

ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION
IN DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN UKRAINE

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Political Science, Concentration TransAtlantic Studies.

Chapel Hill
2008

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ABSTRACT

Heidi Mawby: Assessing the Role of the United States and the European Union in
Democracy Promotion in Ukraine
(Under the direction of Milada Vachudova)

Both the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) are involved in democracy promotion efforts across the world. This thesis examines how each employs its own approach for doing so, and how effective these approaches have been during two different phases of Ukrainian democracy. Although the approaches are complementary and both play a positive role for democracy in Ukraine, they have each been more effective in different phases. During Ukraine's latest transition phase, known as the Orange Revolution, the US "bottom-up approach," with its focus on free and fair elections as well as civil society, was more effective in helping the Ukrainians overcome their corrupt regime. The EU, with its "top-down" and integrative approach, is currently playing a more influential role in helping Ukraine consolidate its democratic gains.

To Mom, Dad, Charles, Colleen and Bastian: Your support and encouragement has brought me every step of the way.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis has only been possible thanks to those who have encouraged me and provided me with guidance along the way.

I would like to thank my thesis advisor Dr. Milada Vachudova especially. Her course, writings, and enthusiasm all inspired me to delve into this topic. Her support in my research was instrumental, as well. I would also like to thank Dr. Silvia von Steinsdorff at the Humboldt University for her encouragement and feedback.

My colleagues in the TransAtlantic Master's program were a strong support net, and enriched the entire year and thesis writing process.

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Introduction

For two major world actors, the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), democracy promotion plays a central role in foreign policy rhetoric and actions. Each spends approximately \$1.5 billion a year on such programs (McFaul, 2007), and both are currently investing enormous financial and technical resources around the globe in this pursuit. Although their goals are the same, their methods and approaches for encouraging democracy abroad vary considerably.

Encouraging democracy in the post-Soviet states situated between the eastern border of the EU and Russia is a priority for both. These are comparatively new states with fragile democracies. They are threatened not only by periodic domestic turmoil but also remain fairly dependent on the Russian Federation for energy and trade, and carry a legacy of authoritarianism from the Cold War period.

In this thesis, I will examine exactly how the United States and the European Union work to promote democracy in this region. Why and how do these strategies differ, and has one been more effective than another? I will investigate the case of Ukraine in order to uncover the effects of US and EU influence on two phases of Ukrainian democracy. The first is Ukraine's most recent moment of regime change or transition, known as the Orange Revolution which occurred in late 2004. The second phase is the period of consolidation which has succeeded it.

I argue that both the US and EU have had a positive influence on Ukrainian democracy in both phases. However, the US was more involved in the Orange

Revolution, whereas the EU plays more influential role in the current consolidation phase, and will likely continue to do so.

A comparison of the US and EU approaches to democracy promotion within a specific country is helpful because it demonstrates the strengths and weakness of each approach. It can also indicate how the approaches overlap, complement or conflict with one another, and can learn from one another. Ideally the approaches will complement one another without too much overlap.

Ukraine is an ideal case study in this region both because of its regional importance and internal dynamics. It is a major actor in Eastern Europe because it controls the major port of the Black Sea, it is a transit country for energy supplies to Europe, and because of its relations with neighbors such as Moldova and Belarus. But it is also politically divided, struggling with corruption and human rights violations, and must carefully balance its policies with the West as well as Russia. For all of these reasons, the US and EU are committed to democracy's success in Ukraine.

Understanding how and why democracy promotion efforts here have worked can help shape strategies for other post-Communist states as well as for other regions.

The rest of this thesis will be organized in the following way: first, I have to answer the broader question: "Why and how are the US and EU democracy promotion approaches in Ukraine different?" This will require an explanation of the history and development of democracy promotion efforts by both actors, followed by their characteristics. In this first section, I will establish that the US approach is generally designed to bring about a revolution, whereas the long-term nature and integrative aspect of the European approach is designed to help consolidate a democracy. Then I will turn

to Ukraine, and give a brief overview of its democratic trajectory from independence until today.

Building upon this knowledge, in the second part of this thesis I will answer the question, “How effective have each of these two approaches been in the Ukraine?” Starting with the factors that led to the Orange Revolution, I will describe how US and EU efforts directly or indirectly enabled domestic actors to topple the corrupt regime. I will demonstrate that although both played an important role, the US overall played a stronger role during the Revolution through its election-related activities and civil society support, as well its more forceful criticism of the regime.

To determine which actor plays a larger role in the current stage of democratic consolidation, I will look at their political and economic influences on Ukraine, and how both are viewed by elites and the population. In addition, I will assess the potential role that each actor can play in the future. Although both actors are effective in this context, I will argue that through the offer for deeper integration, the EU does play a larger role and will likely continue to do so.

The US and the EU do not carry out democracy promotion efforts in a vacuum, however, and therefore I will also briefly examine two other major external actors who play an influential role on Ukrainian democracy, Russia and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Especially in light of this summer’s conflict between Georgia and Russia, many fear that Russia is looking to reassert its control over the former Soviet region, and that its next “target” for destabilization is Ukraine. I will argue, however, that these fears are exaggerated and that Ukraine is likely to continue to consolidate democracy.

In the concluding section of this thesis, I will review how each approach has been useful to democracy in Ukraine, and I will speculate on how successful each one is likely to be in the future. In addition to offering some suggestions for improvement to both actors, I will also consider to what extent their efforts are complementary.

I. Democracy Promotion Approaches of US and EU: History, Characteristics, and Role in the Ukraine

Within democracy studies, the role which external actors can play in helping to establish a democracy is a neglected topic, for both theoretical and practical reasons. Theoretically, the prevailing consensus within the field focuses on the role of internal actors and conditions, and insists that the role of external actors is at the best marginal. In a practical sense, measuring the actual results of democracy promotion efforts is an “overwhelming, if not impossible task,” according to a report by the National Endowment for Democracy (Epstein, Serafina & Miko, 2007, p.17).

Despite these hurdles, however, there is evidence that democracy promotion can be effective, and much more research needs to be done to understand how, when, and why these efforts can make an impact. This is necessary not only for the field of democracy studies itself, but for a very practical reason as well- democracy promotion is now a major foreign policy goal of some international actors. These may spend substantial time and financial resources to encourage countries along their path to democracy, and research needs to ensure that these efforts yield results and are not counter-productive.

Laurence Whitehead, in the book *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Comparative Perspectives*, was one of the first to break with the accepted opinion that external actors played little to no role in democratic developments within a country. He detailed the different background and effects of the US and the (then) EC democracy

promotion efforts in Eastern Europe and in Latin America, and drew general distinctions between the two approaches. Interestingly, although his 1986 piece pre-dated the fall of communism, the existence of the European Union and its enlargement process, as well as the Iraq War, his analysis is still extremely relevant today.

It is difficult to precisely define how exactly the “US” or “EU” carries out democracy promotion, because there is a labyrinth of institutions, programs and funds involved in both actors’ work. There are NGO (non-governmental institutions), civil society initiatives, government-funded foundations (such as the German political foundations) as well as privately-funded run organizations, such as the Soros Foundation, among many others. In this thesis, I primarily focus on official government programs and actions by the United States and the European Union, as more private initiatives are involved on nearly every level with a range of goals.

Above all, it is important to remember that a democracy cannot take root without active and willing participation by the individual country, and domestic actors play the primary role in establishing or steering democracy. At best, external actors can play a secondary role.

In order to understand how the US and the EU’s general approach to democracy promotion efforts differ, this section will begin with a review of their individual development of democracy promotion. A general description and assessment of these two approaches will follow. Finally turning to Ukraine, I will briefly outline its steps towards democracy since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

History of Democracy Promotion in US and Europe

US

American and European democracy promotion approaches have grown from two very different histories and motives. The American experience has a longer history, and has from the beginning has often been associated with overthrowing an illiberal regime through violent means and helping build democracy in the aftermath.

US history in democracy promotion began with involvement in Spanish-American War in 1898, during which the ideal of Manifest Destiny played a large role. It was seen as a duty to export the American ideals and institutions of freedom (Whitehead, 1986), even through military means, if necessary. This tendency to employ democratization efforts after a military intervention only increased over time and with experience, and ultimately became a “pattern of American foreign policy” (Kneuer, 2007, p.17).

Democracy became an explicit part of the foreign policy rhetoric of many US presidents. President Woodrow Wilson led the country into the First World War in order “to make the world safe for democracy” (Whitehead, 1986, p. 4). President Franklin Roosevelt called for America to become the “arsenal of democracy” in December 1940, before the US entered World War II.

In the wake of World War II, Germany and Japan become examples of “guided democracies” which were led to democracy after a complete military defeat. It was the first time that the US used the military to support “rapid and fundamental societal transformation” (Dobbins et al, 2003, p.xiii). It was during this era that the US began to see democracy as a foreign policy objective. At America’s urging, it was mentioned in

many international treaties, such as the Truman Doctrine, the Final Act of Bogotá of the Organization of American States, and of course in the NATO treaty.

Democracy promotion obviously became a pivotal US goal during the Cold War. President John F. Kennedy engaged in its use because he “believed...that the United States had a unique capacity, as well as the duty or even destiny, to do good in the world” (Carothers, 1999, p.20). Unfortunately during this time, democracy promotion as an ideal was often in conflict with the preoccupation of countering the Communism’s spread. The legitimacy of this policy suffered when the US administration supported dictators in Latin America or in the Middle East.

After the Cold War, the US was the only remaining world superpower. The lack of archenemy or a future mission was lacking, known as a so-called “missionary gap.” President William Clinton’s enlargement doctrine partially filled this gap. In the *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, his administration declared that democracy promotion should be a main objective of US foreign policy in order to ensure peace, security and human rights (Epstein et al, 2007, p.8). His administration also frequently pointed out that democracies do not go to war against one another; his National Security Advisor Anthony Lake stated that: “The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement...of the world’s free community...We must counter the aggression- and support the liberalization- of states hostile to democracy” (Schraeder, 2002, p.115).

Under the presidency of George W. Bush, the democracy promotion ideology, even through military means, has reached its pinnacle. After September 11, the fight against terrorism has become the primary objective of the administration, which “asserts

that democracy promotion is a long-term antidote to terrorism” (Epstein et al, 2007, p.8). US-led invasions into Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 exemplify the administration’s firm belief in exporting democracy for national security. In 2007, President Bush affirmed that “the ideas and interests that led America to help the Japanese turn defeat into democracy are the same that lead us to remain engaged in Afghanistan and Iraq” (“Bush: history will prove,” 2007).

In perhaps the most ambitious theory related to democracy promotion, many in the Bush administration believed that the Iraq invasion would unleash a wave of democracy in the Middle East. According to this theory, toppling Saddam Hussein would allow the people to rise up and establish a free and democratic system of government. This was meant to set a powerful example for other countries in the region, and encourage people in the Middle East to demand democracy. This “democratic dominos” theory was expressed by former Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who said that Iraq would “cast a very large shadow, starting with Syria and Iran, across the whole Arab world” (Reynolds, 2003).

A lack of clear success in Afghanistan and Iraq might have dispelled such ambitious and idealistic plans for democracy promotion, and unfortunately many in the international community regard “democracy promotion” as synonymous with American use of military might. However, experts in the field defend democracy promotion as an essential US foreign policy objective, as long as appropriate lessons from recent experiences are taken to heart (Carothers, 2006).

EU

The EU itself is a rather new international actor, and as such it does not have such a long history of promoting democracy beyond its borders. But in the wake of World War II, democratic Western European nations desired stability and democracy in their geographic neighborhood. Unable and unprepared to use military strength (unlike the US); they developed a more peaceful incentives-based approach to dealing with anti-democratic regimes in neighboring countries (Whitehead, 1986). They developed a long-term approach which offered monetary, political and societal incentives in exchange for reform. This was achieved by creating certain institutions which held privileges and expanding membership only to countries which had met certain criteria.

The Council of Europe was founded in 1949 by ten Western European countries. This body “not only committed all its members to the rule of law, human rights, and fundamental freedoms, but ... provided for the suspension of member governments who violated these precepts” (Whitehead, 1986, p.5). Out of this core group grew a treaty which began the process of European integration.

The Treaty of Rome in 1957, which created European Economic Community (EEC), contained no explicit language requiring democracy (Whitehead, 1986). However, in 1962, as Franco’s Spain wished to join the EEC, a group of western European Socialists were determined to keep them out because of political reasons. They commissioned the Birkelbach Report, which laid out the EEC’s membership condition: “Only States which guarantee on their territories truly democratic practices and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms can become members of our Community” (Whitehead, 1986, p.21).

Although primarily directly against Spain, this new criteria also made it impossible for Portugal and Greece to join the newly established Community. All three were finally able to do so in the mid-1970s, after democracy was finally established in these countries. Although it is not clear that that democracy finally won out due to this refusal, it added to the pressure that the authoritarian governments faced (Kneuer, 2007). This therefore established the approach of withholding economic and political benefits from a country until they themselves had made democratic reforms, as opposed to the American approach of using military force.

As the EEC grew into the European Union, the lessons from southern Europe were kept in mind, and after the fall of communism in the Soviet Union, many East Central European countries immediately turned towards the European Union for support and for entry reassurances. In the next section, I will explain how the European Union was able to use this approach to successfully encourage many of these countries on their paths to consolidated democracies.

Two Different Approaches: Characteristics, Methods, and Advantages and Disadvantages

As I have described in the previous section, the US and the EU have developed two different approaches for promoting democracy abroad due to their different histories and challenges. In this section, I will explain the characteristics of each approach and give examples their programs and objectives. Finally, I will give a brief overview of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

US

The US democracy promotion approach can be summed up with the following: “topple the leader, pull down his statue, and let civil society take over” (Kopstein, 2006, p.2). According to this model, quickly after the old regime has been deposed (possibly through violent means), elections should be held. Through these elections, the will of the people will be expressed, and this allows democracy to grow from the bottom up.

The two key elements of this “bottom-up” (Kopstein, 2006) approach are free and fair elections and a strong civil society. This is where the bulk of US financial aid and effort is spent, and although the US employs a multitude of institutions to carry out its democracy promotion efforts, they primarily focus on these two objectives. In this model, civil society is one that is well-informed politically and is able to organize, and will be able to elect reformers and continue to do so.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) was created in 1983 to coordinate the efforts of all the political parties, unions, and business organizations in the field of democracy promotion abroad (Whitehead, 1986). The two main American political parties have their own organizations, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI), which are financed through government and private funds. Both of these institutes are involved in the Ukraine, with almost identical priorities. Both promote the development of political parties, civil society, election monitoring and parliamentary development (see sites of both institutions in bibliography).

Further US government support comes in the form of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This institution’s goal is to “increase citizens’ participation in elections and to improve democratic governance by strengthening

government institutions and various civil society organizations” (USAID website). In the Ukraine, for instance, its project for civil society, UCAN, supports hundreds of NGOs.

Two further projects aid democracy in the Ukraine. Since 1992 Ukraine has been a major recipient for the Freedom for Russia and Emerging Eurasian Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) Act. Ukraine has received three billion US dollars from this program, primarily to “promote political and economic reform and to address urgent humanitarian needs” (US State Department website). Since 2006, Ukraine has also had a “Threshold Program” treaty through the program Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). This program is targeted to receive \$45 million, and its goals are to fight corruption through civil society promotion and reform of the judicial branch.

Despite the fragmented nature of this aid, it is clear that American democracy promotion efforts in the Ukraine focus on elections and related activities. While the US spent \$28 million promoting democracy in the Ukraine in 2005 here (Brinkely, 2004), it spent more than \$18 million on election-related programs alone in 2003-2004 (McFaul, 2007). The other main focus of aid is building civil society.

EU

The European approach to democracy promotion in this region is more long-term in its view, and has in fact presided over “the most successful democracy promotion program ever implemented by an international actor” (Ekiert et al, 2007). It has done this through its unique process of integration and enlargement. By offering membership in return for substantial reforms, it has anchored countries to a democratic path. Because

this approach relies on countries adopting these reforms at the government level and offering institutional support, this is known as a “top-down approach.”

After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1989, East Central European countries such as Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia turned towards the European Union in their quest for economic prosperity and in order to “return to Europe.” Eight new members from East Central Europe were finally able to join the EU in 2004, followed by Romania and Bulgaria in 2007. Before they could do so, however, they were required to undergo a vetting process which has asked they undertake major reforms in democracy. The EU was able to require this by using conditionality and exerting passive and active leverage over these countries.

Before a country becomes an official candidate for membership, the EU exerts what Dr. Milada Vachudova terms “passive leverage” over the country in transition. This means that because the political and economic benefits of joining the EU are so great, and the cost of exclusion is also so high, the EU is able to exert pressure on the country in transition to reform.

Active leverage is comprised by the actual requirements the EU set up for membership, and refers to the Copenhagen criteria and the *aquis communautaire*. In 1993, a set of standard entry requirements was settled upon for new members at the Copenhagen Summit. These became known as the Copenhagen criteria, and in order to join the Union, they demand:

“democratic stability, rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities...” as well as “the existence of a functioning market economy...and the ability to take on the obligations of membership including adherence to the aims of the political, economic union” (Vachudova 2005, p.96).

In addition, countries wishing to join must sign up for the *aquis communautaire*, or the approximately 800,000 pages of laws and obligations that are needed to fulfill compatibility with EU laws and institutions. These are organized into thirty-one chapters, all of which take years for a country to adopt. In order to help prospective members achieve their targets, the EU offers financial transfers, technical training and exchanges. There are also regular reviews that detail their progress in thorough reports.

These requirements were non-negotiable for the aspiring members, and there was clear-cut conditionality involved: if the countries made the reforms and met the requirements, they would be awarded with membership. This process was therefore extremely transparent and demanded long-term engagement from both the new members as well as from the EU. It also relied on elites to lead reforms from the top and adopt EU policies which will then affect practices and trickle down to the rest of the country, known as a top-down approach.

On the eastern borders of the expanded EU, there are other countries struggling for democracy and which are interested in EU integration. However, due to internal political reasons, the EU enlargement is currently on hold, and future membership offers are likely to be difficult to obtain in the near future. The EU has now developed the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) as its main instrument to encourage democracy in its immediate periphery. Ukraine is one of deal with these countries included in the new ENP, and in Part II I will go over its effect on Ukraine further.

The ENP is composed of bilateral relationships between the EU and six countries in Eastern Europe as well as in ten Mediterranean countries. The program began in 2004, after the last big round of enlargement. Although it was clear that further enlargement

was far off, the EU realized that its technique of enlargement was the best way to promote democracy. It also did not want future possible members to be neglected until they were finally in a position to offer membership. Thus the ENP is a compromise “to remove lines of division and to render the dichotomy ‘EU accession: yes or no’ less dramatic” (Lippert, 2008, p. 6).

The ENP clearly tries to emulate the successful components of the enlargement process (Kelley, 2006, p.49). It retains the principle of conditionality, for example, although in a weaker and more flexible form (Kelley, 2006, p.35). In its action plans (which cover three to five years), it requires reforms from neighboring countries in return for increasing incentives from the EU. Action plans are tailored to each neighboring country’s specific needs and requirements. Reforms required are both general and specific, and include political, social and economic aspects (Grant, 2006). The incentives listed are generally: “a stake in the EU’s internal market, opportunities to participate progressively in EU policies and programs, reduction of trade barriers, increased financial support, participation in cultural and exchange programs, and deepening economic and political relations” (Kelley, 2006, p.37).

Although in its founding document the ENP only mentions democracy in a footnote (Beichelt, 2007), the ENP’s goal is to promote democracy through political stability, economic development and human rights by encouraging closer ties with the EU. This is indeed a very-long term goal, and focuses on making a country reform its own institutions, which is the defining characteristic of the EU’s top-down approach to democracy promotion.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Approach

Both the US bottom-up approach and the European top-down approach have strengths and weaknesses, and both are more suited to different stages of democracy promotion. The US focus on elections and civil society generally make it best for bringing about a transition, whereas the long-term European integration model is best equipped to help with democratic consolidation.

The US approach is rather unpredictable, short-term, and impersonal (Whitehead, 1986). Often a certain U.S. administration chooses a country to be its “showcase” democracy, for which it offers political and economic rewards for reform. However, this reward often comes in the form of lump-sum payments, which only rewards short term behavior and holds no incentive for politicians and parties to fundamentally change their governance or the way they contest elections. Because there is also no certainty that another administration will also support this country, this system lacks stability for domestic actors. The multitude of actors and institutions, each with their own budget and objectives, also makes the US approach less “visible”, and runs the risk of considerable overlap.

The fixation on holding elections can backfire if a country is not prepared to do so, and can produce counterproductive results. Examples of this include US-backed elections in Lebanon in 2005, which brought US-labeled terrorist group Hezbollah to power, and similar results in the West Bank in 2006 with the victory of Hamas. The ink-stained fingers of Iraqis indicating their first election after the US invasion only serve as a sad reminder of this fact, as these elections have not brought stable democracy to the country. Even if a country is ready to hold elections, democracy is more than just

holding free and fair elections, which this policy neglects to consider (as Robert Dahl has stressed in his multiple works on polyarchy).

The bottom-up approach seems best equipped in helping create a transition away from authoritarianism, because of its emphasis on a strong and educated civil society and strict rules for power change in elections. However, in terms of helping a democracy consolidate, this does not seem as effective as the EU approach.

The EU, with its strategy of enlargement and using conditionality to encourage long-term change and reform in a country, is more suited for a long term commitment to democracy rather than causing a transition.

Its enlargement and now ENP program is one clear-cut program, which is transparent and based on mutual obligation- reform in exchange for incentives. The ENP is tailored to each country's needs, and progress is regularly reviewed with reports.

However, this approach has a limited reach, as it only extends to reform-eager countries on its periphery (Belarus is excluded from ENP), and it has the most influence and effect on countries which are dependant on the EU's security and economic policies (Bendiek, 2008, p.31). Many doubt whether countries will be motivated enough to make reforms without the ultimate reward of membership (O'Donnell & Whiteman, 2007). As withholding this ultimate carrot isn't available to the ENP, the EU's only recourse to deal with failure to reform is to "name and shame" them.

In conclusion, the US approach, with its focus on elections and bottom-up civil society influences, is better designed for short term democratic gains such as revolutions. In contrast, the EU approach is better-equipped with helping a country consolidate their

democracy. In Part II of this thesis, I will demonstrate that this has been the case in Ukraine as well. But first, I will give a brief history of democracy's progress in Ukraine.

Overview of Ukraine since 1991

Seventeen years after independence from the Soviet Union, Ukraine's democratic progress is listed as undergoing consolidation (Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2008). Ukraine seems now finally on the path to democracy after a short but difficult history which for a period of time even saw an increasing authoritarian tendency. In this section, I will briefly sketch its democratic trajectory. This will build a foundation for Part II, in which I will examine how the US and the EU have influenced Ukraine's democracy.

Ukraine was the first country to succeed from the Soviet Union, having declared its independence in December 1991 (Karatnycky, 2005). However, this was not a "people's revolution" as seen as in some east central European countries such as Czechoslovakia and the German Democratic Republic, but rather more typical of a "palace coup" regime change, which also occurred for example in Bulgaria and Romania, and in which many of the old elites were able to cling to power (Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2008).

During the incumbency of Ukraine's second president Leonid Kuchma (1994-2005), Ukraine's democracy regressed. Corruption grew, and Kuchma dominated the semi-presidential system of government. Especially during his second term, Ukraine saw an increasing tendency towards authoritarianism. In the presidential election of 2004, Kuchma supported Viktor Yanukovich from the Party of Regions, who represented more the eastern and Russian-speaking part of Ukraine. He was running against former prime

minister and economic reformer Viktor Yushchenko (Karatnycky, 2005), who led the Our Ukraine coalition. Yushchenko was not only subjected to an election campaign which was almost universally criticized as unfair, he was also the victim of a poisoning which has left his face scarred (“Tests confirm Yushchenko,” 2006).

Despite this, Yushchenko was shown to be leading in the exit polls, until election fraud ensured that Yanukovich was declared the winner. This event sparked off what became known as the Orange Revolution, in which millions of ordinary Ukrainians protested in the streets, waving the orange banners of the Our Ukraine coalition. Seventeen days later, the Ukrainian supreme court annulled the election results. New elections were held in December, after which Yushchenko was rightfully declared the third president of independent Ukraine. He acknowledged the success of the people’s revolution by declaring, “We are free. The old era is over. We are a new country now” (Karatnycky, 2005).

Since the Orange Revolution, however, Ukraine has been plagued by political turmoil, and is currently experiencing the break-down of its third government. In September 2005, less than a year after Orange, Yushchenko dismissed the government headed by his former Orange ally, Yulia Tymoshenko. He was then forced to form a coalition with former opponent Yanukovich, who then became prime minister. After this government also failed, Tymoshenko became prime minister once again in December 2007. This reunion has also been strained, however, and public disputes as well as Tymoshenko’s obvious desire to run for president in 2010 led many to suspect that the government would be dismissed yet again. Disagreement over Ukraine’s reaction to

Russia's military action against Georgia this summer was the final straw ("Timeline: Ukraine," 2008). New elections have officially been called for December of this year.

Ukraine enjoyed special relations with both the US and the EU even before the Orange Revolution, although both have sought to deepen ties since. Although an ENP plan for Ukraine was being negotiated even before the end of the Kuchma regime, it took on special urgency afterwards. Ukraine was the first eastern European country to get an ENP plan from the EU (Fischer, 2008, p.2), and since 2007 there has been a new *Enhanced Treaty* for Ukraine with the ENP. The first priority for the ENP in Ukraine was "further strengthening the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law" (European Commission, 2005).

Some of the requirements for Ukraine are rather broad, while others are fairly specific, such as implementing recommendations from the "UN Committee of the Rights of the Child of 2002, as well as joining the Council of Europe Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO)" (Kelley, 2006, p.33). For cooperation and reform, the EU is to offer "the possibility for Ukraine to participate progressively in key aspects of EU policies and programmes" (European Commission, 2005), such as an EU-Ukrainian free trade zone.

In response to the colored revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, the US has pushed to bind these countries to the West as well. It is doing so especially by pushing for their entry into NATO, which would bring their security under the transatlantic alliance. I will discuss implications of Ukraine's NATO bid in more depth in Part II.

In Part I, I have explained both US and EU approaches to democracy promotion, establishing that US efforts are better designed for bringing about a transition, while EU aid is better for longer-term consolidation of democracy. I have also given a brief introduction to democracy in the Ukraine, which will serve as a foundation for in-depth analysis in Part II.

II: Assessing US and EU Approaches

Having thus far established the basic facts about US and EU democracy promotion efforts and Ukraine's democratic history, I will now look how US and EU support has impacted Ukraine. Is it correct to conclude that American support was more geared toward helping the Orange Revolution, and that the Europeans are doing more to help consolidate democratic gains there, or is this an oversimplified view? In Part II, I will uncover exactly how the US and the EU have helped to aid democracy in the Ukraine, and at what stages they have done so.

The Orange Revolution: a Triumph for American Democracy Promotion Alone?

As many experts are quick to point out, the Orange Revolution in the winter of 2004 was a triumph of the Ukrainian people, not the result of an outside coup and not the complete end effect of foreign aid, either. However, there are external factors that contributed to the strengthening of certain opposition forces as well as to the weakening of the illiberal regime under President Kuchma. Diplomatic pressure on the regime, as well as election-related activities and civil society efforts played a major role in the lead-up to and during the Orange Revolution. Although both the US and the EU were engaged in these efforts, the "United States was clearly the more active Western contributor to international efforts in Ukraine during the 2004 presidential election" (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006, p.134).

On the diplomatic level, both the United States and Europeans remained engaged with both sides before and during the revolution; however, the United States took a stronger tone and involved more of its “heavy-hitters” earlier in the game, and was willing to employ “sticks.” In the run-up to the election, American policy heavyweights including Madeleine Albright, Richard Holbrooke and Henry Kissinger all made clear statements warning the Kuchma administration against tampering with the votes. On September 15, Congresswoman Dana Rohrabacher submitted a bill titled “Ukraine Democracy and the Election Act of 2004,” listing various sanctions if the elections did not go well (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006). These included banning Ukrainian officials and family from traveling to the US, seizing their bank accounts and assets, and forbidding loans to them.

As the crisis unfolded, the US employed high-level actors and issued stronger “sticks” in response. President Bush personally wrote a letter to President Kuchma during the Revolution stating that the US would reconsider its relationship with Ukraine if the protests were not heeded, and he sent his personal representative Senator Richard Lugar to deliver the message (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006). Secretary of State Colin Powell’s condemnation of the fraudulent vote was also read to the crowd to great applause (McFaul, 2007). Powell made it clear that only a re-vote was acceptable, and that the crisis was jeopardizing US-Ukrainian relations.

The EU played a more subdued diplomatic role in the run-up to and initial stages of the crisis. In July 2004, the Commission noted that if the election did not go well, it might decide to bar it from the first round of ENP plans (Kelley, 2006, p.41). However, this did not equal the forcefulness of US statements.

EU reaction was also split between the old members and the new Central European members. The new members, such as Poland and the Baltic states, were immediately alarmed by the fraud and offered their support to the Ukrainian opposition (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006). “Polish president Aleksandr Kwasniewski, who was working with a European Union delegation to mediate the crisis, also used his contacts with the regime to discourage the use of force” (McFaul, 2007, p. 71) as protestors gathered in the square. Lech Walesa, the former Solidarity leader in Poland, assured the crowds that “the West was on their side” (McFaul, 2007, p.79).

It was only near the end stage of the crisis that the EU dispatched high-ranking officials to mediate the crisis, at a time when the United States deliberately remained absent in order to minimize antagonism. During the mediation among Kuchma, Yushchenko and Yanukovych, Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski, Lithuanian president Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania and EU diplomatic chief Javier Solana were involved (McFaul, 2007).

There were many factors by external actors that aided Ukrainians during the Orange Revolution, but these can generally be broken down into two components: aid to election-related activities and to civil society. In this, the “United States also contributed more financial and technical support” (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006, p. 134).

The US had contributed \$18 million towards election-related activities in Ukraine from 2003-2004 (McFaul, 2007), while the EU spent only 1 million Euros for technical assistance in projects relating to elections (Kempe & Solonenko, 2005). This included opposition training and exposure of election fraud. A united opposition was a key element during Orange, and both the American IRI and NDI had devoted years of

training to all political parties in Ukraine. They had also both increased the visibility and legitimacy of Yushchenko through their extensive contacts and networks. Much of the technology and know-how used by domestic civil society organizations and NGOs to uncover election fraud was contributed by NDI and other American efforts (McFaul, 2007).

Civil society played an essential role during the revolution through the media and popular mobilization, which was indirectly supported by external actors. Many members of the media which independently covered the campaign and protests had had extensive contact and had cooperated with American institutions, such as USAID and the National Endowment for Democracy. Active civil society groups such as the youth organization Yellow Pora had been influenced by contacts with more experienced from other regions in Europe, which was facilitated by a number of Western organizations groups (McFaul, 2007, p. 78). They had also received training funded by USAID and other Western foundations.

It is important to mention here that after the Orange Revolution, many questioned the nature of the US democracy promotion aid during the election. Members of the US Congress, Russian officials, as well as some Ukrainian observers inquired whether “the \$58 million the United States spent to promote democracy over the past two years was actually intended to oust the government there” (Brinkley, 2004). Foreign governments are not permitted to fund partisan activities, and many were concerned that US aid focused on bringing Yushchenko to power or played too direct a role in the Orange Revolution. However, none of these claims have ever been verified, and most experts (including Michael McFaul) insist that this was never the case (McFaul, 2007).

In this section, I have so far demonstrated that the US played a larger role in influencing Ukraine's Orange Revolution. However, I must also consider how much Ukraine's desire to join the EU might have also played a role. There is an obvious Western and EU orientation in Ukraine, which might have also restrained the hand of those trying to hold on to power at any cost. This desire to one day join the EU might have ultimately helped the Orange Revolution.

Although Ukraine has not been offered a membership perspective, Ukraine still regards itself as a credible future member of the EU. The EU has been careful to avoid using language that extends an explicit or too implicit membership, but instead has talked of partnership and cooperation.

However, as Ukraine considers itself a possible future member of the EU, this desire could have contributed to some of the successful elements during the revolution. According to Dr. Vachudova, it is possible that through this desire, the EU was already able to exercise two types of leverage.

The first is that the pro-Western (Orange) forces were able to overcome their divided nature and unite on a "pro-West agenda." This means that the possibility of one day joining the EU creates a "focal point for cooperation" (Vachudova, 2006, p. 31). This was displayed by the cooperation of the Orange bloc's leaders and platforms for closer relations with the West.

The second way in which prospective membership can affect countries pre-breakthrough is by encouraging adaptation, or "adapting their political and economic agendas to come closer to satisfying the expectations of the EU and other international organizations" (Vachudova, 2006, p. 31). Adaptation to EU standards probably occurred

on many levels, but one obvious sign is that Yushchenko, in negotiations with Kuchma and Yanukovich, agreed to make changes to the constitution which would make it more transparent and less dominated by the president (McFaul, 2007), thus bringing the constitution more in line with international and European standards.

As I will reiterate in the next section, there is a consensus among the Ukrainian elite and population to increase ties with the West and join the European Union. Because of the large potential economic and political benefits associated with joining the EU, no major political actor is against EU integration (Wolczuk, 2004). This EU orientation played a role in avoiding bloodshed and overturning the fraudulent vote.

However, the desire to join the EU must be regarded as a “guideline rather than a milestone” in achieving a democratic transition (Kempe & Solonenko, 2005, p. 17). Overall, the US was “the most active contributor to international efforts in Ukraine in terms of consistency, allocated assistance, and readiness to implement radical measures if democracy failed” (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006, p.141). During the Orange Revolution, the US bottom-up approach did in fact contribute more to the democratic transition than the EU.

Long-Term Stability and Consolidation: Is Only the EU Able to Make a Difference?

In this section I will look at how the consolidation of Ukraine’s democracy has developed since the Orange Revolution, and how the US and EU approaches are assisting. In order to do so, I will examine both actors’ political and economic relations with Ukraine, and consider views by elites and the population. Because democratic consolidation would take years to complete, it is important to also assess which actor has

the right methods to encourage further consolidation. I will conclude that thus far, the EU is taking the lead in consolidation, but the US has played an almost equal role. However, I predict that this gap will continue to widen and that the EU will play the leading role in helping Ukraine consolidate its democracy in the future. Assuming that the ENP Action Plans are followed through, and considering the challenges remaining for Ukraine's consolidation, I will conclude that EU efforts will make more of an impact in the future.

Politically, both the US and the EU exert political influence on Ukraine's democracy, although generally the EU is able to exert more influence through its ENP program. The US focuses on aiding civil society, and as I demonstrated in Part I, this played a large role in Ukraine's democratic transition. As this aid continues and civil society grows more robust, this will certainly help consolidate democracy.

However, with its top-down approach, the ENP is able to exert more leverage. It does this by requiring that Ukraine undertake very specific reforms in return for incentives. In its action plan for Ukraine, there are six chapters covering a range of issues, from elections to company laws to nuclear waste. This process basically requires Ukraine to adopt much of the *acquis communautaire*, which have helped other Eastern European states consolidate democracy and could ultimately make Ukraine's entrance into the EU easier. In order to adopt the reforms required by the action plan, a "Road Map on the Implementation of the AP" was drafted under Tymoshenko's first government in 2005. Later adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers, it lists 350 concrete measures which need to be implemented by certain deadlines (Wolczuk, 2008). This process, although lacking some of the framework necessary to push through the reforms,

is an example of how the ENP requires countries to internalize their own reforms. This is ultimately how the EU is able to exert more political leverage over Ukraine.

Both the US and the EU are also helping to stabilize Ukraine's democracy through economic relations. They have both supported Ukraine's WTO (World Trade Organization) membership, promoted foreign direct investment in Ukraine, and have increased trade relations with Ukraine. Due to its geographical location as the world's largest market on Ukraine's border, as well as its ENP program, the EU has a potentially bigger role to play.

This year Ukraine finally became a member of the WTO, which is seen as a positive step towards increasing trade between Ukraine and the EU and US. This is also seen as a prerequisite step if Ukraine is ever to join the EU. This step will not only increase Ukraine's economic development, but it will also encourage even further reforms for Ukraine's economy (Shumylo, 2006, p.4). Both the United States and the European Union supported this important step for Ukraine.

Foreign direct investment is an important economic support for Ukraine, and here the EU and US both play large and constructive roles. "The EU is by far the largest foreign investor in Ukraine with its growing share every year (71.7% by the end of 2005). FDI flow from EU 25 amounted to €5.5 billion in 2006 compared to just above €230 million in 2003" (European Commission, 2008). The US also plays a large role here, in sixth place in terms of amount of FDI (Wolowski, 2008). It seems likely that these trends will continue, and that FDI from both the EU and US will grow. Newsletters for InvestUkraine, the promotion agency responsible for coordinating FDI into Ukraine, constantly lists programs and cooperation that the US and EU organize for them. One

example is a recent tour organized for Ukrainian economic experts to visit Czech Invest. Czech Republic has been the most successful East European country attracting FDI, and this tour was sponsored by USAID.

Trade with the EU has grown and will continue to anchor Ukraine's position as a democracy with free markets. "The enlarged EU has replaced Russia as Ukraine's primary trade partner, accounting for 32.5% and 29.3% of its external trade share in 2003 and 2004" (Shumylo, 2006, p.3). A free trade zone is one of the goals of the ENP Enhanced Agreement, and in order to increase trade volume with the EU, Ukraine would require "progressive convergence to Internal Market rules, coupled with stepped-up consultation and cooperation, and an adaptation of institutional practices to EU standards" (Fantini & Dodini, 2005, p.64).

Fantini and Dodini contend that countries completing the demanded reforms to join the EU could expect to see some of the large economic growth which has followed former enlargements. Other countries undergoing the enlargement process have seen an average increase of 1.5% to 8% of GDP new members. Fantini and Dodini generally conclude that "the ENP has a potential to foster economic growth in neighbouring countries" (2005, p.72).

Although an important and growing trade partner for the Ukraine, the US cannot compare to the EU's importance in this area. It is also currently working on a free trade zone with Ukraine, but even if this would succeed, it would probably not require the same commitment to reform that the EU does. Overall, I have demonstrated that the EU is in a better position to encourage democratic consolidation in Ukraine through its economic importance.

As I briefly mentioned in Part I, there is a strong consensus among Ukrainian political elites for European integration. In fact, they are the driving force in the quest for EU membership (Wolczuk, 2004). Ukraine was the first post-Soviet state to declare intention its of joining EU, and it has been the stated goal of every president of the Ukraine, including Kuchma. This pursuit had a new sense of priority after Yushchenko's election, and one of his first moves was to assign his close aid and former chief of staff, Oleh Rybachuk, to head up the important Ministry of European Integration.

Before the implementation of the ENP agreement in 2004, Kataryna Wolczuk was convinced that Ukrainian elites had embraced EU membership publicly, but remained unwilling to undergo the high costs of Europeanization and reforming institutions and policies (Wolczuk, 2004). Although she is skeptical whether or not the ENP is strong enough to cause reforms, she does claim that it has helped change the discourse about joining the EU. She argues that the elites now seem aware that they will have to be willing to undertake major reforms. They also understand that Europe means not just moderization and a better economic outlook, but that it includes norms, standards and values as well.

It is clear that the Ukrainian political elites are united on one thing: the importance of joining the European Union. If these elites are willing to undergo tough reforms in order to do so, this gives the EU room to insist that they adhere to the rules of democracy and eschew authoritarian tendencies.

The leaders' sentiments echo those of the population at large, which overwhelmingly support EU entry (Copsey, 2007). In one 2003 survey, 93% of the Ukrainian population thought that entering the EU would be beneficial for Ukraine

(Wolczuk, 2008). In the parliamentary elections in 2006, all major campaigns were for EU membership (Copsey, 2007), and the results demonstrated that people were unhappy with the slow pace of reforms, according to Kataryna Wolczuk (2006). This indicates a readiness among the population for reform, and should give the elites permission to make steps towards the EU, including democracy reform.

When considering how far Ukraine still has to go in its consolidation, the EU is in a position to exert more leverage for reform. Pawal Wolowski suggests that Ukraine's major impediment to consolidation is a weak state, which is caused by three factors. First, the legal system and constitution need to be reformed, which is evident yet again as Ukraine enters another constitutional crisis. Secondly, the party system is out of touch with local voters, does not provide transparency or opportunities, and does not represent important issues. Finally, there is a too-close link between politics and business, with many oligarchs playing a powerful role in politics, leading to wide-spread corruption (Wolowski, 2008).

These obstacles must all be overcome by the Ukrainians themselves, but there are ways that both the EU and the US can assist, each playing to its own strengths and approach. Although there is little either can do on the first issue, the EU could make an effort to insist that a new Ukrainian legal system should adhere to EU standards, so that it will be easier for it to integrate in the future. In order to address the second issue, both the US and EU can play a hand in helping the party system develop. Already NDI and IRI are involved in civil society programs in the Ukraine, and party development could become one of their explicit priorities. German political foundations abroad (Friedrich Ebert and Böll Foundations, for example) could do the same. In terms of the business-

political ties, the US could target more of its money towards reducing corruption, with conditional aid for reaching benchmarks. Its civil society programs could train in this as well. The EU could add this to the ENP Enhanced Agreement, and also provide technical advice by bringing experts and bureaucrats to monitor this.

In this section I considered what impact the US and the EU have had politically and economically on democratic consolidation in Ukraine. I have also looked at the Ukrainian elites and population to determine how they view the European Union. I have proved that the EU has played a marginally bigger role in consolidation so far, but I explained why I expect that the EU will soon take the lead, based on projections for the ENP's success as well as the particular challenges facing Ukraine.

Other Major External Actors in the Ukraine

The United States and the European Union are not the only international actors who have influence on Ukrainian internal politics and goals. In this section, I will focus on two other external actors which could influence democracy's path in the Ukraine: the Russian Federation and NATO.

The Russian Federation has a number of close ties to Ukraine. In the section below I will address how these ties affect Ukrainian democracy, often constraining its democratic path. Especially in light of this summer's conflict between Georgia and Russia, many fear that Russia is looking to reassert its control over the former Soviet region, and that its next target is Ukraine. I will argue that despite these negative influences and threats, these fears are exaggerated and that Ukraine is likely to continue to consolidation.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is a political-military institution which offers security incentives for its members. NATO expanded into east central Europe after the fall of the Soviet Union, and requires aspiring members to undergo some reforms in order to join. Ukraine has applied for membership and is involved in some of NATO's actions. However, in light of low approval ratings in the population as well as recent tensions with Russia, it remains unclear when or if Ukraine will join the alliance, and whether it will have an impact on democracy.

Russia

Russia figures large into Ukrainian domestic politics, with substantial results on democracy there. Russia influences Ukraine for a number of reasons: historical ties, a large number of Russian-speaking minorities and regions in the east, geographical proximity, energy security, economic influence and its engagement with the entire region. I will briefly review all of these influences here, to demonstrate how Russia does play a large role in Ukraine, and does so to the detriment of democracy. Especially recent events on Russia's behalf in breakaway regions of Georgia threaten peace and security in the region, as well as Ukrainian democracy. However, I tentatively forecast that if the US and EU are able to manage the situation well and keep Ukraine on the right path, there is no reason that recent events should unravel democratic gains in Ukraine.

Ukraine became a member of the Soviet Union in 1922, and during this era it played a vital role: it was known as the "breadbasket," and it was also its heart of heavy industry. When Ukraine declared independence in 1991, this officially signaled the break-up of the Soviet Union. 17.3% of Ukraine's population is ethnically Russian, and

25% of the population is Russian-speaking (CIA World Factbook, 2008). This is predominantly the case in the eastern half of the country which borders Russia. This segment favors closer ties with Russia, and is deeply skeptical of NATO.

“Russia’s involvement in the Ukrainian presidential election in Oct and Nov 2004 is widely viewed as the Kremlin’s greatest foreign relations blunder since 1991” (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006, p. 145). In the run-up to the Orange Revolution, Russian president Vladimir Putin supported Viktor Yanukovich, who was Kuchma’s hand-picked successor. When the fraudulent voter activities as well as with Moscow’s knowledge and support were exposed, Putin looked discredited. “The problem is not that Kremlin gambled on a candidate who lost, but that the Kremlin’s involvement was so conspicuous and crude” (Sushko & Prystayko, 2006, p. 145).

Putin struck against the democratic Orange government a few months after the election. Remarking that he wasn’t interested in providing the Orange forces with cheap gas, he demanded a drastic price increase from \$50 per 1.000m³ to \$250, the actual market price (Woehrel, 2008). Until that point, the Ukraine had benefited from highly subsidized prices from Russia’s state-run Gazprom, which supplied 80% of Ukraine’s oil consumption and 78% of their gas consumption in 2004 (Woehrel, 2008). When Yushchenko refused the price, Gazprom shut off supplies. Ukraine is a major transit country for western Europe, and when Ukraine began to siphon off some of the supplies earmarked for western Europe, Gazprom was forced to end the blockade. This event, right after the ascent of democratic rulers and in defiance of Putin’s support, demonstrates that Russia is unsettled by democratic movements in Ukraine, and that it is willing to act against such actions.

As I will describe in the next section, Russia does not approve of the prospect of Ukraine joining NATO. It is not clearly opposed to its entry into the EU, as it views the EU as mostly an economic union. However, it does offer some integration alternatives of its own to Ukraine, such as the Common Economic Space, which offers lower energy prices and reduced tariff barriers and includes Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan (Wolczuk, 2004). Russia holds also financial influence over Ukraine due to trade and investments considerations. While these are not as large as US and European ties, they are nonetheless influential. According to official data, Russia is the seventh largest foreign investor in Ukraine, and buys 25% of its products. Ukraine imports 29% of all its products from Russia (Wolowski, 2008).

All of these factors demand that Ukraine maintain good ties with Russia, and so Ukraine's political leaders try to strike a balance between Russia and the West. However, recent events have threatened to unsettle this delicate balance. In August 2008, the Russian military marched into parts of sovereign Georgia as a reaction to Georgia's attacks on the separatist region South Ossetia, and sent ships there from its Black Sea Fleet, which is based in Sevastopol on Ukraine's territory. Ukraine, in response, declared that it was considering terminating its agreement with Russia over the use of the Crimea. When the US sent aid ships to this region, much of the Crimean population, including ethnic Russians and Muslim Tartars, became alarmed and began to protest for the independence of Crimea (Gee, 2008). Many experts are concerned that violence and tension from the situation in Georgia will now spill over to Ukraine (Brüggman, 2008). Adding to the tension, President Yushchenko accused his Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko of siding with the Russians in this conflict. This was the death-knell for

their fragile coalition government, which has now officially split up. The entire situation lends credibility to suspicions that that Russia's actions in this region are having a negative impact on Ukrainian democracy. Many are even looking to Ukraine as the next conflict point with Russia.

I believe, however, that this portrayal is too dramatic. Instead of threatening Ukraine in an existential way, this summer's actions have only stirred up tensions already brewing in the government coalition. Well before this summer's conflict in Georgia, the International Centre for Policy Studies in Kyiv predicted that the government would break up and snap elections would be called by the end of 2008 (International Centre for Policy Studies, 2008). A piece in *Time* pointed out that "it was not manipulation on the part of Moscow that brought down the Yushchenko government. The immediate threat comes from Yushchenko's erstwhile key coalition partner" (Karon, 2008). Anders Aslund from the Peterson Institute for International Economics argues that the coalition break was superficial because the coalition was already defective, and this opens up the possibility for a stable coalition to take its place and continue to necessary constitutional reforms (Weikert, 2008).

I argue that although Ukraine has not completed its democratic consolidation, it nonetheless is a solid democracy. There is a deep consensus for a path to democracy, and no major political actors contest this. According to the Bertelsmann Transformation index: "Occasionally, the political elite continues to play with the rules instead of by the rules. But they do not question democracy as such" (Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2008, p.6). Even listening to Yushchenko's political opponents affirms this. Viktor Yanukovich, Yushchenko's opponent during the Orange Revolution, spoke of "the

irreversibility of democratic changes in Ukraine after the Orange revolution” on a trip to the US (“Visiting USA,” 2006). Yulia Tymoshenko has also attested that Ukraine is now committed to a democratic and European future: “We are now immune to that illness (authoritarianism) ... Today, I see Ukraine’s path...unequivocally in the direction of the creation of a real, European, democratic, rule-of-law state” (Freeland, 2008).

Although the events of the past summer are indeed unsettling, there is no clear evidence that Ukraine’s democracy won’t remain on track, especially if the US and the EU maintain their steadfast support there.

NATO

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is another international actor that is sometimes associated with democracy promotion, and in this section I will assess to what extent NATO is generally responsible for democracy promotion, and what kind of an impact it has on Ukraine. I will demonstrate that NATO’s impact on Ukraine is currently rather weak, due to two factors. First, Ukraine’s future entry into NATO is not entirely secure. Although it is endorsed by the Ukrainian leaders, entry into NATO remains unpopular with the Ukrainian population and is unpopular with Russia. Secondly, NATO does not offer enough long-term incentives geared towards promoting democratic reforms.

Although NATO has already absorbed many east central European countries which previously belonged to the Communist bloc, further expansion remains controversial. Ukraine and Georgia, two countries which have in the past years seen “colored revolutions,” are pointing the way towards democracy and are officially striving

for NATO membership. However, Russia has openly opposed this move, and in the face of its objection, France and Germany refused to back the entry of both countries at this year's NATO Bucharest Summit. However, the Alliance did send a strong message, stating that "that these countries will become members of NATO" ("US confident of NATO," 2008).

Entry into NATO is not only in doubt due to external concerns. Whereas the desire to join the EU is widely embraced by the Ukrainian population and politicians, entry into NATO is more controversial. According to February 2008 figures, a full 58% of the country is against entry, while merely 21% supports it (Umland, 2008). This wariness of NATO is especially pronounced in the eastern and Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine.

Even if NATO entry wasn't contested, however, there is little evidence that NATO would be able to influence the development of democracy within Ukraine. The NATO preamble calls for its members to "safeguard the freedom, common heritage, and civilization of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law" (Whitehead, 1986, p.5). However, NATO was historically a military alliance against the Soviet Union's Warsaw Pact, and in its strategic interest it has not always insisted upon the democratic nature of its new members. For example, whereas Portugal, Greece and Turkey were all forbidden entry into the EEC during their non-democratic regimes, they were all accepted into NATO because of strategic military considerations (Whitehead, 1986).

NATO does not seem to require a large commitment towards democracy. Although its Membership Action Plans require years of military and institutional reform

to complete, NATO “does not carry out systematic and regular monitoring” (Dimitrova & Pridham, 2004), and therefore lacks strong conditionality to spur democratic reforms.

However, it is important to note that in the wake of 9/11, a new debate is being held on both sides of the Atlantic on expanding NATO’s missionary reach to include more democratic stipulations. This debate could have a future impact on how much NATO emphasizes democracy in its members. For the time being, however, NATO is unlikely to have a large democratic influence on Ukraine.

As demonstrated in this section, the United States and the European Union remain the largest external supporters of democracy in Ukraine. Ukraine is in a unique geopolitical situation between the West and Russia, and there are many external actors which influence Ukraine. However, in regards to democracy, none of the other actors have as much influence as the US and the EU.

Russia does factor largely into Ukrainian domestic politics and considerations, but its role in democratization is far from positive. Russia does periodically play a role in destabilizing democracy in the Ukraine, such as during the Orange Revolution, as well as during the current crisis over separatist regions in Georgia. This is something that the West must continue to take seriously and try to counterbalance. Despite these negative influences, however, Ukrainian politicians and the population remain enthusiastic about joining the EU and the West, and as long as the US and the EU make efforts to continue on this path, a disruption in democracy due to Russian pressure can remain an unlikely development.

NATO is directly related to the Russia issue, as Russia seems determined not to lose Ukraine to this political-military alliance that has traditionally sought to counter Russia. However, the very nature of NATO does not influence democracy per se, and even if Ukraine were offered a membership action plan, it would be unlikely to help consolidate democracy further. Thus, the US and EU remain the most influential actors in regards to democracy in Ukraine.

Conclusions and forecasts

In the first part of this thesis, I explained how and why the US and European approaches to democracy promotion are different. Due to a longer history associated with toppling regimes to bring about democracy, the US generally uses a bottom-up approach. This focuses primarily on holding free and fair elections and helping civil society. The EU, through its policy of enlargement, tends to use a top-down approach, where the incentive of becoming a member spurs the candidate country to undertake their own major democratic reforms. Whereas the US approach is generally geared towards creating a revolution, the EU approach has become one of the best tools to encourage democratic consolidation in history.

In the second part of this thesis, I examined whether or not these general guidelines pertain to the case study of Ukraine. I demonstrated that during the Orange Revolution, the US overall played a stronger role through its election-related activities and civil society support. With regards to aiding democratic consolidation, I argued that through the offer for deeper integration within the ENP program, the EU currently plays only a slightly larger role, although I predict this gap will widen as the ENP continues to shape Ukrainian policies.

I also assessed the roles played in the Ukraine by two other actors- Russia and NATO. Russia does sometimes have a negative impact on Ukrainian democracy, but because of its proximity, cultural and historic ties with Ukraine, as well as its energy and financial power in the region, Russia remains an important partner for Ukraine.

Therefore Ukraine must deal carefully with Russia, and cannot completely shake its influence. The summer of 2008 saw a re-ignition of the frozen conflicts in the Caucasus region, and this has had repercussions for Ukraine. However, the right reassurances by the West may assuage these fears, and Ukraine's leaders should be able to move forward and put together a functioning government despite the recent events.

Joining NATO is another current issue for Ukraine, but due to its unpopularity with Russia and with the domestic population, Ukraine is not likely to receive major support from NATO at this time. Even if it were to receive a NATO membership bid, the nature of NATO's accession process does not provide incentives for long-lasting democratic reforms.

The US and the EU, therefore, remain the best chances for external influence on Ukraine's democratic consolidation. Although these partners have two very different approaches from the outset, they work together very well. Because both actors have similar goals and interests in the region, their approaches are complementary. For example, during the Orange Revolution, US and EU officials and institutions were in close contact with one another, and coordinated responses to the ongoing crisis. Because US interference would have likely aggravated the situation, the US purposefully played a more behind-the-scenes while getting updates from European and EU public negotiators (Baun, 2008). The US also realizes what a significant role the EU can play in Ukraine's democratic consolidation by offering membership perspective, and are therefore openly supportive of Ukraine's bid to join the EU (Baun, 2008).

That is not to say, however, that there are not points of tension between the US and EU democracy promotion efforts in this region. Overall, the US favors bringing former Soviet countries such as Georgia and Ukraine into the transatlantic security fold, and more aggressively countering Russia's influence. The EU, while also hoping to stabilize Ukraine and supporting nations on its eastern border, is more cautious of evoking Moscow's ire (Baun, 2008). The Europeans remain acutely aware of Russia's important role in energy security and in other global institutions such as the United Nations. An example of US and EU approaches in conflict is the issue of offering NATO membership to Ukraine and Georgia. However, the Americans and the Europeans are willing to compromise and cooperate: at the Bucharest Summit in 2008, no membership action plan was offered to these countries, but a joint issue securing their eventual entry was made. It seems that US and EU officials both agree on the priority of democracy in Ukraine, and will coordinate efforts and policies to complement and compromise with one another.

But improvements could be made in both current approaches. The United States could make its aid more effective during the consolidation period by switching from a focus on elections to a focus on long-term commitments with some conditionality. The US cannot realistically offer the same level of help that the EU could by offering membership, but it could still make its aid dependent on incremental and long-term reforms.

The EU would do well to first raise the awareness of the ENP- according to some statistics, most people in Ukraine and even in Europe have never heard of it, and therefore it is very difficult for elites to convince the population that any difficult reforms will

actually pay off with a strengthening of ties to the EU (Lippert, 2008). It could also perhaps set deadlines for benchmarks. Currently, there are no specific deadlines for reforms or incentives within the action plans, and this could give added pressure to both sides to complete the objectives.

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