

Democratic Diffusion: The Spread of International Norms in Central and Eastern Europe

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Paper prepared for presented at the International Studies Association
Annual Convention, Honolulu, Hawaii, March 1-5, 2005

Abstract:

Why have some of the newest members of the European Union consolidated their democratic transitions while others have lagged behind? This paper tests the hypothesis that the difference in democratic consolidation between Central and Eastern European countries could be attributable to factors associated with membership in international governmental organizations. Three countries in Central and Eastern Europe, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic, have consolidated their democratic political systems while three others, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania, have not. This paper utilizes aggregate data to compare the differences in political outcomes in Central and Eastern Europe and measure the effect of the assistance provided by the European Union upon these political outcomes. This process of norm diffusion suggests ideational factors should be taken into account for democratization.

Key Words:

International Norm, Democracy, Democratization, Central and Eastern Europe, Intergovernmental Organizations, European Union.

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INTRODUCTION

Democratization remains an important topic in the social sciences. Many Western governments have made democracy promotion a cornerstone of their foreign policy. One democratizing agent which has shown considerable success in promoting democracy in recent years is the European Union (EU).¹ International factors and agents' roles in democratization have only just begun to be addressed in the sub-disciplines of International Relations and Comparative Politics.² The impact of agents such as international governmental organizations (IGOs) is only beginning to be understood by scholars. However, the success of the EU has not been universal. There exists great variation in political outcomes within Central and European states in their attempts to transit and consolidate their democracies.

Why have some of the newest members of the EU consolidated their democratic transitions while others have lagged behind? This paper looks at differences in the adoption of democracy within Central and Eastern European countries. The differences in outcome can be attributable, in part, to the role of IGOs and thus the target countries exposure to these organizations and the benefits of membership. This study examines the process of democratization in six countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Hungary,

¹ Antoaneta Dimitrova and Geoffrey Pridham, "International Actors and Democracy Promotion in Central and Eastern Europe: The Integration Model and its Limits," *Democratization*, 11, no. 5 (December 2004): 91-112; Heather Grabbe, "EU Expansion and Democracy," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, (Summer/Fall 2004): 73-79 and Janine R. Wedel, "U.S. Foreign Aid and Foreign Policy: Building Strong Relationships by Doing it Right!" *International Studies Perspectives*, 6, no. 1 (February 2005): 35-50.

² Hans Peter Schmitz, "Domestic and Transnational Perspectives on Democratization," *International Studies Review*, 6, no. 3 (September 2004): 403-426 and Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda, eds., *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Volume 2: International and Transnational Factors*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Ronald H. Linden, ed., *Norms and Nannies: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

Poland, and the Czech Republic, which have consolidated their democratic political systems, and Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, which have not.³

This paper advances the claim that the benefits of membership and the potential for membership in IGOs, and specifically the EU, can help bridge the gap between the good intentions of domestic elites and the capacity of their societies to promote democracy.

This paper begins with a review of the literature, from the sub-discipline literatures of Foreign Policy, International Relations and Comparative Politics, all of which address the processes of democratization. Then I offer several hypotheses drawn from this literature about the nature of international factors potentially influencing democratization in Central and Eastern Europe. The paper then turns towards testing the hypotheses suggesting that there are other transnational factors at work in addition to material influences upon democratization. Drawn from the analysis, the results of this study suggest that policy makers should focus their attentions on other factors which can influence the internalization of democratic norms within domestic sphere.

³ Micahel McFaul, “The Fourth Wave of Democracy and Dictatorship: Noncooperative Transitions in the Postcommunist World,” *World Politics*, 54 (January 2002): 212-44. There are discrepancies on this point. Experts disagree whether or not Slovakia has consolidated their democracy. For example, Adrian Karatnycky, Alexander Motyl, and Aili Piano, eds., *Nations in Transit 1999-2000*, 19 (New York: Transaction Publishers, 2000). indicate Slovakia is a consolidated democracy. The disagreement itself would seem to indicate the potential for backsliding in this country. Regardless of the conclusion drawn, the variation in the outcome of consolidation is interesting to theory formation as to why consolidation occurs within a shorter time frame in one place and takes longer in others. Additional confusion with the distinction in the phases of consolidation is indicated by the categorization of several Central and Eastern European states as highly consolidated democracies (including Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic) and “middle of the range” democratic consolidation (which includes Bulgaria, Romania and Slovakia). Alex Pravda, “Introduction,” in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda, eds., *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Volume 2: International and Transnational Factors*, 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

DEMOCRACY

Any analysis of the processes of democratization must begin with an understanding of what constitutes the term “democracy.” Interpretations of democracy in the era of the nation-state revolve around conceptions which include the state apparatus as the embodiment of democracy.⁴ Because democracy includes greater input over collective decision making within a particular territory by its citizenry, all interpretations of democracy have similar conceptions of the basic nature of democracy.

Democracy is a political system where the members of the political community have the ability to influence the outcomes of collective binding decisions. When “pure democracy” is applied to the nation-state, the regime includes a specific set of institutions, including free, fair and competitive elections, political parties, an independent media and the usual trappings of modern democracy.⁵ Influenced by Robert A. Dahl’s conception of “‘polyarchy,’ we can define democracy as a type of state in which formal institutional guarantees of electoral contestation of free citizen participation are in place.”⁶ These institutions collectively constitute what is referred to as “democracy,” at least in the minimal, formal sense of the phrase. Procedural interpretations focus on the formal or institutional aspects of state institutions which make up one aspect of the regime. The notions of these formal, and thus more easily observable, rules are constructed within each individual polity.

⁴ Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁵ Schmitz, “Transnational Perspectives.

⁶ Stephen E. Hanson, “Defining Democratic Consolidation,” in *Post Communism and the Theory of Democracy*, eds., Richard D. Anderson, Jr., Stephen E. Hanson, M. Steven Fish and Philip G. Roeder, 141 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

Democracy can be conceived as a set of specific institutions. As Douglas North articulates, institutions have both formal and informal aspects.⁷ Bringing in the conception of regime from International Regime Theory incorporates both formal aspects and the informal side of governmental institutions.⁸ The regimes which make up domestic governance have rules and procedures which are codified, and there are informal norms and principles which guide the political behavior of a polity. The concept of regime has existed in both Comparative Politics as well as International Relations. Traditionally, these two literatures generally regard the idea of regime as distinct conceptions unique to each individual sub-discipline. It is the institutionalization or consolidation of the regime that requires the latter to be internalized as the “only game in town.”⁹ The formal aspects of a democratic regime are put in place during the transition phase of democratization. These institutions exist even if they do not guide the behavior of the polity or if the rules are followed for purely instrumental reasons. These domestic regimes have been assigned many different labels including: “illiberal democracies;”¹⁰ “hybrid regimes;”¹¹ and “protracted transitions.”¹²

⁷ Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 4.

⁸ “International Regimes are defined as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area.” Stephen D. Krasner, “Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables,” *International Organizations*, 36, no. 2 (Spring 1982): 185. For further discussion on regime interpretation and theory see Andreas Hasenclever, Peter Mayer and Volker Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁹ This phrase is attributed to Guiseppe DiPalma in Linz and Stephen, *Problems*, 5.

¹⁰ Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs*, 76 no. (1997): 22-24.

¹¹ Terry Lynn Karl, “The Hybrid Regimes of Central America,” *Journal of Democracy*, 6, no. 3 (1995): 72-86.

¹² Todd Eisenstadt, “Eddies in the Third Wave: Protracted Transitions and Theories of Democratization,” *Democratization*, 7, no. 3 (Autumn, 2000): 3-24.

Democratization as a process entails several different stages when the polity moves from authoritarian rule to democracy. The first phase in the transition from authoritarian rule is liberalization, followed by transition, and lastly, consolidation.¹³

While there are possible intervening variables influencing democratization, there may be a different mechanism that operates in the same way.¹⁴ S. M. Lipset suggests culture may be an intervening variable that is created by economic development. This creates a middle class that presses for a political voice while decentralizing economic power. A context is created in which political tolerance and influence over collective decisions can exist. A different manifestation of cultural factors may be at work in Central and Eastern Europe. In the instance, described above, economic factors prompted change in social relations and thus, the political order. This is an evolutionary change normally taking place over many hundreds of years. However, Central and Eastern European countries have experienced rapid change from one form of regime to another. The form of regime change has certainly had an effect upon the consolidation of democracy in the six countries of this study.¹⁵

¹³ See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); and More recently, Carsten Q. Schneider and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation: Measuring the Components of Democratization," *Democratization*, 11, no. 5 (December 2004): 59-90.

¹⁴ Seymour Martin Lipset suggests that economic factors change the culture. S. M. Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review*, 53, no. 1 (March 1959): 69-105; S. M. Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited: 1993 Presidential Address," *American Sociological Review*, 59, no. 1 (February 1994): 1-22.

¹⁵ Huntington provides the theoretical background for this comment while there is empirical evidence of this taking place in countries of Central and Eastern Europe Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, (Norman: Oklahoma University Press, 1991). Specifically in regards to Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic vis a vis Bulgaria see Nicholas Wood, "Young Bulgarians Know Their Nation's History, Sort of," *The New York Times*, November 15, 2004.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

The process of democratic consolidation is a complex and confusing phenomena. Even those who have studied the politics of transition and consolidation for years have been perplexed by the multiple variables which go into determining whether or not consolidation has occurred, bringing a high degree of confusion into the analysis of the factors of consolidation. The easiest way to conceptualize democratic consolidation is the minimalist interpretation offered in the democratization literature.¹⁶ This minimalist interpretation is that the democracy will persist in the future and that there will not be a regress into authoritarian forms of governance. This interpretation differs from conceptions of democracy in that there is no dependence upon improving the form of democratic governance but that a status quo of the regime is merely maintained. It is future-oriented, encountering the problems of prediction in the social sciences.¹⁷ The minimalist interpretation of consolidation is the expectation that the regime will survive into the future. Interpretations which go beyond this minimal expectation include the informal aspects of the regime.

The term, “consolidation,” may be elusive but it evokes the necessary conception to bring forth the normative ideational concerns that provoke academics, policymakers and the mass publics at large. The idea of democracy involves the increased participation of those who are not able to participate in determining their own future. In academia, it is

¹⁶ See Larry Diamond, “Toward Democratic Consolidation,” *Journal of Democracy*, 5 no. 3 (July, 1994); Guillermo O’Donnell, “Illusions About Consolidation,” *Journal of Democracy*, 7, no. 2 (1996): 34-51; Andreas Schedler, “How Should We Study Democratic Consolidation?” *Democratization*, 5 no. 4 (Winter, 1998): 1-19; Andreas Schedler, “Measuring Democratic Consolidation,” *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 36, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 66-92 Linz and Stephen, *Problems*.

¹⁷ For reasons to pursue prediction in the pursuit of inquiry see Bruce Gilley, “Should We Try to Predict Transitions to Democracy: Lessons for China,” *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 6, no. 1 (2005, forthcoming).

a search for the “X” factor. Democratic consolidation is a search for a cause.¹⁸ In searching for this cause there are many factors which need to be taken into account. These factors can be subdivided into the artificial separation of domestic factors and international factors.¹⁹

One interpretation stresses the expectation of regular practices, a necessary characteristic of a regime.

[Consolidation is a] process of transforming the accidental arrangements, prudential norms, and contingent solutions that have emerged during the uncertain struggles of a political transition into institutions that are reliably known, regularly practiced, and normatively accepted by the participants, citizens, and subjects of such institutions.²⁰

This approach has the particular benefit of easily being translated into observable behavior. It incorporates the specific action of enforcement as a measurement of the degree of consolidation.

Steven Hanson examines the approaches to democratic consolidation and the prospects for Russian consolidation.²¹ He criticizes the mainstream approaches in the literature on democratic consolidation and determines a Weberian institutionalization approach is best for examining the conception of consolidation. Several points are articulated that add to the debate over the proper interpretation of democratic consolidation. Hanson advances the need for scholars of consolidation to incorporate their notions of regime into their conceptions of consolidation rather than simply

¹⁸ Schedler, “How Should We Study;” and Schedler, “Measuring.”

¹⁹ This division follows along with Kenneth Waltz’s conception of the different “images” in international relations or international politics. Kenneth Waltz, *Man State War*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954). However, the use of this socially constructed division between spheres comes with the acknowledgement of the nature of the conception. The division is an artificial construct that makes the individual portions easier to understand when considering each individually. However, at time it makes the comprehension of the interaction of the two more complex to conceive of them as distinct spheres of interaction.

²⁰ Philippe C. Schmitter, “Consolidation,” in S.M. Lipset, eds., *The Encyclopedia of Democracy*, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1995, vol. 1): 295.

²¹ Hanson, “Defining Democratic Consolidation.”

democratic consolidation. Within the broader frame of varying regime types, the consolidation of the regime provides for a greater understanding of the process of even democratic consolidation. Additionally, Hanson provides a critique of two specific approaches to democratic consolidation: Rational Choice and Modernization Theoretical approaches. Both rational choice and modernization theory slip into “Western-centric” positions which falter when examining the prospects for democratic consolidation in other cultural and geopolitical positions in the world. The view taken by Hanson centers around the notion of consolidation as the enforcement of the rules of the regime. If there is a general high level of enforcement of these rules, Hanson considers the regime consolidated. Thus,

...it is still meaningful to speak of democracy as ‘consolidated’ wherever the enforcers of democratic institutions themselves can be counted on with very high probability to behave in ways compatible with, and oriented toward, the perpetuation of formal institutional rules.²²

Juan Linz and Alfred Stephen examine problems associated with democratic transitions and consolidation. They make specific contributions to the understanding of democracy from their conceptualizations of both transition and consolidation. The three levels of consolidation necessary to reap and preserve the gains made through transition provide a benchmark standard of what is necessary.

Linz and Stephen’s working definition of democratic consolidation is:

- Behaviorally, a democratic regime in a territory is consolidated when no significant national, social, economic, political, or institutional actors spend significant resources attempting to achieve their objectives by creating a nondemocratic regime or turning to violence or foreign intervention to secede from the state
- Attitudinally, a democratic regime is consolidated when a strong majority of public opinion holds the belief that democratic procedures and institutions are the most appropriate way to govern collective life in a society such as theirs and when the support for antisystem alternatives is quite small or more or less isolated from the pro-democratic forces.

²² Hanson, “Defining Democratic Consolidation,” 141. Emphasis in the original.

- Constitutionally, a democratic regime is consolidated when governmental and nongovernmental forces alike, throughout the territory of the state, become subjected to, and habituated to, the resolution of conflict within the specific laws, procedures, and institutions sanctioned by the new democratic process.²³

It matters very little if the nature of democracy is at stake. There is a fundamental quality expected to perpetuate the existence of the democracy for the foreseeable future. This key quality is the perception of the individual citizens. Despite the focus of scholars on the role of elites in the process of transition in democratization, the internalization of democratic norms and principles is a necessary precondition for consolidation. This is general in the masses of the population. Incorporated in the institution of democracy are many norms bundled together which function to propagate the continued existence of the institutions. Fundamentally, political equality is a necessary first step. This interpretation draws heavily upon the notion of the procedure definition of democracy advanced by pluralists such as Robert Dahl and Joseph Schumpeter. While the similarity is intentional, the conclusions which can be drawn from such a connection are more profound. The procedural relevance reflects strongly upon the nature of the society which institutionalizes the norms within their society to consolidate a particular regime.

The development of democracy forms an empty, hollow shell, if the members of a society do not internalize democratic norms, values, belief and principles. These hollow democratic husks with constitutional and legal structures which do not reflect the principles, beliefs values and norms of democracy have been labeled “illiberal democracies.”²⁴ Those societies that succeed in internalizing these ideational factors

²³ Linz and Stephen, *Problems*, 6.

²⁴ Zakaria, “Illiberal Democracy.”

become consolidated democracies with diffuse support for the democratic regime.²⁵

Internalization of democratic ideals carries with it the expectation that others within the society will play by the rules of the game and not seek to overthrow the regime, thereby consolidating democracy and legitimating specific societal norms of behavior.

Two prevalent ways to operationalize the concept, “democratic consolidation,” are the “two-turnover test”²⁶ and external observation.²⁷ The first has its own difficulties as a form of measurement. The second is extremely subjective and relies on a purely external viewpoint, ignoring the perspective of the people who make up the polity.

The utility of this benchmark is that it avoids the pitfalls of uniquely correlation measurement such as the “two-turnover test” proposed by Huntington.²⁸ This test suggests that to consolidate, democracy must have a peaceful turnover of executive power to the opposition, within the rules established by the democratic regime, two times. After this second peaceful handing-over of executive power, Huntington suggests the polity is then consolidated and will most likely not regress into authoritarianism.

Huntington’s test has severe limits in its application upon the consolidation of the democratic norms. Under ideal circumstances, meeting the test means normal democratic procedures are being respected and internalized.²⁹ In respecting democratic procedures,

²⁵ The origin of the concept of diffuse support comes from David Easton, *The Political System*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953).

²⁶ Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

²⁷ Schedler, “How Should We Study.”

²⁸ Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 77. There is also a single turnover test which has been used that is of course not as stringent as the one Huntington uses. See Schedler, “Measuring.”

²⁹ Since both Lipset and Huntington use procedural definitions of democracy, a similar criticism applies to them and their measurements of democratic transitions. For further discussion on both the theoretical and practical implications of measuring democracy using procedural definitions see Zakaria, “Illiberal Democracy;” and the entire issue 7.3 of *Democratization* on protracted transitions. Since there are multiple criticisms of this form of democratic definition, I will restrict this line of argumentation to the “two-turnover test” used by Huntington. For examples of its application see Doh Chull Shin, “On the Third Wave of Democratization: A Synthesis and Evaluation of Recent Theory and Research,” *World Politics*, 47 (1994): 135-70.

elites demonstrate they have an interest in doing so. This represents a lack of internalization of democratic norms and the reliance on the instrumental interests of elites to follow the democratic procedures. The test does not measure elite motivations. For example, the test cannot determine when elites' interests are best served by following democratic procedures. Elites still retain the capability of changing their instrumental dependence on democratic procedures to a different form of regime. Thus, the test is limited to an evaluation of the performance of a country's leadership rather than norms of the society.

Additionally, when a country fails the test, it yields little predictive power for the prospect of consolidation. The nature of prediction is especially important for the operationalization of democratic consolidation as a prediction of the future of the polity's current political system. When used, this test only indicates when a society has passed a specific point where consolidation has occurred. The test does not give any indication when consolidation will occur or what is necessary to achieve this goal, but only that prior to "two turnovers" in power, consolidation actually occurred. An example of this latent confirmation of consolidation is exemplified by the 1993 changeover in power from the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to the opposition in Japan. Until this turnover, the LDP had dominated national politics. Before the change in power Japan had been considered a democratic country without the risk of sliding back into authoritarianism and militarism.³⁰ Without the second change over in 1994, when the LDP came back into

³⁰ The presence of U.S. Armed Forces probably had something to do with the levels of confidence in the persistence of Japanese democracy. However, Japanese democratic institutions have achieved a high degree of legitimacy on their own due to their performance, especially in economic matters. The foundation of democratic rule was probably consolidated sometime during the 1970s when Japan's economic development challenged the industrialized democracies of the western world. Thus, consolidation of Japanese democracy occurred at least 20 years before an actual change over in power occurred. This prospect of economic affluence is supported by the research of both Lipset and Huntington.

power, Japan would not have met this test. However, the actual consolidation of democracy occurred before a real turnover of power.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Legitimate actions, or, in Weberian terms, actions that are considered to be legitimate, constitutes the realm of international behavior by the actors who inhabit the system or society.³¹ In order to promote behavior that is unquestionable by other actors, a state either acts legitimately or provides a justification for its behavior.³² Legitimate action conforms to the established norms. Illegitimate action can be justified either by the use of force or persuasion. Persuasion is the use of rhetoric or discourse to convince other actors that the action or behavior was either legitimate in the first place or the action should have been legitimate. One caveat should be noted here: Frequently persuasion is employed to justify inaction rather than action.

Democracy, as a legitimate form of government, is a recent occurrence. Thus, an examination of how states have adopted this norm becomes relevant in the analysis for the discipline of International Relations. Absent an international context for justifying legitimacy of democracy and proscribing correct behavior, the elites would be more likely to move to an alternate form of governance.

To examine this form of international context for domestic decision-making, the formation of democratic institutions, and the consolidation of democratic rule, this paper examines the relationship between several states that have attempted transitions to

³¹ This is an example of what Dessler calls constitutive rules. David Dessler, "What's at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?" *International Organization*, 43, no. 3 (Summer 1989): 441-473.

³² Frank Schimmelfennig, "The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union," *International Organization*, 55 no. 1 (Winter, 2001): 47-80.

democratic rule, and IGOs. In addition to the general benefits of membership, IGOs like the EU provide transition assistance for prospective members. This assistance provides an incentive for the accession countries to accede to the criteria of the EU in exchange for material provisions.

The decision to democratize is the decision to form institutions based on a particular ideal type. This decision occurs within a particular context. The formation of international affairs can be influenced by the occurrences of domestic politics in what has come to be known as “two-level games”³³ and the “second image reversed.”³⁴ The logic flowing from this literature contains the general argument that domestic politics has implications upon the realm of international affairs and vice versa. However, the literature containing the analysis of the implications of international politics upon domestic affairs is relatively scarce when compared to the focus on domestic factors or the reverse, the effect of domestic factors on international outcomes.³⁵ Discussions of the implications of international politics and domestic relations tend to relegate the international context to an insignificant variable that contributes to, but is not a cause of, domestic political change. This lack of theoretical material to deal with such a link does not mean that there are no effects in domestic politics stemming from international sources. Greater understanding of the ways in which international politics influence domestic politics is needed. Typically, the proximate causes of democratization and

³³ Robert Putnam, *Double Edged Diplomacy: International Bargaining and Domestic Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). The formation of these games and how leaders use domestic interests to affect their international bargaining position is established in the *International Organization* article by Putnam that is reprinted at the end of the book, pages 431-470

³⁴ Peter Gourevitch, “The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics,” *International Organization*, 32, no. 4, (Autumn, 1978): 81-912.

³⁵ For the former, see Linz and Stephen, *Problems*. For the latter, see Paul K. Huth and Todd L. Allee, *The Democratic Peace and Territorial Conflict in the Twentieth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) and Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

consolidation are relegated to the sphere of elite politics and their decisions to seek regime change.³⁶ The significance of the international factors upon domestic political institutions may be understated in its effects. This paper aims to look at the development of an international context for the development of democratic norms.

In fact, IGOs, as the embodiment of international regimes, are seen as key intervening variables in the creation of international outcomes.³⁷ The formation of what Hedley Bull has characterized as “international society,”³⁸ provides a forum for expectations converging on the world stage.³⁹ The incorporation of principles and norms runs through a cycle starting with the initial promotion of norms by entrepreneurs to their internalization and incorporation into the institutions of governance.⁴⁰ The distinctions between these different levels do not matter for the internalization of these norms. The adoption of norms and principles forms the development of political change even at the domestic level. Societies internalize international norms through the process of state socialization.⁴¹

³⁶ Huntington, *The Third Wave*, O'Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule*.

³⁷ Krasner, “Structural Causes; Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

³⁸ *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*. 1977. New York: Columbia University Press.

³⁹ Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger, *Theories of International Regimes*.

⁴⁰ Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” *International Organization*, 52, no. 4, (Autumn 1998): 887-917. For the specific application to the EU and the Central and Eastern European state see Frank Schimmelfennig, “Introduction: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and Eastern European States—Conceptual and Theoretical Issues,” in *Norms and Nannies: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States*, ed., Ronald H. Linden (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

⁴¹ Schemilfeng, “The Impact of International Organizations,” and Trine Flockhart, “A Mission Bound to Fail?: The United States as Socializer of Democratic Norms in Post-War Iraq,” *Seton Hall Journal of Diplomacy and International Relations*, 6, no. 1 (2005, forthcoming).

The foundation of the norms of behavior which make up democratic polities has to begin with the notion of political equality.⁴² The concept of political equality has to be learned and internalized for the consolidation of successful democratic systems and their possibility to endure in the international system.

THE ROLE OF IOS IN DEMOCRATIZATION

One strand of literature within international relations suggests that IGOs, may be able to assist democratization in transitional countries. IGOs provide an education as to what community norms are, i.e., late socialization for domestic elites in order to socialize them in internationally accepted norms of behavior and to set limits upon their actions.⁴³ They can also provide material incentives to comply with internationally formed norms of behavior for domestic politics. The application of the spread of norms to democratization has only recently been subject to systematic study.⁴⁴ However, despite the abundance of literature dealing with international norms and the socialization of societies, there are very few studies dealing with the consolidation of a political regime.

One good example of the systematic treatment of variables such as IGOs has been conducted by Jon Pevehouse. He suggests IGOs help nascent democracies implement reforms as part of their transition from authoritarian rule.⁴⁵ The mechanism of this commitment comes from the criteria for membership in the IGO. He infers from this the

⁴² Robert Dahl describes this as a starting point for the emergence of democratic systems. Where this idea is absent, democracy cannot take root. Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

⁴³ Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy," *International Organization*, 47, no. 4 (Autumn, 1993): 565-597; and Jon Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization," *International Organization*, 50 no. 2 (Spring 2002): 325-347.

⁴⁴ See Linden, *Norms and Nannies*.

⁴⁵ Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In?"

aid from regional IGOs provide an incentive to sustain reforms both for their symbolic as well as material value.⁴⁶ However, with the exception of the study by Pevehouse, the role of IGOs is generally seen to be as influencing decisions of domestic elites to embark on a transition to democracy.⁴⁷ The literature dealing with the role of IGOs in the process of democratic consolidation is relatively scarce. Pevehouse indicates that foreign aid reinforces the ideational support given by IGOs.

Alexandru Grigorescu takes a different look at the role of the EU and its member states. His examination looks at the transmission of norms from the international system to affect domestic change within six countries in Central and Eastern Europe.⁴⁸ His study looks at the attempt of European IGOs to transmit a norm of transparency. Grigorescu argues that the IGOs were unsuccessful in transmitting the norm because of their own transparency issues and the lack of a commonly held norm among the IGO members. Generalizing from this, Grigorescu suggests that for IGOs to be used as effective “organizational platforms” to successfully transmit a norm, the organizations themselves need to reinforce the norm.

Judith Kelly’s piece represents an effort to examine the influences of European IGOs upon several of the Central and Eastern European countries that have begun transitions to democracy.⁴⁹ The focus of her study is upon ethnic policies in several countries. Kelley focuses upon three different methodologies to examine the units of analysis. These three forms of method corroborate the overarching argument proposed.

⁴⁶ Pevehouse, “Democracy from the Outside-In?”

⁴⁷ Jon Pevehouse, “With a Little Help from My Friends? Regional Organizations and the Consolidation of Democracy,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 46, no. 3 (July 2002): 611-626.

⁴⁸ Alexandru Grigorescu, “European Institutions and Unsuccessful Norm Transmission: The Case of Transparency,” *International Politics*, 39 (December 2002): 467-489.

⁴⁹ Judith Kelley, “International Actors on the Domestic Scene: Membership Conditionality and Socialization by International Institutions,” *International Organization*, 58 (Summer, 2004): 425-457.

The three levels of analysis include case studies of the units, statistical and counterfactual analysis. The conclusion arrived at is that incentive-based approaches, such as membership conditionality work better to affect domestic behavior than socialization-based efforts, such as persuasion and social influence.

This is not to suggest that international factors trump domestic elements. The purpose of this study is to show that international factors are capable of affecting domestic politics with an aim towards democratic consolidation. Viewing international factors in this way lends weight to the congruence of domestic and international factors that come together to provide the best context for the long-term survival of democracy in post-transitional political settings. Both the international and the domestic can contribute to democratic consolidation (Table 1).⁵⁰

Table 1: Domestic and International Factors Contributing to Democratic Consolidation

	DOMESTIC FACTORS		
INTERNATIONAL FACTORS		Positive	Negative
	Positive	Best	Worse
	Negative	Better	Worst

FOREIGN AID

While democracy and democratization have occupied the attentions of both academia and the press generally, the technical knowledge that makes up the growing

⁵⁰ For a look at the difficulties of imposing democracy on an undemocratic polity see Flockhart, “Mission Bound to Fail?” For an empirical study of the imposition of institutions by foreign powers see John M. Owen, IV, “The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions,” *International Organization*, 56, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 375-409.

industry of democracy assistance has been rather small. As a starting point, Thomas Carothers' book *Aiding Democracy Abroad*, goes a great distance towards closing the gap of incomplete information about democracy promotion programs.⁵¹ This work examines the lack of communication between those who are engaged in democracy promotion programs, and concludes that this lack of information is hurting the ability to create efficient and effective programs. Carothers suggests that while much work needs to be done to improve democracy assistance, there has been substantial gains along the learning curve. The integration of democracy assistance programs within the overarching goals of development assistance as a whole needs to be addressed. In suggesting the incorporation of on-the-ground ideas into the broader framework of democracy promotion, the concerns of indigenous peoples should be taken into account. The implementation of these programs remains one of the largest tasks to be tackled. This suggests "cookie cutter" democracy promotion programs do not work. This type of concept can be tested in the implementation. While democracy itself has various forms, the programs tend to follow the procedural list that Carothers specifies.⁵² Determining which variations work requires an examination of what procedures need to be altered to improve the performance of democracy promotion programs.

Western governments have spent billions of dollars providing other countries with assistance for the purpose of consolidating gains made during their political and economic transitions.⁵³ Plying this aid through both bilateral and multilateral

⁵¹ Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

⁵² Carothers, *Aiding Democracy*, 6.

⁵³ While the units of analysis, the polities, are going through both political and economic transitions, this study, while incorporating economic factors as independent variable, looks at political rather economic outcomes.

mechanisms, the West aims to provide support for nascent democracies especially in those countries that once fell behind the Iron Curtain. Has this aid assisted these transitions, or have Western governments wasted their resources trying to affect a purely domestic process? What is the role of IGOs in providing this assistance? What is their role in helping these countries consolidate their democratic regimes?

IGOs have become major contributors of aid, thus their role increases in importance. This is especially true in places such as Central and Eastern Europe, where the largest aid donor, by far, is the EU.⁵⁴ This role as a provider of assistance differs from previous eras where IGOs and their policies were seen merely as the aggregate outcome of the collective interests of the member states.⁵⁵ Typical realist accounts of the spread of norms rely upon a dominant power to impose the norms and principles upon domestic societies.⁵⁶ IGOs are emerging as potential actors on the world stage, independent of their collective memberships.⁵⁷ The notion of an independent IGO is especially true when looking at the institutions which form the EU.⁵⁸ Evaluating the effectiveness of the EU's aid requires an examination of the impact upon the states in Central and Eastern Europe.

⁵⁴ Aid donor database, www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline.

⁵⁵ Keohane *After Hegemony* and Joseph Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tariff Barriers to Trade*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

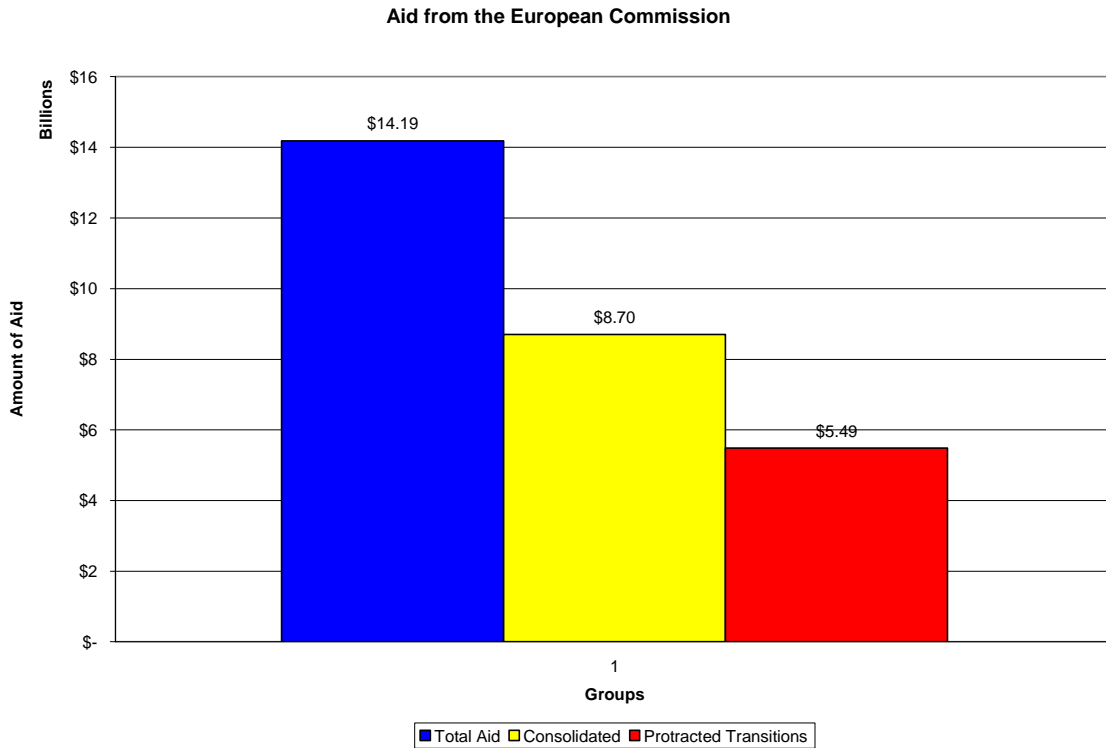
⁵⁶ Hans Peter Schmitz and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Human Rights," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds., Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, 521 (New York: Sage Books, 2002).

⁵⁷ Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy," *International Organization*, 47, no. 4 (Autumn, 1993): 565-597.

⁵⁸ Karen Alter, "Who are the 'Masters of the Treaty'? European Governments and the European Court of Justice," *International Organizations*, 52, no. 1 (Winter, 1998): 121-147.

The total amount of aid administered in this region for the period of 1990 through 2002 is over 14 billion U.S. Dollars (Graph 1).⁵⁹ The consolidated regimes in Central and Eastern Europe have received substantially more aid than those countries whose transitions have become protracted. When examined over time, the amounts of aid delivered to consolidated and protracted transition groupings roughly follow the same trend (Graph 2).⁶⁰ This data begs the question of causality. Do the consolidated democracies receive more aid because they are a better investment on the part of donors, or are they consolidated because they receive aid?

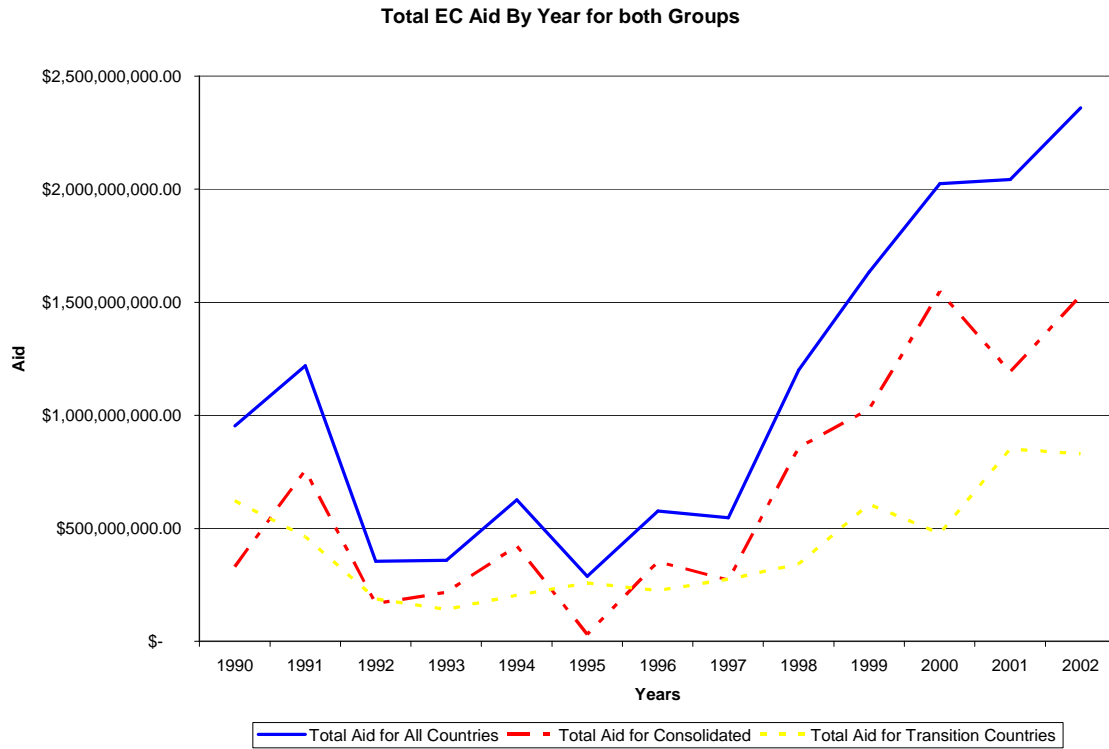
Graph 1: Total Aid from the European Commission to both Groups



⁵⁹ www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline.

⁶⁰ www.oecd.org/dac/stats/idsonline.

Graph 2: Total aid administered by the European Commission for both groups.



One assumption behind the administration of this aid is that it can “buy off” opposition groups who might threaten the political stability of nascent democracies or ease the burden of transitional politics. In post-transition politics, support for the regime can fall along two basic lines. The first line is a form of normative ideological support. The second line of thinking about why people support the regime is for their instrumental motivations. They are willing to support the regime because it is in their best interest, at this time to do so. If an alternative emerges which will benefit them to a greater extent, their support shifts to accommodate this change. In democratic terms, this latter group does not see anything inherently good about a democratic form of government. Aid is supposed to provide them with a form of instrumental interest and incentives to tide them

over until democratic norms and principles are internalized and democracy becomes the “only game in town.”⁶¹ This aid changes the incentive structures of their polity until consolidation occurs. One way the EU’s interests have manifested themselves is through the criteria set for new members. The EU provides incentives for accession countries to accede to the Copenhagen criteria which require new members to have democratic institutions.⁶²

Recent evidence suggests that the aid administered to the former Iron Curtain countries has not all been wasted. The nature of the relationships formed could be better.⁶³ However, despite the difficulties in administering aid by Western countries, one agent of democratization has helped the transition and subsequent consolidation process. The EU’s aid programs hold the most promise for success in the Central and Eastern European states.⁶⁴

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS

To answer the questions of how international factors affect the process of democratization, it is important to examine it with a perspective that goes beyond the domestic level to see how international factors affect the levels of democracy in a country. The internalization of democratic norms indicates that a society has moved

⁶¹ Linz and Stepan, *Problems*, 6.

⁶² The Copenhagen criteria are “(1) stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities; (2) the existence of a functioning market economy; (3) capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union; and (4) the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.” John Van Oudenaren, *Uniting Europe: An Introduction to the European Union*, 2nd ed., (Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, August 2004), cited in John P. Hardt, “European Union Accession, May 2004,” *NewsNet: News of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies*, 44, no. 5 (October 2004): 1. For the documentation see, European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993, “Conclusions of the Presidency,” *Bulletin of the European Communities*, 26, no. 3 1993.

⁶³ Janine R. Wedel, “U.S. Foreign Aid and Foreign Policy: Building Strong Relationships by Doing it Right!” *International Studies Perspectives*, 6, no. 1 (February 2005): 35-50.

⁶⁴ Grabbe, “EU Expansion,” and Dimitrova and Pridham, “International Actors.”

beyond the transition stage of democratization to consolidate their democracy.⁶⁵ Beyond the adoption of procedural rules to guide political behavior, the internalization of democratic norms helps form a political culture based on the values, beliefs, and patterns of behavior which conform to democratic ideals. This is what it means to foster substantive rather than procedural or constitutional democracy.

The role of IGOs within the international system for the promotion of democratic consolidation has only recently come to the attention of political scientists.⁶⁶ While domestic factors are given primacy within explanations offered for the success or failure of democratization efforts, international factors are increasingly seen as facilitating the process of democratization.⁶⁷ An examination of the process of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe may provide an indication of why some societies have been able to consolidate their democracies while others have not. This will provide a better understanding of the process of democratic consolidation and provide some guidance for policymakers when targeting democracy promotion programs.

CASE SELECTION

This paper examines the prospects of democratization within Central and Eastern Europe. Specifically, this paper addresses this process within several states that entered the EU on May 1, 2004. These cases include the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and

⁶⁵ Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

⁶⁶ Schimmelfennig, "The Impact of International Actors;" Dimitrova and Pridham, "International Actors;" Alexandru Grigorescu, "European Institutions and Unsuccessful Norm Transmission: The Case of Transparency," *International Politics*, 39: 467-489, (December 2002), Pevehouse "With a Little Help from My Friends," Pevehouse, "Democracy from the Outside-In;" Edward Mansfield and Jon Pevehouse, "Democracy, Democratization, and International Organizations," paper presented at the Annual International Studies Convention, Montreal, Canada, March 16-20, 2004, Hans Peter Schmitz, "Domestic and Transnational Perspectives on Democratization," *International Studies Review*, 6, no. 3 (September 2004): 403-426.

⁶⁷ Jon Pevehouse, "With a Little Help from My Friends?" Schmitz, "Transnational Perspectives."

Slovakia. Three have generally been considered to be consolidated democracies.⁶⁸

Poland has passed the “two turn-over test,” proposed by Huntington to measure when consolidation has occurred. Hungary and the Czech Republic have experienced similar political occurrences since the transitions began in the “Velvet Revolutions” of 1989.

The examples of Central and Eastern European consolidation may bring a certain amount of parsimony to the study of international relations and its effects on domestic politics. The cases are unique due to the assistance, both ideational and material, in supporting the transitions. Students of transition countries will find that the IGOs have had a substantial effect upon the ability of domestic actors to consolidate democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. What can be taken away from this experience are several ways to assist democratic consolidation in Central and Eastern Europe, and lessons to apply to other contexts.

Specific problems have been encountered by Central and Eastern European countries that make them different from the transitions of the “Third Wave of Democratization” discussed by political scientists.⁶⁹ Despite the argument advanced by Samuel Huntington that the international context has provided elites in pre-democratic transition states with the impetuses to foster transitions from authoritarian rule, he has argued that domestic politics provides the most important factors guiding the transitions and subsequent consolidations of democracy. Most analysts, including Huntington, who have dealt with the politics of democratization after the fall of the Berlin Wall, acknowledge international factors play a role in the democratization of transitional

⁶⁸ Anna Seleny, “Old Political Rationalities and New Democracies: Compromise and Confrontation in Hungary and Poland,” *World Politics*, (vol. 51.4, 1999), pp. 484-519. Michael McFaul, “The Fourth Wave.”

⁶⁹ Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

countries.⁷⁰ Most do not acknowledge the potential for international factors to guide and secure the prospects of nascent democracies to become full, consolidated democracies, but rather point to variation in outcomes which emerge due to domestic factors.⁷¹ The recent shift in the examination of post-communist transitions to examining the role of international institutions in forming the context of consolidation within their societies represents a substantial advance in our understanding of the subject.⁷²

It is not without a sense of irony that all of the democratic transitions and consolidations in Central and Eastern Europe have occurred with strong international influences. Because of Soviet hegemony over Central and Eastern Europe during the Cold War, notions of self-determination could not flourish.⁷³ The reasoning for the welcome of the Western project may be a function of geographic proximity, as suggested by some political scientists.⁷⁴ This may be a function of the material assistance Western Europe has provided to those states on the borders of the “Evil Empire.” The historical significance cannot be overstated. The states in Central and Eastern Europe, which have consolidated their democratic regimes since 1989, have performed exceptionally well in terms of political and economic development, despite the potential of post-communist transitional countries to form anti-western, anti-capitalist sentiments. As an example, the biggest problem for Poland is not the problem of a resurgent communist or authoritarian party but instead the failings of corruption and economic performance. Before the end of

⁷⁰ Huntington, *The Third Wave*.

⁷¹ Schimmelfennig, “The Impact of International Actors.”

⁷² Jacques Rupnik, “Eastern Europe: The International Context,” *Journal of Democracy*, (April 2000): 115-129.

⁷³ Samuel Huntington, “Will More Countries Become Democratic?” *Political Science Quarterly*, (Summer, 1984), p. 217.

⁷⁴ Harvey Starr, “Democratic Dominoes,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, (June 1991), pp. 356-381; Rupnik, “Eastern Europe.”

the Cold War, there was a strong international influence upon the political and economic future of the countries of Central and Western Europe.

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has also been involved in the region although it is not examined in great detail. The major difference between the two has been the stringency of membership requirements. NATO was easier for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland to enter, and was considered a higher priority due to the nature of security considerations which are necessary for stable democracies.⁷⁵ The requirements for accession to the EU are more difficult and take a stronger economic approach to its conditionality. Because of the differences in approach as well as the expected implications of EU membership, this study examines this IGO rather than NATO, with its less stringent entry requirements.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

Typically, comparative analysis for the study of transition societies occurs with the examination of domestic politics. The potential independent variables for democratic consolidation are extremely numerous, with many different combinations.⁷⁶ To narrow them down, the presumption of this paper is that membership, or in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, prospective membership, in regional IGOs has had a qualitative difference on the prospects of democratic consolidation. The way in which this variable operates is to bolster the conditions present in the domestic context of transition societies.

⁷⁵ Rupnik, "Eastern Europe," 121.

⁷⁶ See Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 37, for a large list of potential variables that affect the prospects for democratic transitions. As these variables do not disappear and may still be responsible for failed transitions and the potential for backsliding consolidated democracies, they are still relevant to the discussion of prospective consolidation. Thus, the potential variables for consolidation are even greater than those for transition due to the potential for all of the variables affecting transitions plus the nature of transitions affecting the prospects of consolidation and similar variables that are dependent upon the transition from authoritarian rule.

In some ways, this is an incomplete answer to the questions surrounding democratic consolidation. However, the social requisites as well as the potential for economic structures and other institutional settings to influence democracy have been discussed at length in other sources.⁷⁷ Thus, while these variables are not diminished in importance by the argument advanced in this paper, they are only considered insofar as the independent variable of IGO membership has the potential to affect the capacity of a society for producing democratic consolidation. All of the cases under examination have made transitions from authoritarian rule in Central or Eastern Europe. All of the cases considered have similarities in geographic position, legacies bequeathed to them by the trappings of communism and socioeconomic and historical backgrounds.⁷⁸

Of the potential explanatory variables used in this study, economic influences tend to hold a position of primacy in the literature.⁷⁹ Gross Domestic Product per capita (GDP) takes the fundamental factors of national income into account. This data uses the information provided from the World Bank Development indicators to determine the GDP per capita for each year in the study.

An additional economic factor that is not necessarily an indication of economic development or prosperity, deals with the openness of each economy of the six countries.

⁷⁷ For one specific source see Seymour Martin Lipset, "The Social Requisites of Democracy Revisited."

⁷⁸ There are distinctions in the legacy of communism for the various cases under examination in this study. Specifically, Jacques Rupnik argues that the countries which were more independent from the center of power under Soviet hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe were the least successful in their democratic transitions. "Eastern Europe: The International Context," *Journal of Democracy*, (2000), 120. Despite this distinction in the legacies of the transitional societies, this paper argues that International Institutional support is a crucial ideational and material benefit to societies attempting to consolidate their democracies. See also, Michael G. Roskin, *The Rebirth of East Europe*, 3rd ed., (Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 1997): 4-6.

⁷⁹ There are theories that rely upon economic variables as key independent variables for their effect upon democracy. There tend to be intervening variables between the independent and dependent in modernization theories which rely on economic forces to change societies to accommodate democratic institutions. Adam Preworski and Limongi, "Modernization: Theories and Facts," *World Politics*, 49, no 2. (1997), Lipset "Social Requisites Revisited."

This model uses trade as a percent of GDP as a proxy for economic openness. Again, this information is taken from the World Bank's measurements.

THE DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable in this study is democratic consolidation. This phenomenon is difficult to measure. The practical aspects of what a consolidated democracy is very difficult to pin down. In this sense, it is a phenomenon similar to the United States Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's interpretation of obscenity, "... I know it when I see it..."⁸⁰ In the same sense, students of transition countries know that there are consolidated democracies that exist, including the United States and most of Western Europe. But what makes these democracies established and consolidated? These difficult to grasp phenomena are tackled from many different angles.⁸¹ While numbers are used to describe the level of democracy in the political communities examined in this study, the type of data is an ordinal form. The data set for this study utilizes a minimalist definition that is regarded in the literature as a procedural form of democracy.⁸²

The graph below (Graph 3) displays the degree of democracy for the six countries under examination.⁸³ They have been divided into two different groups: consolidated and

⁸⁰ *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 378 U.S. 184, 197 (1964). Available at: <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=378&invol=184>, Downloaded on April 11, 2004.

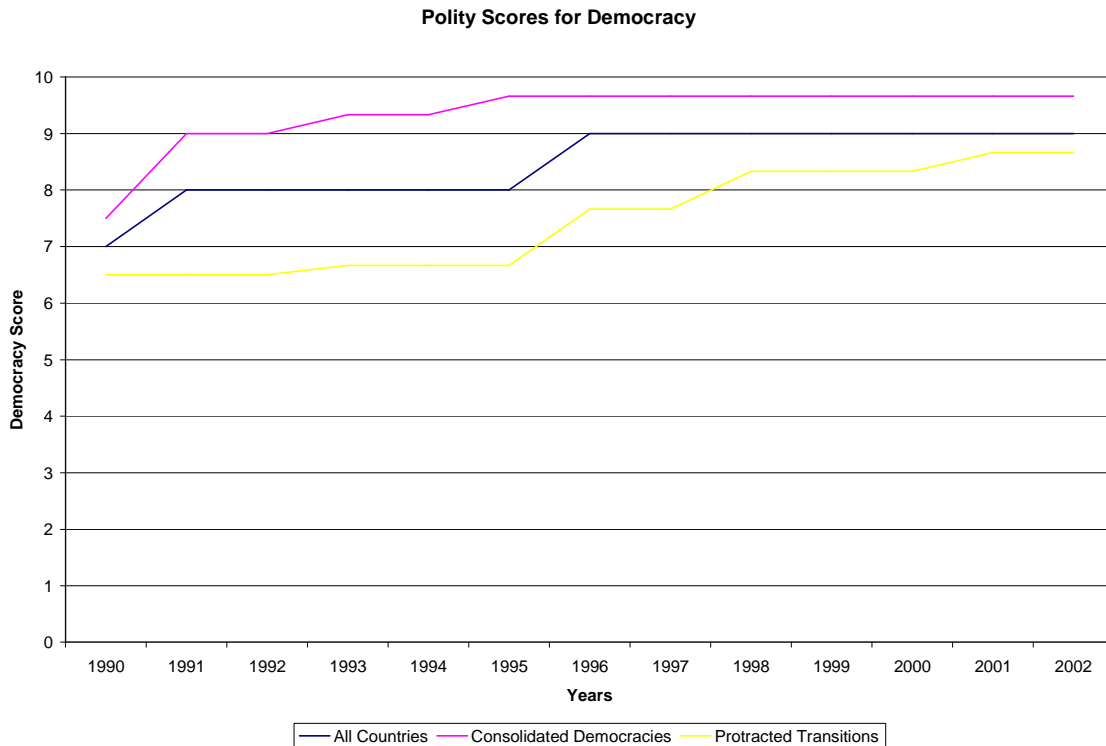
⁸¹ For examples of differences see also Linz and Stepan, *Problems* and Schedler, "How Should We Study," and O'Donnell "Illusions"

⁸² Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2002. Dataset Users' Manual*, Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR) Program Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland, College Park 20742, www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/polity.

⁸³ Monty G. Marshall and Keith Jagers, *Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2002. Dataset*, Integrated Network for Societal Conflict Research (INSCR) Program

unconsolidated democracies. The difference in their degree of democracy as measured by the polity dataset provides some illumination as to the difference between a consolidated democracy and an unconsolidated democracy. For the two groups in question, both are sets of democracies, however, the second group of countries has not institutionalized or consolidated democracy in their polities. The three consolidated democracies display a consistently higher score since the introduction of democratic politics in 1989. The higher degree of democracy for the protracted transitional countries came later. This demonstrates the strong possibility of backsliding away from democratic principles. This examination of the dependent variable details where these states are today.

Graph 3: Time series of democracy scores for both groups.



The variance in the dependent variable, of course, begs the question about what is different about these two groups of cases. The major difference is the involvement of a major regional international organization, the EU. This organization has assisted the countries of the first group and placed requirements upon their entry into the EU. These requirements for the EU include democratic governance as a prerequisite for membership.⁸⁴ At the same time, an outlier exists in a specific form. One of the protracted transition countries, Slovakia, joined the EU with the other three consolidated countries examined in this study.

TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

From this examination of the literature on international norms and democratic consolidation, several hypotheses emerge which can be tested. These potential hypotheses along with their null-hypotheses are listed below. Because of the potential for aid from Western democracies, and specifically through IGOs, the amount of aid given to each of the Eastern and Central European countries should correspond to the ability of these countries to consolidate their democracies. Thus, the amounts of Official Development Assistance (ODA) from Western Europe should correspond to consolidation.

The total amount of aid administered for the period 1990 through 2002 is over 14 billion U.S. dollars. The consolidated group received substantially more aid than those countries stuck in the process of transition (Graph 1). When examined over time, the amount of aid delivered to consolidated and protracted transitional groupings roughly

⁸⁴ Hardt, "European Union Accession."

follow the same trend. However, in any given year, the European Commission, the division of the EU which administers aid, tended to give more aid to the group of consolidated countries.⁸⁵ This raises a question about the direction of causality. Do the consolidated democracies receive more aid because they are a better investment or are they consolidated because they receive aid?

An additional hypothesis may be suggested, stemming from the use of IGOs as an “organizational platform.”⁸⁶ It is possible that membership in IGOs is related to democratic consolidation as suggested by Pevehouse.⁸⁷ In addition, the literature on norm transmission indicates that IGO may be used as a platform to project norms to members of the organization.⁸⁸ Thus, there should be higher levels of democracy in the countries who are members of the EU.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The model for this study utilizes several variables discussed in the literature that are hypothesized to have an effect upon democracy, and specifically consolidation. The independent variables are hypothesized to have varying degrees of influence upon levels of democracy.

To test the first hypothesis to see if there is a correlation between the aid administered by the EU and the level of democracy in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, we look at the correlation between EC aid per capita and the polity

⁸⁵ The European Commission administers the aid for the entire European Union and is marked as such in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s donor database.

⁸⁶ Grigorescu, “European Institutions.”

⁸⁷ Pevehouse, “With a Little Help from My Friends

⁸⁸ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), Grigorescu, “European Institutions.”

scores of the six examination countries (Table 2). The hypothesis is that there is a positive correlation between the amount of aid the EU gives per person and the level of democracy. When examined the correlation between the scores is positive .301 that is significant at the .01 level.⁸⁹ This is sufficient to reject the null hypothesis for this correlation.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient:

Spearman's Correlation Coefficient	Polity	
EC aid per capita	0.301	**
GDP per capita	0.801	**
ELF	-0.550	**
Geography	-0.466	**
Contagion	0.006	
Openness	0.318	**
Durability	0.415	**
Country #1: Bulgaria	-0.201	
Country #2: Czech Republic	0.376	**
Country #3: Hungary	0.569	**
Country #4: Poland	-0.031	
Country #5: Romania	-0.484	**
Country #6: Slovakia	-0.229	*

* indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** indicates that the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The second hypothesis examines the relationship between national income and democratic levels. The hypothesis suggests there is a positive correlation between the size of the economy and the level of democracy. When tested, the correlation is .801 with a significance level of .000, displaying a greater correlation than the aid distributed by the EU. Of the correlations tested in this study, national income is positively correlated and has the strongest correlation to the dependent variable. This lends support to the literature suggesting a strong link between the size of a polity's economy and its

⁸⁹ All statistics used in the correlations use Spearman's.

level of democracy. The degree of correlation suggests there is a reason to reject the null-hypothesis suggested in the previous section.

The third hypothesis suggests there is a negative relationship between cleavages which form in a polity and the degree of democracy. These cleavages are tested by examining the probability that a person of one ethnolinguistic group will run into a member of another ethnolinguistic group. The Spearman's correlation coefficient shows ethnolinguistic factors (ELF) have a negative correlation at $-.550$ also significant at the $.01$ level. This indicates that the lower the probability of multiple ethnolinguistic groups within a polity, the more likely the country is to be a democracy. This negative correlation suggest the more homogenized a country, the more likely the country will be able to consolidate its democratic practices.

The next variable to be examined is the distance from the center of influence in the EU based in Brussels, Belgium. The distance is measured in miles to see if greater distances from the center of the EU have a difference upon the level of democracy. In this instance, it is hypothesized that there is a negative correlation between distance and level of democracy. The correlation supports the hypothesis that there is a negative correlation between distance and democracy levels in the six countries examined. The correlation is not as high as either economic effects or ELF, however, it is significant at the $.01$ level. The correlation is $-.466$ for geographical distance.

While distance from the agent of influence may be strongly correlated, other geographical factors tested in this study do not demonstrate a strong correlation between the factors influencing the processes of democratization in the countries under examination. The contagion factors examined have suggested there is a positive

correlation to the level of democracy in the surrounding countries. These contiguous countries may influence the process of democratization in the countries under examination. Despite the variance of the mechanisms discussed in the literature, it is important to examine the possible effects of the neighborhood of the study countries. The correlation, however, does not display a statistical significance of correlation between the diffusion or other effects from the neighbors of these six countries. The variable displays a correlation coefficient of .006 and is without statistical significance. This shows the importance of the relationship between these six countries and their neighbors to be minimal or non-existent for their political system. This runs counter to the claims of Central and Eastern European foreign policy posturing cited by Alex Pravda.⁹⁰

The sixth hypothesis tests the possibility of a correlation between the ability of commerce to move in and out of the countries under examination. Openness is hypothesized to be positively related to the level of democracy in each of the countries under examination. The correlation is positive at .318 with a significance level of .01. This demonstrates the possibility that the level of trade with the world economy may have a great impact upon political governance. While this economic variable may be of interest, this study has not been concerned with the further question of whether trade influences domestic practices and regime choices. Further research into this question may yield results that would create further support for this hypothesis.

The last hypothesis suggests there is a positive correlation between the length of time a regime is in place and the likelihood the country will internalize the norms and

⁹⁰ Alex Pravda, "Introduction," in Jan Zielonka and Alex Pravda, eds., *Democratic Consolidation in Eastern Europe, Volume 2: International and Transnational Factors*, 1-27 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

practices which back up the institutions of the regime. This proxy of regime durability measures the number of years since a regime was established. The hypothesis is the longer a regime is in place, the more likely the regime will persist. The correlation here is also statistically significant at the .05 level. At .415, this positive correlation suggests a causal relationship may exist between the length of time a polity is democratic and the duration or persistence of that regime into the future.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The practical applications of this research are fairly straight forward. The efficacy of the application of EU aid is a poignant question for European policymakers but also for the rest of the world. With the potential for violence and bloodshed to accompany failed transitions, the effectiveness of aid to promote successful transitions is an important issue for policymakers everywhere.⁹¹ It has been demonstrated that the achievement of foreign policy goals through the gift of aid has suffered from poor and inconsistent planning.⁹² Focusing money on projects with a normative content which emphasizes the transmission of ideas may well improve the effectiveness of the influence IGOs have upon political outcomes behind the curtain of the domestic politics.

CONCLUSIONS

The correlations between foreign aid and the improvement of democracy in the states of Central and Eastern Europe may be evidence of the effects of socialization due

⁹¹ For information on the risks of failed transitions see Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and War," *Foreign Affairs*, 74, no. 3 (May-June, 1995).

⁹² Janine R. Wedel, *Collision and Collusion, The Strange Case of Western Aid to Eastern Europe 1989-1998* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1998).

to the nature of the technical form of assistance.⁹³ The advice given by experts and the forms of technical assistance and advice offered through foreign aid represent a form of socialization with a particular “epistemic community” of advisors.⁹⁴ The contribution to democratic consolidation through technical assistance and the relationships fostered by the EU’s aid would confirm the thesis presented by Wedel.⁹⁵ Since the processes of democratization are primarily occurring at the elite level in the countries under consideration, that formation of relationships in these countries where aid is administered is “doing it right.”⁹⁶

So, why is the EU spending billions of dollars to support the transition of the former Iron Curtain countries? Because they are now EU members is a very simplistic answer. Even if we consider that Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary have consolidated their regimes and these three polities constitute the bulk of the new members of Central and Eastern Europe, we are still left explaining the context of the admittance of Slovakia. The results for Slovakia along the dependent variable indicate that it is meeting the Copenhagen criteria established by the EU, but barely. It is more likely for Slovakia to backslide into an authoritarian regime than the other new EU members.

The support which the EU has given to the nascent democratic societies of Central and Eastern Europe takes two different forms. The first is related to the material

⁹³ The assistance offered by the EU (and other donors) primarily takes the form of technical assistance rather than the capital assistance administered by the United States to Europe after the end of World War II under the Marshal Plan. Wedel, “Doing it Right.”

⁹⁴ This suggestion has been made in Pravda, “Introduction.” Despite the indict to epistemic communities as a socializing form offered by Martha Finnemore’s 1993 article, “Teaching,” the particular forum offered by the administration of technical assistance may lend itself as a form of socialization to contribute to the socialization of the polity.

⁹⁵ Wedel, “Doing it Right.”

⁹⁶ Wedel, “Doing it Right.”

qualifications for democratic societies.⁹⁷ For example, the amount of material aid given by the EU and member countries for the Poland and Hungary Assistance for the Restructuring of the Economy Program has been substantial.⁹⁸ This has provided those governments with an incentive to comply with the admittance requirements as well as easing the monetary costs of their respective transitions.

The second form of IGO assistance that the EU has given to Central and Eastern European countries comes in an ideational form. The IGO can shield domestic elites from the political consequences of reform policies.⁹⁹ In addition to the domestic political costs of failure to meet the requirements of IGO membership, the commitment to IGO membership signals to international society the dedication of the domestic elites to reform programs.¹⁰⁰

The suggestion remains that there may be ideological or symbolic motivations for the attention and monetary assistance provided to Central and Eastern Europe. Despite the failure of transmitting one of the more significant norms for democracy,¹⁰¹ this form of regime has taken root in the region.¹⁰²

The data gathered in this study suggests new areas for research. Different types of aid should be examined for the implications of their effectiveness. It is possible one of the reasons why the EU continues to send seemingly bad money after good is that there

⁹⁷ For the necessity of economic performance for nascent democracies, see Lipset, “Social Requisites.”

⁹⁸ Rupnik, “Eastern Europe,” 125.

⁹⁹ Rupnik, “Eastern Europe,” 125. The behavior of forming an excuse for the leadership in nascent democracies in voting behavior is referred to as “Exonerative” behavior by Susan Stokes, *Public Support for Market Reforms in New Democracies*, (Cambridge University Press, 2001), with particular emphasis on the first chapter which contains the ideal types. See also Pravda, “Introduction,” 21, where aid cushions the impact of the transition.

¹⁰⁰ Jon Pevehouse, “Democracy from the Outside-In? International Organizations and Democratization,” *International Organization*, (Summer, 2002), p. 515-549.

¹⁰¹ Grigorescu, “European Institutions.”

¹⁰² McFaul, “The Fourth Wave.”

may be individual aid programs which are extraordinarily successful in comparison to the sum total. This research can contribute a mechanism on how aid promotes democratic values.

A second area of research should be focused on the prospects of ideational factors in the use of aid monies. Pevehouse infers that aid acts to reinforce the diffusion of norms and principles which proved a foundation for democratic practices to emerge.¹⁰³ One implication of this trend in the application of democracy promotion assistance is that aid tends to be delivered to places where the aid is less likely to make a substantial impact. Countries where the majority of aid monies are targeted tend to be the ones with preexisting pro-democratic sentiments. This finding supports the conclusion of Pravda where the aid should be refocused toward the countries most at risk of backsliding.¹⁰⁴ That is, it would only be necessary to provide aid in places where there is a lack of ideational or ideological commitment to a democratic form of regime. This also suggests Pevehouse's notion that aid acts to reinforce the ideational factors is fallacious. Future research projects can point out the ideational factors which make a difference in the spread of democracy in Europe as well as the mechanism by which they spread.

Currently the aid is going to places where the ideational principles are already internalized. It is also the case the internalization of democratic norms is weaker in transitional setting, as the countries which are considered to be consolidated, reap the majority of the aid monies administered. Thus, the aid has less of an effect but with results that can be shown to the rest of the world, especially to their taxpaying constituents.

¹⁰³ Pevehouse, "With a Little Help from My Friends?"

¹⁰⁴ Pravda, "Introduction."