper Nitra Region	civic education, third sector
Entrepreneur Association of Slovakia	business
The Permanent Committee of the Civic Institute (SKOI)	civic education, third sector, network of civic clubs
Center for Economic Development	business
Association for Support of Local Democracy	elections, third sector, decentralization
Association Obcianske Oko (Civic Eye)	youth, democracy
Association of Regional Press Publishers	media, publication of "civic letters" which report on Slovakia's democratic transition
People and Water	democracy
MEMO 98	monitoring and assessing media coverage
Presov Civic Forum	elections, civic education in Eastern Slovakia
SAIA-SCTS	third sector, NGO development
Open Society Foundation	third sector, NGO development
Pro Democracy Association (APD)	monitoring reform processes, public opinion polls on youth issues, civic education
Foundation for a Civil Society (FCS)	civic education, election, third sector
Institute for Public Affairs	survey on Slovakia's transition
Presov Community Foundation	promotion of local NGOs
Transparency International Slovakia	anti-corruption

Source: own illustration based on the information distributed on the NED website: www.ned.org

Table 23 Examples of USAID Non-Governmental Recipients in Poland

Year	Recipient and Supported Activities
1990	FSLD receives its first support from USAID
1990	NED begins distributing USAID funds to a variety of institutions to meet the needs of pro-democratic forces, independent cultural and publishing groups
1990	IDEE organizes the first competition for local press. Since then, more than 300 local press received funding by USAID. Since 1994 IDEE has provided training, advisory services and scholarships for NGOs and journalists from the region (CEE and NIS).
1990	East Central European Scholarship Program is established, providing U.S.-based training programs for Polish leaders in democratic leadership, public administration, public policy, health care administration and reform, rural development, finance and banking, business administration, and education.
1990	KLON/JAWOR database on NGOs receives start-up assistance from USAID
1991	YMCA receives USAID grant providing funding for youth leadership to address problems of social, environmental and economic concerns.
1991	Newly established CASE foundation, now a leading macro-economic think-tank, receives USAID funding
1991	Warsaw Journalism Center is established with USAID funding
1992	The environmental training project begins, focusing on training private business owners, environmental NGOs, academicians and local government officials
1993	Support Office for the Movement of Self-Help Initiatives (BORIS) is established to provide support to the NGO sector with a start-up grant from USAID. BORIS provides technical assistance in management issues, program planning, proposal writing, and fundraising. By June 2000, BORIS will have helped establish 60 Local Initiatives Centers that help communities organize for local problem solving.
1995	DemNet is launched assisting 65 NGOs; helping among others SPLOT (Network of NGO support and resource centers) to improve the standard of its services; supporting e.g. the first national NGO conference in Poland (FIP)

Source: own illustration based on USAID (2000a: 102-175)

Table 24 Examples of USAID Non-Governmental Recipients in Slovakia**Activities and Programs 1990 - 2002**

Year	Recipient and Supported Activities
1991-1993	Slovak Institute of Public Administration receives management training from the US Institute of Public Administration
1990-1993	NED distributes USAID funds to communities and NGOs with the aim of NGO development
1991-1994	The Association of Towns and Communities is supported by the international City-County Management Association in order to strengthen local public administration
1999-2000	Transparency International Slovakia receives funding for a corruption awareness campaign
1996-2000	Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia receive funding for a market mediation training
1997-1999	The International Foundation for Election Systems distributes USAID funds to NGOs in order to raise public awareness of the elections
1992-1996	The German Marshall Fund distributes USAID funds to Slovak NGOs with the aim of strengthening citizens and human rights
1996-1999	The Foundation for a Civil Society supports local NGOs with the DemNet program
1999-2002	Ekopolis Foundation / ETP Slovakia manages the "Your Land" program
1995-2000	The International Center for Non-for-Profit law works with NGOs and several ministries on a legal framework for NGOs

Source: USAID (2000b: 40)

USAID Legacy Institutions in Slovakia

The following organizations have been established or strengthened with the assistance of USAID:

Recipients	USAID funded international counterparts
Orava Association for Democratic Education	University of Northern Iowa
Environmental Training Partnership Foundation (ETP Slovakia)	University of Minnesota
TRG Slovakia	The Recovery Group
Local Self-Government Assistance Center	ICMA
Slovak Management Training Center	The Recovery Groups, IESC
Slovak Association of Industrial Environmental Managers	World Environment Center
Slovak Pollution Prevention Center	World Environment Center
Citizens Action	National Democratic Institute (NDI)
Obcianske Oko	National Democratic Institute (NDI)
Slovak City Managers Association	RTI, ICMA
Slovak Judges Association	ABA / CEELI
Slovak Advocates Association	ABA / CEELI
Association of Towns and Communities	ICMA, IESC, VOCA
Slovak Syndicate of Journalists	IREX ProMedia
MEMO '98	IREX ProMedia
Gremium for the Third Sector	International Center for Non-Profit Law
Association of Slovak Teachers of English	USIA
Center for Independent Journalism	USIA, IREX
MESA 10	RTI, DemNET

Source: USAID (2000b: 42-43)

Table 25 Recipients of the Stefan Batory Foundation (Institutional Grants only)

	1995 USD	1996 USD	1997 USD	1998 USD	1999 USD
Public Policy Institute, Warsaw	359,109	217,228	312,500	307,874	266,199
Helsinki Human Rights Foundation, Warsaw	136,842	137,453	147,031		102,041
Charta Center Foundation, Warsaw	93,117	82,397	68,750	258,621	
Socio-Economic Initiatives Foundation, Warsaw	76,923				
Polish Humanitarian Organization, Warsaw	65,587	60,674	46,875	28,736	
International Center for Development of Democracy, Cracow	48,583	89,888		57,471	
Polish Roberta Schuman Foundation, Warsaw	38,462	59,551	46,875		25,510
Polish Foundations Forum, Warsaw	36,802			10,057	
Borderland Foundation, Sejny	32,389	33,708		43,103	127,551
NGO Parliament, Poznan	29,798		12,500		
Food Bank Foundation, Warsaw	20,243		15,625		16,582
Euro-Atlantic Association, Warsaw	12,672	9,363			6,378
National Association of the Friends of Lithuania, Warsaw	10,121	11,236	9,375	10,057	8,929
		New in 96			
Environmental Partnership Foundation, Cracow		97,378		100,575	
CASE Foundation, Warsaw		74,906			
School of Leaders Association, Warsaw		67,416	24,625	57,471	63,776
Judaica Foundation - Jewish Culture Center, Cracow		63,670	50,000	48,851	38,265
Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe, Warsaw		52,434		57,471	
BORIS Office for the Servicing of the Self-Aid Initiative Movement, Warsaw		34,906	93,750		20,408
National Association of Soltys, Konin		29,963			
Center of Political Thought, Cracow		9,925		11,006	12,755
			New in 97		
Synapsis Foundation, Warsaw			62,500		
Foundation for Support of Local Democracy, Warsaw			56,250	51,724	

Foundation for Help to Children with Neoplastic Diseases, Warsaw			46,875		12,755
Polish Pen Club, Warszawa			31,250	22,989	
	1995 USD	1996 USD	1997 USD	1998 USD	1999 USD
Public Policy Institute, Warsaw	359,109	217,228	312,500	307,874	266,199
Helsinki Human Rights Foundation, Warsaw	136,842	137,453	147,031		102,041
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Foundation for Support of Local Democracy, Warsaw			56,250	51,724	
Foundation for Help to Children with Neoplastic Diseases, Warsaw			46,875		12,755
Polish Pen Club, Warszawa			31,250	22,989	
Women's Support Center Foundation, Warsaw			31,250		
Social Foundation of the Powisle District, Warsaw			31,250		
Wegajty Country Theater Association, Wegajty			28,125		
Civic Education Center, Warsaw			18,750		51,020
Bene Vobts Foundation, Warszawa			18,750		
La Strada Fund at ion Against Trafficking in Women, Warsaw			16,875		
Society for Social Prevention, Bydgoszcz			15,625		
The Mikolow Foundation, Mikolow			14,063		
Foundation for Help to Single Mothers, Poznan			14,063		8,929
Barge Foundation for Mutual Assistance, Poznan			12,500		
				New in 98	
International Relations Center, Warsaw				86,207	102,041
FIP Association (Nongovernmental Initiatives Forum), Warsaw				68,966	25,510
Center for the Monitoring of Freedom of Press (Polish Journalists Association), Warsaw				34,483	
Foundation for Education for Democracy, Warsaw				31,609	
Federation of Polish Food Banks, Warsaw				28,736	
Polish Work Foundation, Lodz				28,736	
Heart Association for Sick Children, Swidnica				28,736	
Borussia Cultural Association, Olsztyn				25,862	
Association for Family Development, Opole				24,425	
eFKa Women's Foundation, Cracow				20,230	
Foundation for Poland, Warsaw				20,115	

Cracow Hamlet Foundation, Cracow				20,115	
Horse-Riding Therapy Foundation for Aid to Disabled Children, Warsaw				18,621	
National Fund on Behalf of Children, Warsaw				14,368	38,265
Sharing What We Have Association, Stoczek Lukowski				14,368	12,755
Polis Association of Young Journalists, Warsaw				14,224	
National Autism Society, Cracow				11,494	
Altenative Education Studio, Lodz				7,184	
Ancient Music Association, Jaroslaw				7,184	
					New in 99
Junior Achievement Fundation, Warsaw					178,571
Amazons Federation of Polish Clubs of Women after Mastectomy, Warsaw					26,786
Kana Cathilic Center of Youth Education, Gliwice					25,510
Regional Information and Support Center of NGO,					25,510
Lublin Center of Self-Aid Association, Lublin					20,408
Most Association of NGO Support, Katowice					20,408
Art of Disabled Foundation, Cracow					12,755
Wielkopolska Region Information and Suppor Center of NGO, Poznan					12,755
Borderland Music Association, Lublin					12,755
Organization of the Friends of Children					11,480
My Point of View Association, Bystrzyca Klodzka					8,929
Total amount of grants	960,648	1,132,097	1,226,031	1,571,667	1,295,536
Number of grants	13	17	25	33	29
Average amount of grant	73,896	66,594	49,041	47,626	44,674
Exchange rate	2.47	2.67	3.20	3.48	3.92

Source: Stefan Batory Foundation (2000:13-15)

Appendix 8 Survey on Non-Governmental Organizations in Poland and Slovakia

The following survey investigated the situation of NGOs in Poland and Slovakia, and the relationship between non-governmental recipients of foreign assistance and their donors. The survey was part of the research project “Democracy Promotion and Protection in Central and Eastern Europe, the Middle East and North Africa” conducted jointly by the Humboldt University, Berlin and the European University Institute, Florence and headed by Professor Claus Offe and Professor Philippe Schmitter. The survey encompassed three set of questions inquiring on

- description of NGOs: location, year of foundation, number of employees, area of activity, level of activity, type of activity, budget (questions 1-9),
- self-assessment of NGOs’ role and situation in the country: relationship with other actors, importance of NGOs, main problems of NGOs (question 10-12),
- relationship with foreign actors / donors: main donors, number of annually funded projects, benefits of cooperation, assessment of cooperation, main problems of cooperation (questions 13-17).

A Representative Sample

In Poland the sample involved 300 arbitrarily selected NGOs from the Klon/Jawor database.²⁶⁴ The internet based survey has been conducted in 2002. 72 valid questionnaires returned (24%). Because of the relatively low return, and the rather small sample the findings of the survey have been double-checked with a comparison of key indicators of the KLON/JAWOR survey (see below). This comparison reveals that the sample presents a representative picture of the NGOs of the Klon/Jawor database. Key indicators (paid staff, budget, main area of activity roughly correspond with the findings of the Klon/Jawor survey of 1997.

In line with the findings of the Klon/Jawor survey of 1997, the vast majority of questioned NGOs is rather small with no more than 5 paid staff (69%), and an annual budget of up to 20.000 US\$ (53%) (see tables below). One has to note that the findings concerning core area of activity are not easily comparable as slightly different categories have been used in the two surveys and as the Klon/Jawor questionnaire allowed more than one answer. Nevertheless both surveys depict that the major share of NGOs in Poland are active in the

²⁶⁴ Approximately every 40th NGO that was according to the data in the database still active (and did reply to the last questionnaire of the Klon/Jawor survey) was selected.

field of social services, youth, culture and education. Also decentralization and local/regional development is a main area of activity of Polish NGOs.²⁶⁵ One has to note, however, that rather few NGOs active in ecology, science and concerned with issues of the mass media participated in our survey. Also the share of professional groups and organizations active in the area of “state, law and politics” is rather low.

The Slovak sample is based on the databank of the Slovak organization SAIA. One has to note that the database on NGOs provided by the Slovak NGO SAIA-SCTS is not a complete list of NGOs active in Slovakia. The database only includes those organizations that choose to register with SAIA. Consequently the database thus not fully represent certain types of organizations such as sport and hobby clubs. Unfortunately alternative data by the Statistical office is not available. All NGOs that had an e-mail address (400) have been selected. 92 valid answers have been received (23%). Again the portray given by our sample corresponds with the findings of the SAIA database. Most NGOs are located in the capital (although the DPP survey has a slight bias towards capital-based NGOs (44% instead of 35% in the SAIA database). The majority of NGOs focus on youth, culture and education (see for an interpretation of the SAIA statistics: Demeš (2001: 471pp). A detailed comparison of our findings and findings of SAIA is, however, not possible, as the SAIA statistics only allow a limited analysis.

Indicator 1: Number of Paid Staff of Polish NGOs

DPP Survey

up to 5	50	69%
up to 15	11	15%
up to 50	9	13%
up to 150	1	1%
up to 500	0	0%
up to 1500	0	0%
up to 5000	0	0%
more than 5000	1	1%
	72	100%

Klon / Jawor Survey 1997

up to 5	70%
up to 15	13%
up to 50	5%
up to 150	1%
up to 500	1%
up to 1500	0%
up to 5000	0%
more than 5000	0%

Source: BORDO (1998: 64)

²⁶⁵ The higher share of NGOs active in this area in our survey may well be due to the later date of the survey. The territorial reform of 1999 opened up possibilities for NGOs in this field. A tendency that NGOs concerned about decentralization and local development sprang up was already evident in the 1997 survey which noted that “the share of organizations connected with issues of regional development is ... clearly rising” (BORDO 1998: 60).

Indicator 2: Approximate Annual Budget (in US \$)**DPP Survey (Budget in the year 2000)**

0-5000	18	28%
5001-20.000	16	25%
20.001-100.000	15	23%
100.001-1.000.000	15	23%
over 1.000.000	1	2%
	65	100%

Klon / Jawor Survey 1997

0-3000	25%
3001-15.000	25%
15.001-30.000	14%
30.001-150.000	23%
150.001-1.500.000	10%
over 1.500.000	2%

Source: BORDO (1998: 69)

Indicator 3: Main Area of Activity of Polish NGOs (in %)**DPP Survey**

	core activity	further activity
support of the NGO-sector	3	19
social services	30	15
economic development	10	6
labour rights	0	2
state, law, politics	0	5
international issues, European Union	3	6
decentralization, regional / local development	17	8
ecology	1	3
human rights/minorities	3	6
women	1	2
media	1	0
science	3	6
professional group	3	5
youth, culture and education	24	19

Klon / Jawor Survey 1997

	core activity	further activity
education	41	27
health	34	7
social assistance	34	13
family, children, youth	24	23
arts, culture	19	7
regional / local development	15	10
sports	14	25
ecology	13	15
human rights	5	10
science	11	10
hobby	7	18
professional groups	7	5
media	6	10
religion	4	2
state, law, politics	6	4
problems of rural areas	3	4
construction	2	3
communication	2	3
public safety	1	2

Source: Bordo (1998: 59)

Table 26 Results of the Survey on NGOs in Poland and Slovakia in %

1. Location of organizations (per inhabitants)				
Poland (72)	> 1 Mio	> 450.000	450.000-100.000	< 100.000
	19	32	4	44
Slovakia (89)	Capital	> 100.000	100.000-80.000	< 80.000
	44	9	9	36

2. Year of foundation				
	before 1989	89-92	93-96	97-00
Poland (64)	6	38	23	33
Slovakia (90)	7	19	44	30

3. Do you publish annual reports?		
	Yes	No
Poland (58)	47	53
Slovakia (90)	57	43

4. Approximate budget in the year 2000 (in US \$) (65)					
	0-5.000	5001-20 000	20.001-100.000	100.001-1.000.000	> 1.000.000
Poland (65)	28	25	23	23	2
Slovakia (88)	27	28	30	14	1

5. Number of paid staff (72)				
	0-5	6 – 15	16 – 50	> 50
Poland (72)	69	15	13	2
Slovakia (92)	73	17	5	4

6. Number of volunteers					
	0	1-10	11-20	21-50	>50
Poland (72)	24	40	18	8	10
Slovakia (92)	16	41	12	13	17

7. Are active members of your organization in command of English?		
	Yes	No
Poland (72)	72	28
Slovakia (89)	72	28

8. At which territorial level are you mainly active?				
	Local	Regional	National	International
Poland (72)	33	36	22	8
Slovakia (91)	14	23	48	14

9. What is your main area of activity?				
	Poland		Slovakia	
	core activity (70)	further activity (65)	core activity	further activity
social services	30	15	19	11
youth, culture and education	24	19	32	20
decentralization, regional / local development	17	8	9	8
economic development	10	6	4	5
support of the NGO-sector	3	19	4	15
human rights/minorities	3	6	8	10
international issues, European Union	3	6	2	7
science	3	6	6	3
professional group	3	5	3	9
ecology	1	3	11	8
women	1	2	1	3
media	1	0	0	1
labor rights	0	2	0	0
state, law, politics	0	5	1	1

10. How do you assess your relationship with the following group of actors?								
	POLAND				SLOVAKIA			
	no relationship		existing relationship		no relationship		existing relationship	
	wouldn't be important	would be important	less important	very important	wouldn't be important	would be important	less important	very important
local and regional authorities (70/86)	19		83		26		74	
	0	19	10	73	5	21	44	30
political parties (71/84)	79		21		89		12	
	55	24	14	7	60	29	10	2
governmental authorities (70/87)	61		38		43		57	
	11	50	7	31	14	29	35	23
international NGOs (69/89)	49		51		35		66	
	1	48	6	45	8	27	33	33
international organizations (68/85)	79		21		68		32	
	19	60	3	18	22	46	18	14
foreign governmental agencies (65/86)	84		16		70		30	
	29	55	2	14	27	43	22	8
business (66/83)	61		39		76		24	
	9	52	6	33	40	36	16	8
Media (69/89)	30		70		18		82	
	4	26	6	64	6	12	47	35
other domestic non-governmental actors (69/87)	19		81		21		79	
	0	19	9	72	6	15	46	33

11. What do you think, why is a vivid NGO-Sector in your country important?						
	POLAND			SLOVAKIA		
	disagree	agree	fully agree	disagree	agree	fully agree
NGOs are important because they control state activities and constitute a countervailing power to the state. (67/90)	22	43	34	5	31	63
NGOs are important because they are more efficient in supplying public services than the state. (69/90)	4	16	80	3	33	63
NGOs are important because they guarantee citizen participation in the political process. (66/89)	33	32	35	17	43	40
NGOs are important because they function as important intermediaries between state and society. (70/90)	4	39	57	2	52	45
NGOs are important because they foster public discourse and provide a platform for public debate. (66/90)	9	47	44	0	34	66
NGOs are important because they help to overcome social conflict. (67/90)	15	39	46	13	56	31
NGOs are important because they foster democratic practices and values in society. (68/90)	1	16	82	3	24	72

12. What are in your opinion the main problems of NGOs in your country?						
	POLAND			SLOVAKIA		
	1- no problem	2 -relatively problematic	3 - very problematic	1 - no problem	2 - relatively problematic	3 - very problematic
lack of financial sources (68/90)	1	15	84	3	24	72
lacking governmental support (68/88)	3	26	71	7	47	47
deficient cooperation among NGOs and business (68/87)	7	31	62	20	40	40
deficient cooperation among NGOs and state institutions (68/87)	7	37	56	7	51	43
lacking philanthropic culture in your country (65/88)	8	40	52	9	46	46
unclear legal situation (70/87)	16	41	43	25	63	12
missing legal regulations (70/86)	19	31	50	20	65	15
Deficient cooperation among NGOs (70/86)	19	41	40	30	59	11
lack of international contacts (69/86)	16	42	42	41	44	15
lack of information about NGO-relevant topics (67/86)	15	48	37	34	59	7
lacking voluntarism (68/88)	18	47	35	16	55	30
lack of professional and qualified staff (65/89)	28	42	31	28	45	27
negative public opinion about NGOs (65/89)	52	37	11	40	49	10

13. Main reported donors (more than one possible)			
	POLAND		SLOVAKIA
no answer	15		
no donors	5		
Phare / European Commission	10	11%	
(Local) Business	11	11%	
Stefan Batory Foundation	16	20%	
Polish-American Freedom Foundation	5	4%	
Academy in Support of Local Philanthropy	4	5%	
USAID (US Embassy)	3	4%	
Local Administration / Government	8	10%	
Other Polish Foundation (Polish Children and Youth Foundation, Pastwowy Fundusz Rehabilitacji)	19	24%	
Other foreign donors	8	10%	
	79 reports on donors	100%	

13a. Number of reported donors			
	POLAND		SLOVAKIA
no report	15		
no donors	5	11%	
one reported donor	10	23%	
more than one reported donor	29	66%	
	44	100%	

13b. Ratio domestic to foreign sources of funding				
	POLAND		SLOVAKIA	
No reports	15			
No donors	5	10%		
Domestic sources only	22	42%		
Foreign sources only	6	12%		
Foreign + domestic sources	19	37%		
	52			

14. How many projects are funded by donor organizations annually?				
	0	1-3	4-10	More than 10
Poland (67)	6	42	46	6
Slovakia (89)	10	53	27	10

15. Why is the cooperation with foreign organizations important for you?								
Cooperation is important, as it provides the following:	POLAND				SLOVAKIA			
	not received		received		not received		received	
	not necessary	had been necessary	but not of importance	very important	not necessary	had been necessary	but not of importance	very important
expertise/consultancy (68/78)	39		60		43		58	
	1	38	1	59	18	24	37	21
institutional grants (67/73)	42		58		68		33	
	6	36	3	55	28	40	22	11
project grants (69/70)	36		64		47		53	
	4	32	3	61	14	33	26	27
networks/contacts (70/81)	23		77		24		77	
	0	23	1	76	4	20	30	47
training/workshops (69/86)	46		54		28		72	
	4	42	6	48	11	17	31	41
moral support (66/83)	50		50		24		67	
	21	29	12	38	16	18	33	34
protection from governmental arbitrariness (66/76)	71		29		63		37	
	53	18	2	27	47	16	21	16
assistance in applying pressure towards government (60/75)	83		17		55		45	
	75	8	2	15	31	24	29	16
cooperation is important as the foreign organization is a partner who strives for the same goals (68/87)	34		66		19		80	
	9	25	4	62	3	16	24	56
cooperation is important as one can profit from reputation of donor (63/77)	43		58		49		50	
	16	27	10	48	26	23	36	14

16. How do you describe your donors?						
Donor ...	POLAND			SLOVAKIA		
	Not the case	partially	Yes, in all cases	Not the case	partially	Yes, in all cases
... is an equal partner (48/72)	25	50	25	17	49	35
... ist mainly financier (51/72)	16	41	43	6	49	46
... is teacher (47/62)	53	36	11	47	40	13
... leaves necessary space concerning project design and implementation (44/71)	55	39	7	7	51	42
... is informed about the social and political problems in the country (47/70)	36	36	28	4	43	53

17. What are the main problems concerning the cooperation with the foreign donors?						
Donor ...	POLAND			SLOVAKIA		
	Not the case	Partially	Yes, in all cases	Not the case	partially	Yes, in all cases
... does not know enough about the country (48/70)	54	38	8	56	41	3
... lacks credibility (49/69)	88	12	0	88	7	4
... intervenes too much into projects (47/71)	64	28	9	51	39	10
... is too bureaucratic (51/72)	35	45	20	29	54	17
... is guided by his/her own interests rather than by a real interest in the goals of your organization. (49/74)	45	43	12	55	35	10
... prefers a few highly professional NGOs. The major share of NGOs has little chance to receive financial support. (49/71)	35	51	14	38	49	13

Table 27 Interpretation of Results

I. The Polish and Slovak NGO Sector in Comparison

According to the DPP survey the majority of Polish NGOs is active in the area of social services (30%), youth, culture and education (24%), decentralization (17%), and economic development (17%). Only 3% classify their main activity as “support of the NGO sector”, however a rather high amount of NGOs, namely 19%, see support of the NGO sector as a further important area (question 8). The majority of NGOs is rather small with less than five paid staff and an annual budget below 20.000 US \$ and relies to large extent on volunteers (76% of NGOs have volunteers) (questions 4,5,6). The survey also covered a rather high number of local NGOs. 44% reside in cities with less than 100.000 inhabitants and the majority (69%) reports that they are mainly active on the local and regional level (question 1, 8). The largest share of NGOs has been established between 1989-1992 (38%) (question 2).

In Slovakia most NGOs are active in the area youth, culture and education (32%) and social services (19%). In contrast to Poland, decentralization does not rank high on the agenda of Slovak NGOs (only 9% of NGOs active in this area), neither does economic development (4%). Instead, ecology with 11% of NGOs and human rights issues (8%) are important topics. 4% of NGOs aim to support the NGO sector, and 15% regard it as a further important area of activity. Similar to the Polish case, the Slovak NGO sector is shaped by small NGOs. 55% of Slovak NGOs have an annual budget below 20.000 US\$, 73% have up to five paid staff and 84% operate with volunteers. A remarkable difference between the two cases concerns the location of NGOs and their main level of activity. In contrast to Poland, most Slovak respondents are located in the capital (44%). Moreover, 48% report to mainly operate on the national level. A surprising share of 14% (Poland: 7%) even states the international level as their main field of operation. While in Poland, predominantly small and local NGOs were covered by the survey, in Slovakia capital-based and nationally operating NGOs prevail. A further difference between the cases concerns the year of foundation. In contrast to Poland, the largest share of Slovak NGOs has been established at a later time in the 1990s. Only 20% of the surveyed NGOs report to be founded between 1989-1992. The largest share (44%) started to operate between 1993-1996.

II. Self-Assessment of NGOs' Role and Situation

Question 10. Relationship with other Actors

One can note that Polish NGOs deeply distrust political parties. The majority of NGOs (79%) report that they have no contact to political parties. Moreover, the largest share of them (70%, 55% of total) do not regard such relations as important. The ones that hold contacts to

political parties largely assess them as less important (33% of the ones with contact, 14% of total). Concerning other domestic actors, Polish NGOs are least connected with governmental authorities and business. 61% of NGOs report to have no relationship with both. Half of them regret this. If international contacts are concerned, one has to note that the vast majority of surveyed NGOs have no contacts to foreign governmental agencies (84%), nor to international organizations (79%). As the majority (69%) reports to be mainly active on the local or the regional level, this is not surprising. More surprising is the large number of NGOs that report to hold contacts to international NGOs (51%). Moreover, such contacts are overwhelmingly assessed as very important (93% of total report that they are or were of great importance). Polish NGOs are well connected to local authorities, other non-governmental actors and the media. These are also the relationships valued the most. A vast majority (83%) holds contact to local authorities and assesses those as very important (88%, 79% of total). Additionally, NGOs that do not report to have contacts to local authorities regret this with no exception. A similar picture is presented by the relationships among NGOs; 81% hold such contacts and value them highly (89%, 72% of total), all of the ones with no such contacts wish for them. The same, although to a lesser extent holds true for the media (70% hold contacts, the ones who have not contact mostly desires them).

Also in Slovakia NGOs hold mostly contact to local authorities, the media and other NGOs. However, slightly less contacts to local governments are observable (74%), and those are also not that much valued than in Poland. In contrast to Poland, the number of NGOs having contact to governmental authorities is rather high (58%), and relatively well valued (41% with contacts regard them as very important). The deep distrust toward political parties is evident in Slovakia, too. Only 12% of NGOs report to engage in relationships with parties. Only 17% of those value those contacts as important. In Slovakia even less NGOs have contacts to business than in Poland (only 24%). Half of the NGOs without contacts wish for them. The surveyed NGOs are very well internationally connected, and much more so than their Polish counterparts. The majority, namely 66%, report relations with international NGOs. Additionally, nearly one third have contacts to international organizations (32%), and to foreign governmental agencies (30%).

Question 11: Role and Importance of NGOs

If Polish NGOs are asked why NGOs are important, major emphasis is given to the efficiency of NGOs (80% fully agree that NGOs are important as they are more efficient in supplying public services than the state). We can thus note that Polish NGOs are rather service oriented. Additionally, NGOs see their role as a "school for democracy". A vast majority (82%) fully agrees that NGOs are important because they foster democratic practices and values in society. Also the role of NGOs as intermediaries between state and society is regarded as

important (57% fully agree, 39% agree). In contrast, Polish NGOs are skeptical towards the participatory role of NGOs. One third of questioned NGOs disagree that NGOs guarantee citizen participation in the political process. Also the role of NGOs as a countervailing power to the state is assessed rather pessimistically. 22% disagree to this statement. There is also not much accord with the statement that NGOs foster public discourse and provide a platform for public debate. While Polish NGOs are pessimistic if it comes to questions of citizen participation and the countervailing of the state, they see their role mainly outside the state as service providers and transmitters of democratic values in society.

If we turn to the answers of Slovak NGOs we observe a slightly different picture. Major emphasis has been given to the role of NGOs in fostering democratic practices and values in society (72% fully agree, 24% agree). Also NGOs are regarded as important because they foster public discourse and provide a platform for debate (66% fully agree, 34% agree). The efficiency of NGOs is named only as the third important reason for NGOs (63% fully agree, 31% agree). In contrast to Poland, Slovak NGOs also stress the role of NGOs in countervailing state powers (64% fully agree, 31% agree). They also have a more optimistic view on NGOs as facilitators of public participation in politics (40% fully agree, 17% disagree). The role of NGOs in overcoming social conflict is, however, assessed rather pessimistically (31% fully agree, 13% disagree). Keeping the latest history of Slovakia in mind, and especially the role Slovak NGOs played in the elections voting Meciar out of office, the high accord to the countervailing power of NGOs is especially remarkable. It clearly shows that the experiences of Slovak NGOs with the SOS campaign and the OK98 campaign shaped their self-assessment and thus left a legacy.

Question 12: Main problems of NGOs

The majority of NGOs in Poland and Slovakia agree that the lack of financial resources is a major problem of NGOs in their countries. 84% in Poland and 72% of the Slovak NGOs consider the lack of financial sources as very problematic. In general, Polish and Slovak NGOs name the same problems with slight exceptions, Polish NGOs, however, judge their situation more pessimistically than the Slovak NGOs. The question on major problems of NGOs reveals especially the big frustration with the government among Polish NGOs. 71% judge the lacking governmental support as very problematic (47% in Slovakia). The lacking cooperation between NGOs and business is named as the third main problem by Polish NGOs (62%). In Slovakia, in contrast, the deficient cooperation with business does not rank as high on the agenda of main worries, only 40% name it as very problematic, 20% see a deficient cooperation with business as no problem for Slovak NGOs at all. Again the lacking cooperation with government is regarded as troublesome in both countries (56% of Polish and 43% of Slovak NGOs see it as very problematic), as is the lack of a philanthropic culture

in the country (52% and 46%). The unclear legal situation and a lack of legal regulations as well as a deficient cooperation among NGOs are matters of moderate concern in Poland. A substantial 40-50% of NGOs regard those issues as very problematic. In Slovakia in contrast, only between 11-15% agree that these are issues of major concern. 20-30% do not regard those points as problematic. A negative public opinion about NGOs is no issue in both countries.

III. Relationship with Foreign Actors / Donors

As was evident in question 10, Polish and Slovak NGOs have frequent contacts to international actors, in particular non-state actors. The following bundle of questions aims to investigate how Polish and Slovak NGOs assess the cooperation with foreign donors.

Question 15: Why is the cooperation with foreign organizations important for you?

Questioned on why foreign cooperation has been or would have been important, the majority of replying NGOs in Poland report that they received benefits from international organizations in the form of networks and contacts (77%), project grants (64%), expertise/consultancy (60%), institutional grants (58%), and training / workshops (54%). All these benefits have been highly valued by all NGOs no matter whether they received them or not. A share of 90% or more reported that the benefits had either been very important or would have been important. The picture looks different if one asked for “moral support”, “protection from governmental arbitrariness” or “assistance in applying pressure towards government”. These factors are obviously not regarded by Polish NGOs as important merits of international contacts. The bulk of NGOs (50%, 71% and 83%) reports that they did not receive such form of assistance. While moral support is nonetheless valued by 67% of NGOs, “protection from governmental arbitrariness” and “assistance in applying pressure towards government” is widely regarded as superfluous. The majority of NGOs (58%) see the foreign donor as a partner that strives for the same goals, a fact that is highly valued (87%). Also most NGOs agree that one can profit from the reputation of the donor organization (75%).

The picture looks rather different if Slovak NGOs are concerned. Firstly, one has to note that Slovak NGOs received less financial support in the form of institutional or project grants (only 33% of NGOs report that they receive institutional grants; 53% received project grants). Instead with 72% much more NGOs underwent training. “Network/contacts” and “expertise/consultancy” are on an equal high with 77% and 58% respectively. Slovak NGOs do not assess the received assistance as positive as the Polish NGOs did. The most valued benefits are the provision of “networks/contacts” which are considered as important by 66% of Slovak NGOs, the importance of having a “partner that strikes for the same goals” (73% of NGOs esteem the cooperation with foreign organizations for that reason), “project grants”

(60% valued them), and “training” (58% regard training as important). All other benefits are condemned as “unnecessary” by half or more of the NGOs covered.

Question 16: How do you describe your donor?

If asked not about the received benefits but the donor himself, the majority regards them mainly as financier (84% in Poland, 95% in Slovakia). Slovak NGOs tend to see their donors in a more positive light than Polish NGOs. Whereas 55% of Polish NGOs report that donors do not leave necessary space concerning project design and implementation only 7% of Slovak NGOs think this is the case. Similarly, 36% of Polish NGOs agree that their donors are not informed about the social and political problems in the country. Only 4% of Slovak NGOs put forward the same criticism. Still, 75% of Polish NGOs agree that some or all of their donors are equal partners. 84% of Slovak NGOs see at least some of their donors as equal partners.

If asked about the major problems of the cooperation with foreign donors it becomes, however, evident that in Poland as well as in Slovakia foreign donors are mainly assessed positively. Main criticism is put forward toward the bureaucracy of some or all donors (65% in Poland, 71% in Slovakia regard donors as too bureaucratic). The NGOs also largely agree that donors tend to prefer a few highly professional NGOs leaving the major share of NGOs with little chance to receive financial support (65% of NGOs in Poland; 62% of NGOs in Slovakia see this point confirmed at least if some of their donors are concerned). 55% of Polish NGOs put forward that donors at least partially are guided by their own interests rather than by a real interest in the supported organizations (45% of Slovak NGOs confirm this point).

Appendix 9 List of Interview Partners

Table 28 List of Interview Partners relevant for the Polish Case

Interview Partner	Organization		Date
Slawomir Nalecz	The Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project; Institute of Political Studies	expert	7.2.2001
Piotr Glinski	Polish Academy of Science	expert	21.2.2001
Roland Freudenstein	Konrad Adenauer Stiftung,	donor	9.2.2001
Hermann Bünz	Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Warsaw	donor	16.2.2001
Jan Saloni, Programme Manager	Cooperation Fund, Phare Civic Dialogue Program	donor	19.2.2001
Lidia Kolucka, Consultant	Ford Foundation, Warsaw	donor	26.2.2001
Izabella Rybka, Coordinator	Batory Foundation, NGO Program	donor	14.2.2001
Jakub Boratynski	Batory Foundation, European Program	donor	14.2.2001
Jacek Wojnarowski, Executive Director	Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe, formerly Executive Director Stefan Batory Foundation	donor	16.2.2001
Maldonorzata Naimska, Executive Director	Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)	recipient	14.2.2001
Urszula Doroszevska, Program Director	Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe (IDEE)	recipient	14.2.2001
Kuba Wygnanski, Director	Regardless of Bad Weather Foundation, (Klon/Jawor Database on Polish NGOs), Board member FIP, Batory,	recipient	15.2.2001
Lukasz Domagala	SPLIT	recipient	15.2.2001
Katarzyna Morawska	Fondation dla Polska, now Batory Foundation	recipient	19.2.2001
Katarzyna Wiechowska, International Officer	Wrzos (Working of Associations of Social NGOs)	recipient	23.2.2001
Renata Kozlicka	Regardless of Bad Weather Foundation (Klon/Jawor), European Program	recipient	22.2.2001
Agnieszka Mazur-Baranska	Forum Inicjatyw Pozarzadowych (FIP) (Forum for non-governmental initiatives)	recipient	26.2.2001
Krzysztof Stanowski,	Foundation for Education for Democracy	recipient	20.2.2001
Danuta Przywara	Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights	recipient	20.2.2001
Lidia Kuczmierowska	Civil Society Development Foundation	recipient	21.2.2001
Rosa Thun	Robert Schumann Stiftung	recipient	22.2.2001
Zbigniew Wejcman	BORIS (Service Büro der sozialen Organisationen)	recipient	22.2.2001
Piotr Jaworski, Coordinator	Institut for Public Affairs, European Programme	recipient	27.2.2001
Witold Monkiewicz, Board President	Foundation in Support of Local Democracy (FRDL)	recipient	28.2.2001
Pawel Lukasiak, Programme Director	Academy for the Development of Philanthropy in Poland	recipient	28.2.2001

Table 29 List of Interview Partners Relevant for the Slovak Case

Interview Partner	Organization		Date
Reinhardt Stuth	Director of the Prague office of the KAS between 1995-99	donor	12.10.1999 (Berlin)
Frank Spengler	Director of the Prague office of the KAS after 1999	donor	04.10.1999 (Prague)
Agáta Pešková	Konrad Adenauer Foundation, Bratislava	donor	13.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Maire Saša Linau	Director, ProFem, Czech Republic	Recipient	5.10.1999 (Prague)
Zdenka Mansfeldova	Institute of Sociology, Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic	expert	02/2002 (Berlin)
Katarína Košťálová,	Executive Director, Slovak Academic Information Agency – Service Center for the Third Sector	recipient	13.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Boris Strečanský	Executive Director, ETP Slovakia	intermediary	15.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Michal Petráš	Friedrich Ebert Foundation, local office Bratislava	donor	11.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Ivana Tóthová	Project Manager, Partners for Democratic Change Slovakia	recipient	12.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Michal Vašečka	Institute for Public Affairs, Program Manager	expert	14.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Oľga Gyárfášová	Institute for Public Affairs, Senior Research Fellow	expert	14.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Jarmila Svitekova	Department for International Development, British Embassy	donor	14.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Monika Holečková	Department for International Development, British Embassy	donor	14.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Katarína Vajdová	Director, Civil Society Development Foundation (CSDF)	donor	11.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Marek Jacoby	MESA 10	recipient	12.02.2002 (Bratislava)
Peter Pažitný	MESA 10	recipient	12.02.2002 (Bratislava)

Table 30 List of Interviewees in Germany

Interview Partner	Organization		Date
Arnold Wehmhörner	Department International Dialogue, Central and Eastern Europe, Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bonn	donor	22.2.2000
Uwe Optenhögel	Director International Cooperation, FES	donor	23.10.2001
H. Weber	Coordinator Poland, FES	donor	3.11.1999
Michael Dauderstädt	Coordinator Slovakia, FES	donor	3.11.1999
Dr. Rüdiger Pintar	International Dialogue, Department Central and Eastern Europe, FES	donor	3.11.1999
Michael Weichert	Projektleiter Regionalbüro Sofia, FES	Donor	5.11.1999
Jan Senkyr	Referatsleiter, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Department International Cooperation	donor	4.11.1999
Dr. Günter Dill	Referent Local Government, Konrad Adenauer Foundation	Donor	4.11.1999
von Hausen	Deutscher Landkreistag	donor	4.11.1999
Jürgen Henkel	Foundation for Economic Development and Vocational Training (SEQUA), Project Manager	donor	2.11.1999
Almut Thébaud	Director Department Planning and Management, Friedrich Naumann Foundation	donor	2.11.1999

Declaration

Hiermit erkläre ich, Christine Abele, an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation

“Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe – the Cases of Poland and Slovakia”

selbstständig verfasst habe und keine anderen als die angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel benutzt wurden.

Sämtliche wissentlich verwendete Textausschnitte, Zitate oder Inhalte anderer Verfasser wurden ausdrücklich als solche gekennzeichnet.

Christine Abele