Foundation Feminism and the Articulation of Hybrid Feminisms in Post-Socialist Ukraine

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Drawing on research conducted in Ukraine and Washington, D.C., the author illustrates how U.S. programs to develop nongovernmental organizations in the former Soviet Union have led to the creation in Ukraine of a nonprofit sector that is dominated by "hybrid organizations." These organizations cannot be easily categorized using the conventional dualistic labels that social scientists and policy makers adopt. They are neither strictly state-run nor based in civil society, neither free market nor state enterprise, neither elite nor grassroots. The author examines the main types of "hybrid feminist" organizations that have been established in Ukraine in response to foreign programs devoted to raising awareness of women's rights.

Keywords: feminism; hybrid organizations; NGO; post-socialist; Ukraine; civil society

Political theorists and other observers of post-socialism have long hoped that the intervention of Western nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in eastern European political life would help develop civil societies and strengthen democracy.[1] This has rarely happened. Indeed, Western NGOs have had decidedly

1. See Jean L. Cohen and Andrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); and Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).
2. On the effects that Western programs to build civil society have had in a variety of locales, see Sarah Mendelson and John Glenn, eds., *The Power and Limits of NGOs: A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Sarah L. Henderson, *Building Democracy in Contemporary Russia: Western Support*

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mixed, unintended, and even contradictory effects.[2] This article analyzes the activities of Western NGOs in Ukraine that are dedicated to women's issues. The study of women's NGOs provides a novel perspective for studying the entire nonprofit, nongovernmental sector. In this, as in other aspects of democratization, viewing post-socialism through a gendered lens clarifies processes well beyond those immediately connected to women.[3] I argue that many NGOs in Ukraine are "hybrid" organizations. That is, like many other new organizational forms in eastern Europe, they cannot be easily categorized using the conventional dualistic labels that social scientists and policy makers adopt. They are neither strictly state-run nor based in civil society, neither free market nor state enterprise, neither elite nor grassroots.[4] Although the hybrid nature of the nonprofit sector has rarely been investigated, the evidence suggests that it cannot be understood through the mechanisms proposed so far for explaining the emergence of hybrid capitalist enterprises. It is not the result of the unsuccessful imitation of foreign models, the incomplete institutionalization of foreign projects, or the "recombination" of local actors' existing organizational repertoires.[5] Rather, I argue that hybrid NGOs are best seen as resulting from the encounter between the unexamined assumptions of foreign aid projects and the cultural presuppositions, existing networks, and organi-

for Grassroots Organizations (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003); and Sarah L. Henderson, "Selling Civil Society: Western Aid and the Nongovernmental Sector in Russia," *Comparative Political Studies* 38 (March 2002): 139-67.

3. See Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, *The Politics of Gender after Socialism: A Comparative-Historical Essay* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, eds., *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
4. Hybrid organizational forms are the focus of a large literature on "new institutionalism." Most hybrid forms this literature studies blur boundaries between opposed or conflicting types of formal organizations. They may for instance, combine aspects of public and private ownership and "look and act like" a combination of public agency and private firm. Many hybrids are run through a system of complex networks and alliances among a wide range of specialized departments that each operate semiautonomously. For a review of the theories that have emerged regarding such new organizational forms, see Neil Fligstein, "Fields, Power, and Social Skill: A Critical Analysis of the New Institutionalism" (Paper presented at Hamburg University, Hamburg, Germany, 9-11 October 1997).
5. See, for instance, Victor Nee, "Organizational Dynamics of Market Transition: Hybrid Forms, Property Rights, and Mixed Economy in China," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 37 (1992): 1-27, and David Stark, "Recombinant Property in East European Capitalism," *American Journal of Sociology* 101:4(1996): 993-1027.

zational strategies of local actors. This process of hybridization is evident in an exemplary way in foreign aid projects that are dedicated to strengthening women's NGOs.

Western organizations arrive in post-socialist countries expecting local women to embrace discourses about women that derives from Western feminism and emphasize "women's rights." But as Gal and Kligman have noted, these discourses do not match local understandings of women's civic activity, which are articulated through notions of maternal self-sacrifice and nation building.[6] It is this poor fit between foreign and local understandings of women's roles that has had important consequences for the effects of foreign programs on civil society and on new post-socialist women's organizations.

Prior to 1989, there were almost no NGOs in the conventional sense in Ukraine, and nonstate women's organizations were in their infancy. A complex field of new women's associations has since emerged. Most of these groups view women's activism as an extension of maternal nurturing. Yet U.S. aid practices have not, on the whole, supported any of these groups. They have instead encouraged the proliferation of new organizational forms and discourses that I call "hybrid feminisms." Although they adopt some elements of the foreign models that Western actors promote, they differ in significant respects both from foreign and from local models of women's activism. Furthermore, taken as a group, hybrid NGOs dedicated to women and women's issues require us to blur the supposed boundaries between governmental and nongovernmental organizations, between for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises, between "maternalist" (or traditional women's activism) and activism based on "feminist" principles. These hybrid feminist associations receive most of the support that foreign foundations and foreign women's rights projects have devoted to integrating women into civic life in Ukraine. The effect of hybrid feminist associations is doubly ironic. They fail to support the locally inspired, maternalist groups that have prolif-

6. See Gal and Kligman, *Politics of Gender*, 32, 88, 101-4; and Susan Gal, "Movements of Feminism: The Circulation of Discourses about Women," in Barbara Hobson, ed., *Recognition Struggles and Social Movements: Contested Identities, Agency and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93-119.

erated at every level of civil society, and they also fail to resemble Western feminist models of grassroots women's empowerment.

This analysis focuses on several kinds of women's organizations that have resulted from the encounter between foreign aid and local organizing in Ukraine. Most were created unintentionally by an elite of expert organizers I call "foundation feminists." Foundation feminists are women who are highly educated and speak English. They were hired to work as staff and advisors on U.S. projects to foster grassroots women's activism. They set in motion practices that, over time, drained personnel and resources away from existing local women's organizations. The women's rights projects organized by these foundation feminists have undermined local groups or complicated the relationship between local constituencies and foreign funders. The result has been that programs funded by the United States and aimed at strengthening civil society have provided virtually no financial support to grassroots women's voluntary associations. Instead, they have triggered intense competition for funding and legitimacy among existing grassroots associations and have encouraged professionalism among foreign-oriented civic activists. In the process, NGOs funded from abroad have become increasingly distant from local civic life, even though most of the programs proposed by foreign advisors were intended to stimulate grassroots civic participation and build local associations.

To understand the practices that have led to these unintended outcomes, I conducted extensive interviews and field observations in Ukraine and Washington, D.C. From December 1998 to January 1999, I interviewed the founders, advisors, and staff of the NIS-US (New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union–United States) Women's Consortium, the largest of the

7. I interviewed (or received information from) representatives of many different North American organizations. Representatives or members of the following organizations were particularly helpful: Alliance of Russian and American Women; Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program; Center for Safe Energy; Counterpart International; Friends of Rukh of Northern New Jersey; Human Rights Watch; ISAR: Initiative for Social Action and Renewal in Eurasia; the MacArthur Foundation; Magee Womancare International; NIS-US (New Independent States of the Former Soviet Union–United States) Women's Consortium; Peace Corps; Planned Parenthood of New England; Samuel Rubin Foundation; Ukrainian National Women's League of America; United States Agency for International Development; and US-Ukraine Relief Committee.

partnerships concerned with women's rights that are funded by the U.S. government in the former Soviet Union.[7] I focused on how my interviewees became involved in U.S.-funded assistance to women's NGOs in Ukraine, what were their goals and methods of work, and who were their local partners. From February to August 2001, I explored the same themes among U.S.-funded and locally funded women's NGOs in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv. I interviewed foreign donors, local staff of foreign-funded projects, and representatives of more than sixty women's organizations. I also attended meetings, protest rallies, conferences, and other public events; reviewed one foreign-funded organization's grant records; read mission statements, final reports, and analyses of women's activism; and had informal conversations on a regular basis with recipients of various forms of foreign aid.[8] During fall 2001, I worked in Washington, D.C., interviewing the staff of projects that are funded by the U.S. government and that manage democracy aid to Ukraine.

My analysis begins by discussing the forms of women's activism that have emerged locally since the final years of Soviet rule. After this, I turn to the models of women's activism that U.S.-government-funded organizations intended to promote in Ukraine. Next, I examine the backgrounds of the foundation feminists, the main agents of hybrid feminism. Then I turn to three different hybrid feminist organizations that resulted from different kinds of foreign aid. I show how each departs in important respects from foreign as well as local understandings of feminism and women's activism. The first is a transnational network, La Strada, that arose in response to antitrafficking initiatives. The second consists of NGOs that operate projects to promote women's entrepreneurship. The third is an "empowerment" and education program that works closely with international agencies. I conclude by suggesting that the ultimate success of local women's associations depends on building coalitions between the various kinds of activism I have described.

8. During my field research conducted in Ukraine, I regularly attended the meetings of two women's groups devoted to children's welfare and one feminist seminar devoted to gender equality. All of the groups and individuals included in my study were aware of the nature and purpose of my study.

Women's activism in contemporary Ukraine

Tens of thousands of new civic groups have formed in Ukraine since the late eighties. Ever-increasing numbers consider themselves to be women's organizations (in Ukrainian, *Zhinochi orhanizatsii*).[9] Roughly two dozen groups explicitly seek to raise the status of women as a group. These include several organizations of women entrepreneurs or professionals and a number of groups that define themselves as feminist. But generally, most women's groups work primarily on issues related to families or children and view women's activism as an extension of maternal nurturing.

Women's groups vary greatly in their organizational structure, visibility, size, and scope. Local scholars categorize the most publicly visible women's groups as "traditional" women's organizations to indicate that these groups do not wish to challenge the local gender system.[10] This designation is apt. It also offers a useful introduction to the understandings these groups have of the kind of women's activism they promote. Women's groups nearly all attach a positive value to motherhood, femininity, and what they view as "traditional" gender relations.[11] They do not see their maternal and family duties as sources of their primary grievances. Most associate foreign projects that talk of "women's rights" and "overcoming patriarchal traditions" with false promises the party leadership made in the socialist era.[12] All but a small minority

9. The number of women's organization registered with the state doubled annually in recent years. See Oleksandr Sydorenko, "Zhinochi orhanizatsii Ukrainy: Tendentsii stanovlennia" (Kyiv, Ukraine: Center for Innovation and Development, n.d.). Available at http://portal.uwf.kiev.ua/.
10. The designation "traditional" was widely used in this way by those I interviewed in Ukraine. It is also the main designation used by the primary local scholars of women's activism in Ukraine. It is used for instance in the only scholarly monograph that has examined the role of different forms of women's activism in Ukraine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Liudmyla Smolyar, *Zhinochi Studii v Ukraini: Zhinka v istorii ta siohodni* (Odessa, Ukraine: Astroprint, 1999).
11. See Malgorzata Fuszara, "Women's Movements in Poland," in Joan Wallach Scott, Cora Kaplan, and Debra Keates, eds., *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminism in International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 139. See also Gal and Kligman, *Politics of Gender*, who also make this point.
12. According to Anastasia Posadskaya, one of Russia's most prominent women's activists, Soviet state institutions assumed the right to speak on behalf of women, and official Soviet women's associations promoted the interests of the Communist Party above those of women. As a consequence, Soviet politicians and women came to believe that "an inde-

identify such phrases with "feminism" and reject it as a foreign movement that seeks to drive women and men apart. They believe that Ukraine's problems will be solved by reviving (rather than rejecting) Ukraine's tradition of strong families and equality between men and women.[13] Because of these negative associations, most women's groups in Ukraine avoid using the terms *women's rights* and *feminism* (*femynizm* in Ukrainian, *feminizm* in Russian). Instead, they embrace a "maternalist" discourse in which it is understood that women's civic roles should focus on the welfare of children and families and on the restoration of Ukrainian traditions.

Dozens of local "maternalist" women's groups provide assistance to soldiers, military personnel, and veterans (e.g., Committee in Support of Sons in the Military in Lviv, League of Mothers and Sisters for the Soldiers of Ukraine in Kyiv). Among the more significant of these, the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers of Ukraine,[14] worked closely with groups of officers and veterans to fight against the violent hazing of military recruits. In the Soviet era, they conducted independent public investigations of soldiers' deaths, organized public protests, and lobbied Ukrainian lawmakers for reforms. The result was a 1990 law that limited military service to republics of origin, a development of profound significance that effectively began the dissolution of the Soviet armed forces. When the central government refused to implement the Ukrainian SSR's law on military service, the Organization of Soldiers' Mothers launched a successful boycott of the 1991 military draft and sheltered thousands of deserting soldiers

pendent women's voice did not and could not exist in our country"; and since the Soviet Union's collapse, post-Soviet women "do not trust women's organizations" and have little interest in "working together in public campaigns and organizations." See Elizabeth Waters and Anastasia Posadskaya, "Democracy without Women Is No Democracy: Women's Struggles in Post-Communist Russia," in Amrita Basu, ed., *The Challenge of Local Feminisms: Women's Movements in Global Perspective* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1995), 365-57.

13. See Tatiana Zhurzhenko, *Sotsial'noe vosproizvodstvo i gendernaia politika v Ukraine* (Kharkiv, Ukraine: Folio, 2001); and also Irina Zherebkina, *Zhenskoe politicheskoe bessoznatelnoe: Problema gendera i zhenskoe dvizhenie v Ukraine* (Kharkiv, Ukraine: Kharkiv Center for Gender Studies: F-Press, 1996).

14. On the emergence of the soldiers' mothers movement, see Solomea Pavlychko, "Between Feminism and Nationalism: New Women's Groups in the Ukraine," in Mary Buckley, ed., *Perestroika and Soviet Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 82-96; and Bohdan Pyskir, "Materi dlia Batkivshchyny," *Suchasnist'* 3 (new series), 6 (1994): 70-82.

through underground safe houses. After Ukraine declared independence, Soldiers' Mothers mediated the peaceful dismantlement of the Soviet armed forces.

Also politically significant are two traditional women's federations, Zhinocha Hromada (the Women's Community) and Soiuz Ukrainok (the Union of Ukrainian Women). Their origins are similar.[15] They both formed in response to encouragement from the leadership of the independence movement. Their goal was to engage women in national revival. Taking their names from earlier women's associations that the Soviet state disbanded, their leadership recruited a sizable membership of dissidents, scholars, intellectuals, and educators.[16] Both groups played a crucial role in setting postindependence civic agendas for new kinds of activism.

The Women's Community's initial activities focused on helping children who had been exposed to radiation after the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Its protests led the state to close the Chernobyl nuclear reactor. After independence, the group distributed humanitarian aid to children and assisted in their medical treatment. The group also set in motion the first empirical analyses of women's social, political, and economic status in Ukraine. It launched the first election campaigns to increase women's representation in legislatures and lobbied to strengthen women's legal rights.[17]

15. Solomea Pavlychko, "Progress on Hold: The Conservative Faces of Women in Ukraine," in Mary Buckley, ed., *Post-Soviet Women: From the Baltic to Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 219-34.
16. In 1996, the Women's Community had a membership of 15,000 and the Union of Ukrainian Women had 11,300 members. See *Directory of Women's Organizations and Initiatives in Ukraine* (Kiev, Ukraine: Women's Information Consultative Center, 1996). My research suggests that these figures probably include members who were no longer active by the midnineties.
17. In May 1993, the Women's Community organized the conference "Women in State Building" (*"Zhinka v derzhavotvorenni"*). Papers assessed women's representation in state and government structures as well as in other areas of society. At the conference's close, a resolution was passed that urged the president, Parliament, and Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine to introduce gender quotas to guarantee the equal representation of women in the Parliament and in the government. The Women's Community went on to organize further conferences on women's political and legal status. It coordinated legal campaigns on behalf of equal rights legislation and constitutional guarantees of equality. In addition, the Women's Community formed a bloc of ten women's organizations to support the candidacy of fifty women running for office in the 1994 parliamentary election campaigns. The following year, the head of the Women's Community spoke on the need for expanding women's

The Union of Ukrainian Women has operated most actively in Western Ukraine. The Union was founded there during the interwar period. But it ceased to exist when the Soviet state annexed this region during World War II. The Union seeks to restore Ukrainian traditions of the pre-Soviet era. One of its main aims is to revive the pre-Soviet Ukrainian women's movement.[18] Local chapters have sponsored publications, libraries, museum exhibits, conferences, and other educational activities that raise awareness of Ukrainian women who played a prominent role in pre-Soviet public life. They also coordinate charitable activities to assist orphans, gifted children, senior citizens, veterans, and other needy groups. In addition, they organize local cultural and educational events celebrating Mother's Day as well as national holidays and dates of historical significance.

The Spilka Zhinok Ukrainy (Confederation of Women of Ukraine) is another prominent federated women's organization that adopts a largely maternalist agenda. The Confederation is the formal successor to official Soviet women's organizations called Women's Councils. A 1987 party edict created the Women's Councils.[19] Official reports claimed that one year later there were Women's Councils in every major workplace, with nearly half a million members overall. However, the organization existed primarily on paper, had no budget, and attracted little public interest or grassroots involvement.[20] When Ukraine became independent, the Women's Councils were reformed and adopted their current name. The Confederation has engaged in charitable activities and commemorations of International Women's day as well as in campaigns to strengthen women's legal rights.

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influence in government and politics at the first parliamentary hearings on the realization in Ukraine of the UN Convention "On the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women." See Lyudmyla Smolyar, "Women's NGOs in the System of Civil Society of Ukraine" (Paper prepared for the Global Network for Women's Advocacy and Civil Society, n.d.). Available at http://www.philanthropy.org/GN/KEN/.

18. Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Women's Organizations in Independent Ukraine: Prospects of Power" (Edmonton, Canada: University of Manitoba, the J.B. Rudnyckyj Distinguished Lecture Series, 1997). Available at http://www.umanitoba.ca/.
19. See Pavlychko, "Between Feminism and Nationalism," 90.
20. See Martha Bohachevsky-Chomiak, "Political Communities and Gendered Ideologies in Contemporary Ukraine" (Harvard Papers in Ukrainian Studies, Harvard University Ukrainian Research Institute, Cambridge, MA, 1994), 20-21.

There are numerous smaller, less visible maternalist women's organizations. Many are clubs that organize cultural activities aimed at children or families. One of the largest such groups is the Olena Teliha International Women's Society. It has two thousand members who belong to federated chapters located throughout Ukraine. Other women's organizations work on environmental issues (e.g., Mama 86, Ecofem, and Child and Environment, all women's groups located in Kyiv). Many small local women's groups provide aid to churches (e.g., Olga Bassarab Society of Ukrainian Women in Lviv). Others assist needy children and families (e.g., Ukrainian Association of Large Families, Women's Fate Ukrainian Charity Fund, Young Miss Kyiv Women's Fund, Ukrainian Society of Social Services, Assistance Fund for Widows and Orphans). Some groups support foster homes as an alternative to state children's homes (the Orphan Aid Society, the Ukrainian Association of Family-Style Children's Homes). Other women's groups assist the elderly (e.g., For Survival International Charitable Foundation). Women are also engaged in dozens of local mutual aid groups that work with families.[21]

Foreign funders: Their aims, models, and activities

Although maternalist organizations have created new channels for engaging women in civic life, only a handful of the hundreds of such organizations that have formed since independence have benefited from foreign training or encouragement.[22] This is surprising, given that foreign funders adopt a discourse that expresses their support for helping local women's groups

21. There are well over a dozen local women's groups named after the "Protectress" figure (Berehynia), a mythic figure the independence movement created (e.g., Protectress Women's Association of Kharkiv city, Protectress Women's Association in the village of Makariv, Kyiv oblast, and Protectress Women's Charitable Organization of Evpatoria, Crimea, and the Protectress of Ukraine National Federation). On the Berehynia phenomenon and women's activism, see Tatiana Zhurzhenko, *Ukrainian Feminism(s): Between Nationalist Myth and Anti-nationalist Critique* (Vienna, Austria: International World Bank Working Paper, 2001); and also Oksana Kis', "Modeli Konstruiuvannia Gendernoi Identychnosti v Suchasnii Ukraini," *Yi* 27 (2003): 37-58.
22. Local sources of support for women's organizations have been inconsistent and meager. Political parties and politicians funded women's organizations, but only in conjunction with election campaigns.

and other civic organizations to build a vibrant civil society in Ukraine.

Among foreign donors, U.S. "civil society" projects have provided most of the foreign funding devoted to the development of local women's organizations in Ukraine.[23] The Open Society Institute and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have been the sources of most funding for local women's projects and most direct grants to local women's organizations.[24] Next in importance are the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), followed by the European Union's Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) Program.

All these donors share a particular model of civic activism. They have repeatedly claimed to build civil society through local projects that create horizontal relationships between local and foreign voluntary organizations variously called "partners" or "counterparts." Policy makers believed that such initiatives to forge "partnerships," "alliances," "consortiums," and "networks" between local and American voluntary associations would "enhance the capabilities of local grassroots NGOs in the NIS." In the words of an early USAID report that set the agenda for future U.S. partnerships in Russia and Ukraine (and later, for other post-Soviet countries),

> Facilitation of private voluntary action and the strengthening of civil society institutions is necessary to generate a successful transition to democracy. . . . US PVOs [private voluntary organizations] have the capacity to become a knowledge bridge for our Ukrainian and Russian counterparts—facilitating dialogue, networking and technical cooperation—to accelerate and strengthen the development of a viable civil society and the foundation for a stable democracy: networking, linkages, partnerships, and creative alliances with Ukrainian and Russian counterparts should be fostered and nurtured and supported by private and public donors. Internship opportunities should be

23. I base this statement on my research and on the results of a 2001 survey of all registered women's organizations. See Oleksandr Sydorenko, "Zhinochi orhanizatsiii Ukrainy," table 8.
24. Eighty-five percent of overall foreign funding for civil society originates in the United States. See Kateryna Pishchikova, "What Happened after the 'End of History'? Foreign Aid and Implementation of Civil Society Projects in Ukraine" (Uppsala, Sweden: European Consortium for Political Research, Joint Sessions of Workshops, 13-18 April 2004), 9.

> explored, and supported by public and private donors. Grants for Ukrainian and Russian NGO development and capacity building should be given a high priority for private and public donors. . . . US PVOs are uniquely qualified to be agents of change within newly emerging civil societies, helping their CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] counterparts formulate options and priorities in sectoral activities vital to the improvement of the quality of life and the flourishing of democracy and free markets.[25]

Similarly, program statements at USAID all stressed that partnerships between Ukrainian and American NGOs were the most important factor in the effort to "move countries of Europe and Eurasia far enough along the transition path that they could enter normal economic and political relations with other countries and complete the journey on their own."[26] USAID viewed such partnerships as valuable to democratization and as more "cost-effective" than conventional foreign aid projects.[27] As a result, a broad range of shorter-term USAID women's projects adopted the "network" organizational model. The networks they formed were operated either through USAID contracts with U.S. development agencies or through programs USAID developed jointly with U.S. foundations. I first examine partnership projects USAID itself initiated, then I turn to foundation-based partnerships, and last, to joint USAID-foundation-funded projects.

The NIS-US Women's Consortium was one of the first partnership projects funded by USAID. Supported from 1992 until 1999,

25. See Arlene Lear, ed., *A New Era for Development: Time for a Paradigm Shift. Ukraine and Russia*. Report of the Volunteer Executive Service Team (VEST) Initiative (Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development (USAID), 1992), ii-iii.
26. "From Transition to Partnership: A Strategic Framework for USAID Programs in Europe and Eurasia" (Washington, DC: USAID Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, December 1999), 3.
27. During the crucial first years after Ukrainian independence when foreign governments' assistance programs and field missions were being designed and implemented, women's rights were a low priority. In November 2001, I interviewed two U.S. ambassadors to Ukraine and the Ukraine program staff of the National Security Council, the National Democratic Institute, International Republican Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy (the main democracy assistance providers in Ukraine). My interviewees revealed that U.S. programs were encouraged to place highest priority on conventional security issues, followed by broader economic and political development. Women's rights and other issues received much less institutional support and funding within foreign aid programs overall. They remained the jurisdiction of planning units such as USAID's Office of Women in Development. Such planning units are small, relatively weak, and understaffed. Even more than most USAID divisions, women's programs were under great pressure to identify less expensive types of projects.

it promised to link "women's groups in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union with their counterparts in the West to share information and experiences"; to "provide leadership training, economic empowerment and job skills training, capacity building for nongovernmental organizations and information necessary for local women's NGOs to advocate for policy change"; and to raise a range of issues "from legal issues, prevention of domestic violence, and human rights to entrepreneurial skills and business management."[28] Local women's organizations were also included as target groups for several other projects that operated across borders and were financed by USAID. Counterpart's Alliance for Partnership described itself as a "social partnership" with Ukraine and Belarus and promised to "give citizens a voice in their own development" through "partnership and mutual investment in community development among NGOs, business and government."[29] The US-Ukraine Foundation's Community Partnership Project aimed to "link" Ukrainian and U.S. "partnership cities" to "support grassroots and constituent-driven reform."[30] Another networking project USAID funded was the International Research and Exchanges Board Civil Society Program, which "works in partnership with indigenous groups" and "promotes community activism through increased volunteerism, grassroots initiatives and information campaigns."[31]

These endeavors were explicitly aimed at strengthening or "empowering" women's groups that were to be "local," "grassroots," or based in "communities." USAID defined empowerment as "getting people to believe in themselves, to rely less on government to guide their daily lives, and to take control of their destiny through economic opportunities and political choice."[32] USAID developed women's initiatives that offered three main kinds of empowerment. Projects to promote "NGO development" offered lessons in fund-raising, leadership, and conflict management. Those devoted to "women's leadership" aimed to

28. See NIS-US Women's Consortium Fact Sheet, www.winrock.org/fact.
29. See "Civil Society," www.counterpart.org/DNN.
30. See www.usukraine.org/cpp/.
31. See www.irex.org/civilsociety/ngo.asp/.
32. "U.S. Assistance Strategy for Ukraine 1999-2002" (Washington, DC: USAID, 29 March 1999), 10.

prepare women to speak about gender inequality, domestic violence, and sexual harassment as well as other problems women face as the result of patriarchal traditions. Finally, "economic empowerment projects" trained women to become entrepreneurs.

U.S. foundations also funded "network" projects. Open Society Institute was the largest foreign foundation to provide consistent funding for various women's rights networks. In 1990, Open Society opened a branch office in Ukraine, called the International Renaissance Foundation, that would become Ukraine's first major Western donor. It was also the first to support women's rights and gender equality. The Foundation's Civil Society Program coordinated Ukraine's first gender equality seminars. These were devoted to "women's rights as human rights." This program was also the first to fund travel to international women's rights conferences and to provide small grants for NGO development and publication of feminist literature.

In 1995, the Open Society Institute restructured its gender project. The result was Women in Society, a program whose main goal was to develop a "strong network of Ukrainian women's NGOs."[33] This network project aimed to encourage women's organizations to unite and place pressure on the Ukrainian government to develop national gender policy and new laws that protect women's rights, eliminate discrimination, and widen women's participation in policy decision-making process on regional, local, and national levels. To achieve this goal, Women in Society funded local NGOs that promised to assist in developing and strengthening Ukrainian NGOs, supported cooperation between women's organizations on national and international levels, and widened access of Ukrainian NGOs to international resources and women's organizations on an international level.[34] Women in Society also launched several other projects, including one aimed at strengthening Ukrainian women's civic organizations, particularly those that helped women in crisis (e.g., hot-

33. "Women in Society Program" (Kyiv, Ukraine: International Renaissance Foundation, 2001). Available at www.irf.kiev.ua/.
34. See International Renaissance Foundation, "Special Issue Dedicated to the IRF Program Gender Integration," *Open World* (Kyiv) 4 (2002).

lines, counseling centers, battered women's shelters). This project also provided training in grant writing to local civic organizations and even provided money to allow them to purchase equipment such as computers, printers, and fax machines.

Another project of Women in Society sought to integrate principles of gender equality into secondary school and university curricula. Grants were provided for translating Western feminist literature and related women's rights materials into Ukrainian or Russian, for publishing original feminist scholarly works, and for developing course materials that would be taught in gender and women's studies courses. In addition, this project provided small grants and sponsored competitions to encourage scholars as well as students to conduct and publish research on gender discrimination. It funded local after-school programs and summer camps aimed at teaching gender sensitivity to school-age children.

Women in Society also acted as an organizational center for other foreign donors' "network" projects. Its primary program partners were the UNDP Gender in Development Program and Winrock International, USAID's main contractor working on women's rights.[35] Women in Society, Winrock International, and other foreign donors shared costs and comanaged several women's "empowerment" programs in Ukraine. The largest of these focused on trafficking. Antitrafficking initiatives financed networks of local women's credit unions, women's business incubators, battered women's shelters, women's health providers, and hotlines for victims of violence or abuse. These joint donor projects also resulted in a nationwide network called Women for Women that operated antitrafficking centers throughout Ukraine. These centers offered grant support to local NGOs that provided psychological and job counseling as well as legal, medical, and other services to help women cope with the collapse of the local economy and with other problems, such as domestic abuse.

35. On the Winrock Women's Consortium, see Alexandra Hrycak, "From Mothers' Rights to Women's Rights: Post-Soviet Grassroots Women's Associations," in Nancy Naples and Manisha K. Desai, eds., *Women's Community Activism and Globalization: Linking the Local and Global for Social Change* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 75-82.

Foundation feminists: Their backgrounds and connections

Women's projects that are funded by foreign donors proudly boast that their local NGO partners are "grassroots."[36] Yet as I will show, the social group largely in charge of such partnerships has had little experience with "grassroots" activism. I call them foundation feminists.[37] The members of this elite are at the center of foreign aid networks; they are considered by foreign donors to be experts in women's empowerment. They serve as the primary formal gatekeepers of aid to grassroots women's organizations in Ukraine. Yet few members of this group have ever worked with the informal, grassroots community associations that proponents of civil society consider valuable to democratic life at the local level.[38] Most have been trained as gender experts by American foundations and nonprofits and have previous experience working for high-profile organizations of this type based in the United States. Some had also previously worked in Moscow for U.S. government agencies or participated in U.S. government exchanges (e.g., Peace Links, Friendship Forces, the Peace Corps, ACDI-VOCA [Agricultural Cooperative Development International–Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance]). Others had worked on USAID projects in developing countries, or on projects funded by U.S.-based nonprofits like Planned Parenthood or the League of Women Voters.

The foundation feminists were typically women of local origin who were recent graduates of elite universities. Their life experi-

36. One former U.S. Coordinator of Winrock's Women's Consortium stressed that local women's rights NGOs she worked with in Russia and Ukraine were "very grassroots" (Phone Interview, 11 December 1998).
37. See David Abramson, "Engendering Citizenship in Postcommunist Uzbekistan," in Kathleen R. Kuehnast and Carol Nechemias, eds., *Post-Soviet Women Encountering Transition: Nation Building, Economic Survival, and Civic Activism* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press and Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 65-84; James Richter, *Citizens or Professionals: Evaluating Western Assistance to Women's Organizations* (New York: Columbia University Project on Evaluation of Western NGO Strategies for Democratization and the Reduction of Ethnic Conflict in the Former Communist States, 1998); and Patrice McMahon, *What a Difference They Have Made: International Actors and Women's NGOs in Poland and Hungary* (New York: Columbia University Project on Evaluation of Western NGO Strategies for Democratization and the Reduction of Ethnic Conflict in the Former Communist States, 1998).
38. See Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 167-75.

ence, education, and social status enabled them to embrace USAID's analyses of Ukrainian women's problems. Briefly, this view represented local traditions as the source of women's difficulties because such traditions supposedly denied women a "choice" and silenced their voices in the former Soviet Union.[39] Foundation feminists saw "tradition" as an obstacle. Their acceptance of this idea led to their preference for working with those local staff and local women's groups who also accepted that tradition is oppressive and the source of post-Soviet women's dilemma.

Abramson's description of a similar group in Uzbekistan holds as well for Ukraine. In both countries, the small minority of women who participate in and benefit from international development, especially from NGO projects, is self-selected. They are highly educated elite academics who already resemble their Western counterparts in their views on women and who accept the "simplistic traditional-modern continuum" that many development agencies in practice use.[40] While being the main beneficiaries of this kind of foreign aid, these women and the donor organizations that work with them have been unable and unwilling to accommodate religious beliefs or "traditional" practices in development programs and in projects aimed at building civil society. Thus, although it is true that the U.S. aid agenda for post-Soviet countries includes support for freedom of religious expression and human rights, the larger program of development-as-modernization actually undermines the very civil society and freedoms it purports to be aiding.

In Ukraine, the first women who were attracted to foreign-funded feminist activism were elite Russian speakers. Most were graduates of elite universities or academic institutes based in Moscow. Before they were hired by U.S. programs, they were employed either in Moscow or in Kharkiv, a large city in eastern

39. In the words of the former U.S. Consortium coordinator in Kyiv, "You couldn't use the word 'feminist' right away. And actually the word 'feminist' means different things to different people. I maintain to my Ukrainian friends that being a feminist means that a woman has choices. It doesn't mean that a woman has to be whatever you think all feminists want . . . I guess we had to be really careful with terminology, that was one of the big things I learned working with women" (Phone interview, 11 December 1998).

40. See David Abramson, "A Critical Look at NGOs and Civil Society as Means to an End in Uzbekistan" *Human Organization* 58:3(1999): 240.

Ukraine that is overwhelmingly Russian speaking. These early feminists were generally hostile to the causes and grievances that inspired local women's activism.[41] They tended to see calls to revive religion or the Ukrainian language somewhat as they had been taught to view these subjects in the Soviet educational system, which treated such issues as parochial concerns that would disappear in response to modernization. Several of the most prominent had close family connections to the leadership of the Communist Party or related official groups. Personal and professional relationships connected most of these individuals to academics in Russia. Their relationships and education led them to avoid inviting Ukrainian scholars or activists to their conferences and seminars and to express scorn for Ukrainian women's associations.

The recruitment and training practices of foreign donors attracted a relatively small community of elite individuals to implement their NGO partnerships. Both American employees and their Russian and Ukrainian staff were typically very curious about Western academic feminism and foreign models of activism. But they often had little sympathy for the causes and concerns that inspired the local women's activism that existed locally. They tended to prefer to work with local Ukrainians who shared their understanding of women's issues. The directors and grant recipients of Renaissance Foundation and USAID programs have consequently focused primarily on recruiting other educators and scholars. They rarely took an interest in local maternalists. Indeed, they viewed the dominance of maternalists in Ukraine as evidence of the country's "backwardness" relative to the rest of the world.

The programs run by foundation feminists that were designed to build civil society have had one striking effect. They drained resources and key personnel away from the local groups of citizens who were becoming active in public life "from below." This effect is clearest in the case of the large federated women's organizations that emerged from the independence movement

41. This hostility was considered to be common knowledge among the women's organization leaders I interviewed. For a perceptive examination of this phenomenon and its impact on the Ukrainian women's movement, see Zhurzhenko, *Ukrainian Feminism(s)*.

and challenged local state elites. Since Ukraine's independence, these women's associations have struggled to find the basic resources they need to fund their activities. Few have been able to adapt to the funding priorities and expectations of foreign donors. Only a handful of local chapters of the Soldiers' Mothers Organization of Ukraine, the Lviv chapter of the Union of Ukrainian Women, and the Kyiv and Kharkiv chapters of Women's Community have been able to win occasional foreign grants. In contrast, far more success in fund-raising has been achieved by those former local leaders of the Union of Ukrainian Women and Women's Community who left these maternalist organizations to form their own feminist NGOs that better meet donors' expectations. Indeed, some of the most promising leaders of local chapters of the Union of Ukrainian Women and Women's Community quit working with these volunteer-driven organizations in response to foreign women's rights programs. Several later formed smaller groups that were professional and employed a staff.

The career of one prominent former leader of the Kyiv chapter of the Union of Ukrainian Women provides an illustration of one kind of "hybrid feminist" that has been promoted by initiatives from foreign donors. "Anna" is a former leader of a traditional women's association. She is a Russian who moved to Kyiv from a small Russian city to study engineering in the early eighties. She was in her late twenties when she married a local Ukrainian man who was active in the Ukrainian independence movement. Attracted by its commitment to national revival, Anna joined the Union of Ukrainian Women. She gradually learned Ukrainian, and soon she became the leader of the Union's Kyiv chapter. After independence, a disagreement with the group's leadership led her to abandon the organization. Anna later ran three different foreign-funded projects: a resource center, the Ukrainian branch of a U.S.-based women's foundation, and Empowerment Education (a program discussed further below and funded by the Renaissance Foundation and UNDP). Anna's main staff and regional partners are also former leaders of the Union of Ukrainian Women. For instance, her executive director runs a second professional women's NGO jointly with a third former leader of

the Kyiv chapter of the Union of Ukrainian Women. Other leaders of the Union of Ukrainian Women also founded NGOs that work exclusively on professionally run, donor-driven projects. One operates a rehabilitation center for handicapped women, another a resource center and a trafficking prevention center. Similarly, two former heads of the Women's Community of Kyiv left this organization and formed their own professionally run organizations that work for international development initiatives. They too no longer participate in the activities of their previous organization.

Numerous grants to develop women's NGOs have gone to this small circle of elite NGO specialists who used to work for "traditional" women's groups affiliated with the independence movement. Many local observers claim that these former "nationalists" are not "real feminists," but rather that they were attracted by the lure of foreign grants and foreign salaries.[42] While most local women's organizations have no funding, elite NGOs such as those that Anna operates attract considerable grants and pay their staff sizeable incomes.

Western aid organizations at first expanded the appeal of Ukrainian projects when they hired Anna and other former independence activists. But such women often went on to behave in ways that undermined the broader goals motivating foreign assistance programs to hire organizers they assumed were in touch with grassroots networks and idioms. For instance, Anna, like the directors of most other foreign-oriented NGOs, considers herself to be a professional with expertise in foreign models of women's empowerment that are superior to local understandings of women's activism. Indeed, all the former leaders of "traditional" women's organizations look down on civic activities that do not conform to the models expected by those who provide foreign assistance. They dismiss as naïve and unsophisticated the causes and tactics embraced by most locally rooted grassroots NGOs. Or worse, they consider these local NGOs to represent the tradi-

42. According to one of the former Consortium's former U.S. coordinators, "They all have these hang-ups, on who everybody once was, you know, under the Soviet period. Who are the new feminists, and who are the old feminists, who are the ones doing serious work and who are the ones chasing dollars" (Phone interview, 11 December 1998).

tional attitudes that hold Ukraine back in its development. They model their own nonprofits and advocacy groups on foreign assistance projects. Consequently, they sever ties to most other voluntary organizations rather than create them, unless the local organizations conform to the standards set by foreign assistance projects.

NGO professionals like Anna offered foreign projects important skills and resources. But they later abandoned their prior civic organizations to work full-time as salaried personnel on foreign assistance projects. They engaged in "voluntary activities" that channel foreign resources and training away from local civic groups and into the coffers of the NGOs this "hybrid feminist" elite operates. When the NGO professionals who left the independence movement offered their services as "volunteers," they rarely worked with local civic organizations. Instead, they typically served on the boards of foreign foundations or foreign grant programs. This same small elite of experts that serve (as volunteers) on foreign program committees also work full-time as salaried grants managers for foreign programs. Typically, foreign grant programs fund only those NGOs that these closed NGO elite operate.

Three hybrid feminist organizations

The three NGOs described here represent three different ways in which the encounter of foreign funders and local activists has created hybrid organizational forms that, over time, have worked to complicate the activities of women in Ukrainian civil society.

1. Cross-border "grassroots": La Strada

My first example is a hybrid organizational form that foreign support has institutionalized: it is a "network of networks" made up of cross-border women's NGOs.

La Strada Ukraine describes itself as a network of women's centers. It was founded in 1997 by La Strada International Women's Center, another self-described network. La Strada International Women's Center itself was founded by a Netherlands-

based foundation, Stichting tegen Vrouwenhandel (known in English as the Dutch Foundation against Trafficking in Women). La Strada's parent organization operates and coordinates a regional network of local women's centers in Ukraine as well as Poland, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Belarus, and Moldova. La Strada International estimated its budget for 2005 to 2007 at 5.7 million euros.

While other local women's NGOs struggle to make ends meet, La Strada Ukraine receives consistent financial support from the Renaissance Foundation, Winrock International, TACIS, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, and various other international agencies, foreign embassies, foreign foundations, and foreign universities. Yet La Strada has forged no ties to local grassroots organizations. It is run by "Eva," an elite Russian speaker who was one of Ukraine's first feminist scholars. Earlier, she had a feminist organization in Kharkiv that worked closely with elite groups of scholars tied to women's rights initiatives in Moscow. Now her work brings her in closer contact with government actors in Ukraine and with Western women's rights groups.

In Ukraine, La Strada "partnered" with one of Ukraine's only feminist groups, the Humanitarian Initiative Feminist Association of Kharkiv. La Strada hired Eva, the head of Humanitarian Initiative, as its national coordinator. On its grant proposals, La Strada continues to list Humanitarian Initiative as its main local partner in Ukraine. However, once Eva moved from Kharkiv to Kyiv, where La Strada opened its national office, her own organization became inactive. As a consequence, one of Ukraine's first feminist scholars disconnected from local activist and scholarly networks. As La Strada's representative, Eva threw her energy into managing a large international project. Much of this work involved "bringing" to Ukraine foreign models of women's empowerment that promised to solve the country's trafficking problem.[43] In particular, La Strada International tried to combat

43. Indeed, La Strada's project statement stresses that the parent organization brings to Ukraine the superior models La Strada and its experts have designed abroad: "to transfer the La Strada model and good practices on support to victims of trafficking to other NGOs working on the issues, to successfully embed the international cooperation between La Strada countries and with organizations from other CEES, NIS and Western Europe and to stimu-

trafficking in Ukraine by introducing foreign organizational forms and practices. It began by creating yet another local women's NGO network, this one aimed at linking hotlines and crisis centers that provided support to trafficking victims through partnerships between La Strada and women's NGOs it described as local. But rather than working with existing hotlines or crisis centers, it established its own new local organizations solely to work on this project.

La Strada is not unique in using this strategy. Dozens of foreign programs intended to help women participate in civil society have promoted interorganizational partnerships that use foreign grants to establish a series of new women's NGOs that are represented by their foreign founders as model NGOs that local societies should emulate. Often, however, the solutions these model programs offer are not well adapted to local contexts. Hotlines, for instance, are a good idea in the United States. But they have not yet taken root in Ukraine. One reason may be that most foreign-funded hotlines are located in large cities. As the organization's own research and reports attest, most victims of trafficking are not city girls but teenagers in distant rural areas where phone service is poor and many households share common phone lines. During La Strada's first years, for instance, few potential victims called the hotline to ask for advice or support. The hotline instead tended to receive calls mainly from journalists or from the broader public.[44]

2. Women's economic empowerment and GONGOs

My second example highlights the problem of social boundaries and the ambiguous relationship of organizations to each other. Western aid agencies assume that NGOs in Ukraine are "nongovernmental organizations," that is, independent of the government. But as Kupryashkina has argued, many NGOs in

late mutual cooperation and harmonization of national campaigns." "2005-2007 La Strada Program" (Amersfoort, the Netherlands: International La Strada Association, 2005). Available at www.fo-stvkennisnet.nl/.

44. The La Strada staff person I interviewed could only recall one recent case in which a real victim of trafficking turned to them for counseling and medical attention (Author's interview, La Strada staff, Kyiv, Ukraine, 4 April 2001).

Ukraine are government-organized nongovernmental organizations (GONGOs).[45] Government-controlled organizations least resemble ideal types of "grassroots" activism. Nevertheless, they were the first to join the partnerships offered by foreign-funded women's NGO, and they later received the most sizeable foreign funding: grants for developing small and medium enterprises. Ironically, the result was hybrid feminist organizations that blurred several sets of social boundaries that U.S. observers assumed foreign aid would create in Ukraine. Most notably, they failed to clearly distinguish between "state" and "society," and between nonprofit and for-profit sectors. These groups also blurred boundaries between feminism and maternalism, as their public agenda remained predominantly maternalist.

For instance, business development grants that have gone to the Confederation of Women of Ukraine illustrate such a "mixed" solution. In addition, in this case there was a more general problem that the organization funded by foreign donors was in fact controlled by corrupt local or regional political machines and clans. The Confederation was formerly called the Women's Council. It was the most prominent of a large category of women's organizations that were based in former party networks. The Confederation claimed that it became a civic organization when the Soviet Union collapsed and it adopted its present name. But it continued to operate as an extension of the government. Throughout the ten years when Leonid Kuchma was president, the Confederation and a wide variety of similar groups were used to consolidate autocratic rule, launder money, and fix elections.[46]

The Confederation was one of the first Ukrainian women's organizations to win a large foreign grant to develop businesses owned by women. Arguably, its close ties to the governing elite helped the group to win several subsequent sizeable foreign grants. The Businesswoman Center that resulted existed for two

45. Svetlana Kupryashkina, "Ukraine: End of the 'NGO Dream,' " *Give and Take* 3 (fall 2000). Available at www.isar.org/.

46. See Andrew Wilson, *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005); and Alexandra Hrycak, "Coping with Chaos: Gender and Politics in a Fragmented State," *Problems of Post-Communism* (September-October 2005): 69-81).

years. During this time, it helped more than three hundred women affiliated with the Confederation to start their own businesses. With support from a series of such foreign grants, the Confederation's leadership in Kyiv cofounded two joint ventures, one producing baked goods, the other hand-knit textiles. Outside the capital, local and district-level groups that were formerly Women's Councils were also later successful in starting similar ventures to develop businesses. In Crimea, the Sudak district Confederation formed the Club for Women's Rights to help its members start small businesses. Similarly, the members of the Women's Council for the Kherson Region also established a business. At the end of 1994, the Luhansk Women's Council founded the Luhansk Businesswomen's Club, whose stated mission was to unite all local women entrepreneurs. The Confederation later coordinated an even larger-scale economic development project. From 1997 to 1999, the European Union's TACIS program provided 2 million euros for job creation, to be carried out through a partnership between the Ukrainian Ministry of Labor and the Confederation. This project received roughly seven times more funding than the Ukrainian government budgeted for women's issues annually at that time.

3. Educational NGOs: The problem of activist discourse

Since foreign funding involves an encounter between local activists and ideas from elsewhere, it is instructive to examine the language used in such interactions. "Empowerment," "training," and many other American phrases (e.g., "coffee break," "grassroots," "fund-raising," "trainings of trainers") appear frequently in foundation programs and foreign assistance seminar schedules in Ukraine. These American terms have migrated from foreign mission statements and grant announcements into the vocabulary of elite Ukrainian NGOs.[47] The advantages and disadvantages of adopting foreign women's rights discourse rather than a

47. In the words of a former U.S. coordinator of the Women's Consortium in Kyiv, "Unfortunately so many of our English words have been just adopted as cognates, and that's not very effective. They all say *'feministka,'* and *'fandreizing'* and all that, and who knows if they really know what it means" (Phone interview, 11 December 1998).

local equivalent can be seen in the Empowering Education Program (EEP). Anna, the former leader of the Kyiv Union of Ukrainian Women discussed above, founded this program. She based it on women's programs she developed while working as a "women's empowerment" trainer on USAID-funded projects. It is a summer and after-school program aimed at teenagers that receives its funding from the Open Society Institute Network Women's Program, the International Renaissance Foundation, and the UNDP Equal Opportunities Program. The program conducts its work in English, Ukrainian, and Russian and has started to work in Lithuanian as well. Key phrases found in this program's publications originate in U.S.-based women's rights programs or training manuals.[48] The local Ukrainian or Russian words, phrases, or symbols that the broader public identifies with women's initiatives rarely appear, except as negative reference points to the types of stereotypical attitudes this program seeks to correct.

The EEP has adopted a wide variety of phrases the average Ukrainian would find unfamiliar, but which appear commonly in the manuals, program priorities, and mission statements of the program's major donors. For instance, the EEP's goals are described as "enhancing local women's self esteem" and encouraging practices that lead to "effective self-reflection."[49] Its work is further described as being governed by "nonauthoritarian" principles of "confidentiality" and "nonviolence." These phrases cannot easily be translated into the idiom local activists use to describe women's civic engagement. Arguably, there are no easy equivalents of any kind in Ukrainian or Russian for these terms. Instead of adapting local phrases, the organization has translated its program language using terms that are direct cognates of foreign donor discourse. These terms are confusing, and, I argue, they are also counterproductive. For instance, the program translates "empowering education" using the words *"upovnovazhena osvita,"* a new phrase.[50] According to the EEP, the project manag-

48. Olena Suslova, ed., *Empowering Education Manual*, 2nd ed. (Kyiv, Ukraine: Women's Information Consultative Center, 2002).
49. See http://www.empedu.kiev.ua/english/.
50. Author's interview (Common Action member, Lviv, Ukraine, 18 June 2001).

ers chose the word *"upovnovazhena"* (a word that is normally translated into English as "authorized") because this term is used to refer to government-"authorized" representatives such as ambassadors who are important and powerful people with special "powers" (*vazheli*, a word most commonly used to refer to "levers"). Similarly, the EEP claims, "empowering education" is a new type of education that gives people "special powers."[51]

The construction of such foreign phrases solves some problems but creates new ones as well. EEP participants (who are teenagers) find its terminology alien and hard to understand.[52] Even experienced women's rights advocates find the program terminology and, in particular, the phrase "empowering education" itself, to be confusing. Speaking about the EEP's justification for using this and other foreign terms in its work, one local woman's rights advocate who has worked for more than ten years in several women's organizations commented that the program itself is a good one but that its name and some of its main precepts make no sense in local parlance:

> Sometimes the expressions that come out are absolutely different than what was intended. For instance, I have had a really hard time understanding what is meant by the words "empowered education." What does "upovnovazhena osvita" ("empowered education") mean? I don't understand. Perhaps you might call it "effective education," or "balanced education." I understand that there is no difference between a boy and a girl. But such a term as "empowered education" cannot exist. That's my first point. Of course this is nonsense. I looked at their programs. It is normal. They teach people how to conduct social interactions effectively. You understand to some extent that's our mentality, to just bring foreign things here and claim that they are accepted here. I asked a staff person once at the Consortium . . . "Translate this for me. I don't know the English language, but I studied German and I speak German fluently. Please translate for me what 'empowered education' is. A *person* can be 'empowered.' I can

51. For the program's Ukrainian language explanation of their choice of terminology, see http://www.empedu.kiev.ua/ukrainian/welcome6.htm/. For the English translation, see http://www. empedu.kiev.ua/english/welcome1.htm/.
52. According to the Empowering Education Program's (EEP's) "Recommendations for 2000," one of the few documents on the program's Web site that had not been translated into English, one of its trainers noted that more than 70 percent of university students who participated in the EEP could not understand its basic initial terms. See http://www.empedu.kiev.ua/ukrainian/reports.htm/.

> be given the power to make a speech on someone's behalf. But what does 'empowered education' mean? These two words just can't be put together." And she would start talking in circles and not explain anything. I didn't understand anything she said.

As this example suggests, foreign donors reward Ukrainian NGOs that employ their language to describe their own chief objectives and to conduct on-the-ground program activities. Such practices create an asymmetry between foreign-funded groups and other local civic organizations by encouraging organizations to frame their advocacy goals in ways that stigmatize or delegitimate popular civic discourses. This practice has increased the distance foundations have created between foreign feminist NGOs and the broader public. It has encouraged most elite women's NGOs to adopt the discourse foreign funders understand. As a consequence, local NGOs run by foundation feminists have not developed a common idiom that is intelligible to other local activists or to the broader public.

When there is no local equivalent for a term, then there is a good argument for using foreign women's empowerment terminology. For instance, increasing "gender awareness" or "combating sexism" describe new concepts that are unfamiliar to the public and other local civic associations. There are no obvious terms for these notions in Ukrainian and Russian. However, when foreign funders' discourse is used in reference to civic work more generally, the effects are negative. Rather than speaking the same language as grassroots actors, the elite leaders of hybrid NGOs have adopted a vocabulary that is familiar only to the staff and directors of foreign foundations and foreign programs. Elite NGO leaders frequently refer to their organizations by the English term NGO ("NZhO"), even though they could easily translate "nongovernmental organization" into Ukrainian ("NDO") or Russian ("NGO"), or use the more common term, "civic organization" (*"bromads'ka orhanizatsiia"* in Ukrainian, *"grazhdanskaia organizatsiia"* in Russian). Numerous Ukrainian NGOs make many references in their grant applications, final reports, and Web sites to phrases that appear only in foreign grant announcements. For instance, U.S.-funded "civil society"

programs in the late nineties often stressed that they wished to help women as "volunteers" to play a vital role as advocates for women's rights. Soon, numerous groups proposed grant projects that involved *"trenery"* (trainers) who would conduct *"treninhy"* (trainings) on *"advokatsia"* (advocacy) with *"volontery"* (volunteers). Most Ukrainians would find these terms unfamiliar (indeed, I was told more than once that "trainings" and "trainers" are athletic terms that make no sense with reference to civic activities). There are several widely familiar equivalents for all these terms in Ukrainian and Russian.

Much foreign funding intended to foster grassroots groups in public life has instead produced new types of professional nongovernmental organizations that introduce Ukrainians, Russians, Kazakhs, and citizens of other post-Soviet countries to language that program personnel claim they must speak to stimulate "participatory," "community-based," and "grassroots" models of citizenship that international organizations claim will "empower" women and other "disempowered groups."[53] This practice promotes terminology that discourages the participation of grassroots actors and delegitimates their understanding of their own political activities and interests, while rewarding more privileged actors who espouse goals that are more closely aligned with the agendas of foreign states and foreign agencies.

Conclusion

Foreign assistance was originally aimed at building local civil societies, strengthening grassroots groups, and "empowering local women." As I have suggested, this form of aid initiated a complex set of organizational processes, creating a vast system of networks that are byzantine in their complexity. Ironically, these processes breathed new life into state-controlled women's organizations, cut short the development of promising feminist groups, and created an elite of NGO experts who stopped speaking in local idioms. In short, foreign aid encouraged the forma-

53. See David Abramson, "A Critical Look at NGOs and Civil Society."

tion of "hybrid" organizations. My aim has been to show how and why this happened.

First, the hybrid NGOs I have discussed blur boundaries between social spheres considered separate by funders. Contrary to the hypotheses developed to explain hybridity in capitalist firms, in the nonprofit sector local NGOs did not adopt hybrid forms simply because they misunderstood foreign models. On the contrary, foreign NGOs themselves encouraged projects that blurred boundaries between governmental and nongovernmental sectors as well as between nonprofit and for-profit spheres. Foreign funding practices spurred the development of hybrids that little resemble the organizations that designers of civil society projects intended to promote in post-Soviet countries. Some local hybrids are extensions of state socialist activism. Others are local feminist organizations that exist only on paper once they are accepted as a "partner" of one or another large women's rights initiative that is based in a Western country. Many specialize in forms of grassroots activism that remain oriented toward the language spoken by foreign elites and foundation staff.

Second, aid projects were intended to strengthen the position of the local actors from the "grassroots" or "community" who were considered by past critics of international development projects to be marginalized by old-style forms of development dominated by state, expert, and elite agendas. They were nonetheless often run much like conventional economic development projects of the past.[54] Accordingly, they operated at some distance from local or grassroots actors and even, in the above cases, created new opportunities for elite networks based in corrupt local clans to gain control over resources intended to decentralize political and economic power.

Third, programs in Ukraine that were funded by agencies in Western countries have introduced discursive and organizational templates that subvert the original aim of encouraging widespread, "grassroots" participation. It is true that these templates

54. Pishchikova also reaches this conclusion in her analysis of civil society programs in Ukraine. See Pishchikova, "What Happened after the 'End of History'?" 11-13.

often address a wide range of important issues familiar to international women's rights activists: women's legal and political rights, violence against women, reproductive choice, employment opportunities and discrimination, and women's political participation and representation. And these efforts have indeed raised some important issues that have in the past been neglected in this region. They have resulted in the establishment of various new nongovernmental entities that receive grants to "engage women" in credit unions, businesses, and various other women's empowerment projects. However, although the projects all describe their activities as "participatory" and aim to forge "grassroots NGO partnerships," they have in fact led to activities that are difficult to characterize as genuinely participatory. Indeed, as I have shown, they have had a negative impact on local groups and inhibited their participation in public life.

Finally, participation in most gender equality initiatives is limited to a small, select network. This small elite rarely works with the numerous local women's groups that have emerged in the past decade. Members of Ukraine's NGO elite consider most local women activists to be backward, parochial, naïve, and unsophisticated. They reward only those groups that employ the professional gender terminology and models of activism favored by those who provide foreign aid.[55] They deem maternalist efforts to help needy children, gifted young people, the elderly, the handicapped, or the poor to be ineffective because they fail to employ the discourse of choice, rights, and participation that foreign advocacy groups claim is absolutely necessary for Ukraine to become a developed democracy.

My study of hybridization has implications beyond women's NGOs. It suggests that foreign aid programs to develop civil society have encouraged hybridization and fragmentation of civic organizations. Foreign donors must take steps to redesign programs. In the case of aid for women, as in many other kinds of

55. For an examination of this phenomenon in other countries, see Steven Sampson, "The Social Life of Projects: Importing Civil Society to Albania," in Chris Hann and Elizabeth Dunn, eds., *Civil Society: Rethinking Western Models* (London: Routledge, 1996), 120-38; and also Laura Grunberg, "Women's NGOs in Romania," in Susan Gal and Gail Kligman, eds., *Reproducing Gender: Politics, Publics, and Everyday Life after Socialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), 307-36.

foreign aid, there has been little effort by funders to develop common campaigns with preexisting locally oriented groups. With relatively few exceptions, foreign programs have tended to "partner" with small, single-issue associations that must remove themselves from local civil societies to implement the models of civil society promoted by those who provide foreign assistance. Many of the civic associations that result pursue causes with little local resonance. Indeed, their leaders are often openly hostile to groups that have been able to develop a locally resonant collective action frame.

Foreign assistance programs, and "civil society" programs in particular, have not provided favorable opportunities for building ties among organizations. Such ties are vital if these hybrid feminisms are to have a political impact. Instead of creating a healthy civil society of mutually cooperative women's NGOs, transnational women's rights projects in Ukraine have fueled rivalries among several competing domestic women's networks. Thus, foundation feminists are at odds with the former maternalists who left "nationalist" groups to work in foreign aid initiatives. These two groups are both at odds with women's organizations that were controlled by the Kuchma administration, which are themselves at odds with the "traditional" women's federations that are inspired by maternalist goals. Activists of these many different stripes operate with different aims, and each relies on somewhat different sources of external funding and support. Future coalitions among these many kinds of hybrid feminists are likely to easily break down unless the structure of funding that created these divisions alters considerably.