

ENHANCING A COUNTRY'S SOFT POWER THROUGH
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTRIBUTIONS TO BRIDGE-
BUILDING BETWEEN NATIONS

by

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(Under the Direction of Carolina Acosta-Alzuru)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigated whether public relations, described as relationship management in the public relations scholarly literature, can enhance a nation's soft power abroad. Two types of relationships were explored. The first type involved those ties that government institutions establish with their domestic partners—non-governmental organizations and businesses, whereas the second type of relationships pertained to linkages between actors from one nation and its strategic constituencies in other countries. The chosen research setting for this dissertation study was the nation of Latvia whose government, along with its domestic partners from the non-governmental sector, had been involved in international development cooperation in its neighboring regions of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. These development cooperation initiatives were viewed as soft power instruments that influence a nation's standing in the international community. Qualitative interviews were conducted with development cooperation and public relations officers in Latvian organizations that had been actively involved in development cooperation. These organizations represented government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and businesses. This dissertation study's findings

revealed that relationship management indeed can help a nation wield soft power. However, public relations was not the only organizational function responsible for relationship management. This dissertation also discussed ways that knowledge and sensitivity to transformational contexts—defined as environments undergoing political, economic, and social system changes—can strengthen relationships between constituencies of various nations.

INDEX WORDS: Relationship management, relationship types, public relations, soft power, development cooperation, Latvia

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2009

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DEDICATION

To my parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge several special people without whom this dissertation would not have been possible. My deepest gratitude goes to my advisor **Dr. Carolina Acosta-Alzuru (Dr. A)** for her encouragement and significant contributions to this dissertation. I have been honored to have her as my advisor during my doctoral program at the University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism and Mass Communication.

I also want to give my appreciation to each member of the dissertation committee. **Dr. Christina Joseph** introduced me to various aspects of qualitative research methodology. **Dr. Anandam Kavoori** opened to me the world of international communication. **Dr. Bryan H. Reber** inspired my interest in relationship management. And, throughout my doctoral studies, **Dr. Karen Miller Russell** shared her public relations knowledge with me. I am more than grateful to each of them for being an integral part of this dissertation journey.

My parents **Vizma** and **Reinis Pētersoni** have always supported and encouraged my personal and educational goals. Thank you for believing in me and teaching me the ethics of hard work. I cannot express how much I appreciate the support and assistance of **Mary** and **Walter Johnson**, who relentlessly proof-read this dissertation and provided their input to this work.

Special gratitude goes to the participants of this dissertation study who generously devoted their experience, knowledge and time. As much as I would like to name each participant individually, the requirements of confidentiality do not allow me to do so. I am very grateful for their trust which has served as the foundation for this dissertation study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
 CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Theoretical framework of the study	2
The purpose of the study	3
Research setting	3
Methodology of the study.....	4
Significance of the study	5
2 CONCEPTUALIZATION	7
Public relations contributions to the management of international relations	7
Relating the concept of soft power to public relations	14
Public relations as a relationship management for soft power purposes.....	19
Transformation public relations	35
3 METHODOLOGY	39
Value of qualitative research	39
Research method	40
Preliminary study of documents.....	41

Participants of the study	42
A sector specific overview of participants	45
Data collection.....	48
Data analysis.....	49
Ethical considerations.....	50
Ensuring the quality of the study.....	50
Reflexivity	51
4 RESULTS	52
Research question one: Government institution relationships with domestic partners	52
Research question two: Domestic partner relationships with government institutions	62
Research question three: Comparison of relationship descriptions offered by government institutions and their domestic partners	78
Research question four: Government institution relationships with international publics	90
Research question five: Domestic partner relationships with international publics	100
Research question six: Relationship management contributions to Latvia's soft power	113
Research question seven: Public relations contributions to relationships management.....	126
Research question eight: Relationship management and transformation.....	153

5	ANALYSIS.....	159
	Relationship management for development cooperation purposes.....	159
	The role of the public relations function in relationship management.....	177
	Relationship management contributions to soft power	193
	Relationship management and transformation	201
6	CONCLUSIONS.....	203
	Conclusion set one: The role of public relations in relationship management	203
	Conclusion set two: Relationship management theory and the research setting...205	
	Conclusion set three: Wielding soft power through relationship management.....	209
	Conclusion set four: Relationship management and transformation.....	212
	Implications for public relations theory	212
	Limitations of the study.....	216
	Future research	217
	REFERENCES	220
	APPENDICES	230
	A Interview guide for the government sector	230
	B Interview guide for the non-government sector.....	232

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Participants	42
Table 2: Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Relationship outcomes....	55
Table 3: Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Domestic partners as relationship bridges with third parties.....	56
Table 4: Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Relationship maintenance strategies	57
Table 5: Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Factors influencing relationship quality.....	61
Table 6: Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Types of relationships....	62
Table 7: NGO relationships with government institutions: Relationship outcomes.....	66
Table 8: NGO relationships with government institutions: Relationship maintenance strategies.	68
Table 9: NGO relationships with government institutions: Factors influencing relationship quality	72
Table 10: NGO relationships with government institutions: Types of relationships.....	74
Table 11: Business organization relationships with government institutions: Relationship outcomes—resources	75
Table 12: Business organization relationships with government institutions: Relationship maintenance strategies	76

Table 13: Business organization relationships with government institutions: Factors influencing relationship quality.....	77
Table 14: Domestic partners: Relationship outcomes	81
Table 15: Domestic partners: Relationship maintenance strategies	84
Table 16: Domestic partners: Relationship quality factors.....	88
Table 17: Domestic partners: Types of relationships	90
Table 18: Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes	94
Table 19: Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies	94
Table 20: Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality.....	96
Table 21: Government institution relationships with international partners: Relationship outcomes	99
Table 22: Government institution relationships with international partners: Relationship maintenance strategies	99
Table 23: NGO relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes	103
Table 24: NGO relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies	104
Table 25: NGO relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality.....	108
Table 26: Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes	110
Table 27: Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies	111
Table 28: Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality.....	113

Table 29: Enhancing Latvia's soft power capital	116
Table 30: Latvia's soft power gains from relationships with international publics.....	120
Table 31: Encouraging diverse coverage of Latvia's soft power through relationships.....	123
Table 32: Government institutions: Public relations and the Latvian public	131
Table 33: Government institutions: Public relations and domestic partners	132
Table 34: Government institutions: Public relations and international publics.....	135
Table 35: NGOs: Public relations and the Latvian public	142
Table 36: NGOs: Public relations and the government	144
Table 37: NGOs: Public relations and aid recipients.....	149
Table 38: Business organizations: Public relations and the Latvian public.....	151
Table 39: Business organizations: Public relations and the government.....	152
Table 40: Business organizations: Public relations and aid recipients	153
Table 41: Factors facilitating good relationships between Latvian development actors and transformational contexts.....	158
Table 42: Analysis: Relationship outcomes.....	164
Table 43: Analysis: Factors influencing relationship quality	168
Table 44: Analysis: Different levels characterizing relationship outcomes	170
Table 45: Analysis: Relationship maintenance strategies.....	172
Table 46: Analysis: Types of relationships	176
Table 47: Analysis: Public relations involvement in relationship management between parties directly involved in development cooperation.....	184
Table 48: Analysis: Public relations involvement in socialization of development cooperation policies	188

Table 49: Analysis: Characterizing public relations activities	192
Table 50: Analysis: Relationship related factors creating supportive environments for Latvia in developing countries	196
Table 51: Analysis: Secured national interests as relationship outcome	197
Table 52: Analysis: Soft power capital build-up	198
Table 53 Analysis: Encouraging diverse coverage of Latvia's soft power through relationship management	199
Table 54: Analysis: Relationship management failure affecting soft power	200

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Broom, Casey and Ritchey's relationship model	22
Figure 2: J. Grunig and Huang's relationship model	24
Figure 3: Toth's interpersonal influence model	25
Figure 4: Hung's relationship continuum	27

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1992 two public relations scholars—Signitzer and Coombs—wrote that public relations can help nations reach their international goals. After comparing the disciplines of public relations and public diplomacy they came to the conclusion that these two converge. Although Signitzer and Coombs found parallels between the disciplines of public relations and public diplomacy, they acknowledged that the relationship between the two has been little explored. They wrote that only “empirical studies will facilitate this convergence of research traditions which, in the past, have evolved in quite different intellectual and academic settings and in near isolation from each other” (p. 146). More than a decade later Signitzer and Wamser (2006) made a similar observation about the lack of empirical work, allowing a conclusion that not much has changed in the period between the publications of the two articles. Yun (2006), another public relations scholar, voiced Signitzer and Coombs’ (1992), and Signitzer and Wamser’s (2006) concerns by suggesting that “the works [in public relations] primarily elaborate on further conceptual convergence between both spheres without conducting empirical research” (p. 288).

Meanwhile, the discipline of public relations has changed its focus from communication as a unit of analysis to relationship management as the central element of study. According to Ferguson (1984), “the study of public relations [should be] the study of relationships between organizations and publics” (p. 26).

The simultaneous development of these two trends—the acknowledgement that public relations can help nations reach their international goals and the relational focus of the public relations discipline—has not been addressed by the public relations scholarly community. Only in a concluding section of his article in the *Journal of Public Relations Research* did Yun (2006) acknowledge that the “focus of future research [in public relations] should be on the relationships of governments with specific and strategic foreign publics such as congressmen [and congresswomen], journalists, and opinion leaders” (p. 309).

My dissertation responds to these two trends in the public relations discipline by exploring ways that the function of public relations can help a nation reach its international goals. The dissertation study directly addressed Signitzer and Coombs (1992), Signitzer and Wamser’s (2006), and Yun’s (2006) calls for empirical research on the possible public relations contributions to strong relationships between various social groups of different nations.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This dissertation is guided by two main concepts—soft power and relationship management. According to Nye (2004), soft power, a term widely used in the international relations literature, involves all those “intangible assets” that can make a nation attractive to its strategic constituencies abroad. The “intangible assets” include a nation’s culture, foreign policy goals, and ideals.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the concept of “soft power” is linked to the public relations body of knowledge about relationship management. By applying relationship management to soft power settings, this dissertation attempts to understand ways that relationships are built and maintained between publics of various nations. This dissertation study investigates whether public relations knowledge about relationship management, e.g.,

relationship models (e.g., Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997, 2000; J. Grunig & Huang, 2000; Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; Toth, 2000) and relationship types (e.g., Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; Hung, 2005; J. Grunig, 1993a), can increase a nation's standing in the international system.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore ways that relationship management can strengthen a nation's soft power abroad. This dissertation focuses on two forms of relationships. First, it addresses relationships that government institutions establish with their domestic partners who may help them increase their soft power capabilities. The second kind of relationships involves exchanges between a nation's government institutions and their domestic partners, on one hand, and the nation's strategic publics abroad, on the other.

Research Setting

This dissertation study focuses on the nation of Latvia whose government, along with its domestic partners from the non-state sector, has tried to increase its soft power abroad through development cooperation. The Latvian government has attempted to position itself as a newly emerging international donor by strengthening democratic reforms, facilitating economic growth, and reducing poverty in the neighboring regions of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2006).

For the purposes of this dissertation study, Latvian international development programs, which the government implements together with its domestic partners such as non-governmental organizations and businesses, are perceived as a soft power instrument that can help Latvia increase its standing in the international community. This dissertation study emphasizes the role of relationship management in Latvia's development cooperation efforts.

Methodology of the Study

The applicability of the relationships management body of knowledge to soft power settings is a little-studied phenomenon, therefore, qualitative research methodology, which allows “inductive development of theory from intimate knowledge of situated practice,” was chosen for this dissertation study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). Data about relationship management in soft power settings were obtained through qualitative interviews with Latvian development cooperation actors from both government and non-government sectors. Qualitative interviewing was selected as a research method due to its ability to provide “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) and “rich data” (I. Rubin & H. Rubin, 1995) about the research settings under study. “Thick descriptions” and “rich data” were especially significant for this dissertation because it tried to understand such an under-explored subject as the link between soft power and relationship management.

Sampling strategies including purposeful, snowball, and maximum variation were employed in the selection of participants—Latvian development cooperation actors—with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and affiliations. The data were collected using open-ended questions that allowed the study’s participants to provide in-depth reflections about their experiences and observations. The interviews were analyzed according to a three-step analytical induction process suggested by I. Rubin and H. Rubin (1995). The first step of this analysis process involved searching for emerging concepts and ideas within each individual interview and among the interviews. During the second step the identified concepts and ideas were related to each other in order to uncover major coding categories. The third step involved, what Strauss (1987) called, “axial coding,” i.e., exploring relationships between major coding categories.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this dissertation study facilitates understanding about ways that relationship management can strengthen a nation's soft power abroad. This study may provide five contributions to the knowledge about relationship management for soft power purposes.

First, this dissertation explores a little researched phenomenon—the intersection between relationship management and soft power. According to Signitzer and Wamser (2006), knowledge about international public relations is especially important in the current age of global interconnectedness when forces such as the telecommunication revolution, the world-wide spread of democracy, and globally integrated market economies have intensified the formation of international publics with direct consequences on national governments.

Second, this study responds to Wang's (2006) call to understand various institutions that are engaged in the public relations aspects of public diplomacy, a term closely related to the concept of "soft power." This dissertation tries to identify domestic publics other than governments—non-governmental organizations and businesses—who are also involved in relationship building with international publics, and, thus, may increase a nation's soft power capital.

Third, this research addresses another unexplored area identified by Wang, i.e., the variety of a nation's international publics. The previous research about the contributions of public relations to relations between nations has mostly focused on the media (e.g., Wang & Chung, 2004; Zhang, 2006). This study departs from this earlier scholarly work by emphasizing foreign publics other than the media.

Fourth, this study may also contribute to the body of knowledge about relationship management. Most research on relationship management has been quantitative in nature (e.g.,

Bruning & Galloway, 2003; Huang, 2001; Ledingham, 2003; Ledingham & Bruning, 2000), thus measuring relationships through numbers and statistics at specific points in time. The dissertation study approaches relationship building and maintenance from a qualitative perspective, viewing relationships as an interactive process that evolves and changes in specific contexts over time.

Fifth, this dissertation may also have practical implications for professionals who represent organizations that are involved in soft power wielding. This research study may provide these individuals with a better understanding of relationship management, knowledge that can help their institutions establish strong ties with domestic partners and interact with foreign publics.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUALIZATION

This chapter reviews the two main concepts of this dissertation study—soft power and relationship management. It suggests ways that relationship management could enhance a nation's soft power abroad.

Public Relations Contributions to the Management of International Relations

Over the past two decades public relations scholarship has acknowledged that the function of public relations can help governments reach their foreign policy goals. In particular, several scholars (e.g., J. Grunig, 1993b; L'Etang, 1996, 2006; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006) have conceptualized about public relations contributions to relations between states. This conceptualization has developed in two directions. First, a group of scholars has discussed similarities between the international relations and public relations bodies of knowledge. The second conceptual direction has involved suggestions about ways that public relations can assist governments in conducting international relations. In addition to this conceptual work, several empirical studies have been conducted to explore the link between public and international relations. The following three subsections review these two conceptual directions and provide a brief overview of the above mentioned empirical studies.

Conceptualizing about Similarities between the Public Relations and International Relations Bodies of Knowledge

The first conceptual exploration focused on similarities between public relations and cultural diplomacy. In 1992 a *Public Relations Review* article authored by Signitzer and Coombs

compared the four models of public relations (J. Grunig & Hunt, 1984) to Peisert's (1978) goals of cultural diplomacy. Signitzer and Coombs (1992) found that the press agency model with its objective of propaganda corresponds to the one-way transmission of a country's culture to another country with the intention of changing the other nation's cultural values. The public information model is similar to the self-portrayal goal of cultural diplomats who try to create a particular image of their nation abroad without changing the values of the other culture. The third public relations model, two-way asymmetrical, which is based on scientific persuasion, parallels cultural image advertising. This kind of promotion includes establishing cultural institutes abroad in order to "monitor relevant social and cultural developments" in other countries and exerting influence on foreign publics with the goal of creating sympathy for the advertiser's cultural diplomacy goals (Signitzer & Coombs, 1992, p. 144). Finally, the two-way symmetrical model that facilitates understanding and dialogue between the organization and its publics is consistent with the cultural diplomacy goals of exchange and cooperation between two or more nations in the areas of science, culture, and education.

Later Signitzer, along with Wamser, conceptualized the similarities between public relations and international relations levels of analysis (Signitzer & Wamser, 2006). The two scholars compared Ronneberger and Rühl's (1992) classification of public relations levels with Goldstein's (1994) levels of international relations. First, on the macro level (global societal level in public relations and global level in international relations) scholars of both disciplines study ways that their fields can contribute to overall global changes. Second, the meso level in public relations explains how various market interests intersect, whereas the international relations theory is concerned with relationships among states. Third, the level below, organizational for public relations, seeks to explain how public relations contributes to individual

organizations. Similarly, the domestic level for international relations describes how groups of individuals, whether they are political, special interest, or governmental, influence a state's international behavior. Finally, at the individual level both disciplines are concerned with the actions of individual human beings.

British scholar L'Etang (1996, 2006) identified four functions that are shared by public relations and public diplomacy. She labeled the first common function as representational by suggesting that both public relations and public diplomacy are based on self-interest, self-promotion, and persuasion of others. Representation is achieved through rhetoric, oratory, and advocacy. The second function shared by public diplomacy and public relations includes negotiation and peacemaking, and is labeled as dialogic. The third function, advisory, involves counseling of management or government in matters of communication. The fourth shared function is called "intelligence gathering" in international relations and "environmental scanning" in public relations. This function allows governments and organizations to learn about their environments.

According to L'Etang (2006), some other similarities between public relations and public diplomacy exist. A group of similarities focus on the actors that perform the above described functions—public relations practitioners for corporations and diplomats for governments. Corporate public relations practitioners, as well as diplomats, engage in boundary-spanning activities that allow them to "cross . . . cultures (whether organizational or national) and bridge cultural gaps" (p. 375). Both types of actors manage communication, and they perform the interpretive and presentational roles on behalf of their corporations or governments. Corporate public relations practitioners and diplomats are also concerned with influencing others in ways that are favorable to those that they represent. L'Etang suggested that little difference exists

between public relations practitioners and diplomats. She renamed the first group—public relations practitioners—as corporate diplomats. L’Etang continued her reasoning by describing the relationship between corporate public relations practitioner and diplomats as “one of collusion; governments are highly dependent upon industries and industry agents can use government agents as their own to secure their ends. . . . [T]he relationship between government and business elites may lead to the formation of a wider diplomatic culture within which an extended chain of agency relationship exists” (p. 376).

Despite the similarities between public relations and public diplomacy which L’Etang analyzed in the context of international relations, differences between the two exist. For L’Etang, Wight’s (1994) three approaches to the international order reveal major shortcomings of the public relations discipline. The first of Wight’s approaches—Machiavellian or realist—sees the world as a hostile and competitive place where pressure and inducement are the only ways to maintain order. The co-existence of different governments is ensured through contracts. L’Etang (1996) believed that this realist approach shares a worldview with the press agency and asymmetrical models in public relations. Wight’s (1994) second approach is called Grotian or rationalist. The international order is maintained through relationships between states that are based on reciprocity and mutually beneficial outcomes. The public relations equivalents of this approach are the public information and two-way symmetrical models. The third of Wight’s approaches—Kantian or revolutionist—is the one that demonstrates the public relations discipline’s limitations. The Kantian or revolutionary approach views nation-states as obstacles to the “fulfillment of the human potential” (L’Etang, 2006, p. 385). Wight believed that this potential can be revealed only through the formation and workings of a global society. According to L’Etang (2006), the public relations discipline lacks understanding about levels

other than the organizational. Even the concept of “symmetrical public relations” does not offer solutions for situations when the interest of the organization and its publics are irreconcilable. L’Etang wrote that on these occasions “it is likely that organizational interests will prevail” (L’Etang, 2006, p. 385). She did not see public relations as a revolutionary instrument but rather as an obstacle to true global dialogue and democracy. The current state of public relations “clearly enhances the flow of subsidized institutional information. . . . [T]he public relations industry clearly does not take upon itself responsibility for ensuring that all views are heard—it simply represents those who pay for its services” (p. 386).

Conceptualizing about Prospective Public Relations Contributions to International Relations

In addition to the above described conceptual convergences between public relations and international relations, a group of scholars have explored the possible ways that public relations knowledge can facilitate relations between states. Contrary to L’Etang (1996), J. Grunig proposed that governments should practice public relations in a symmetrical manner. He believed that governments, like their organizational counterparts, can reach their goals through “dialogue, collaboration and compromise” (p. 150). The added value of symmetrical public relations is its inherently ethical nature which allows integration of the interests of all parties involved.

J. Grunig, as well as Signitzer and Wamser (2006), believed that governments must practice international public relations as a strategic management function that is an integral part of the overall governmental processes. They suggested that J. Grunig’s (1997) situational theory of publics is used to learn about a country’s strategic consistencies abroad. Signitzer and Wamser (2006) acknowledged that governments can employ public relations as a boundary-spanning

function in order to understand their international environments. The two scholars wrote that the public relations discipline can also provide governments with knowledge about the most effective communication channels. They advised that governments use the mass media to disseminate hard political information. Interpersonal communication channels are much better for reaching a nation's cultural goals such as academic and artistic exchanges. Signitzer and Wamser also believed that the public relations discipline's knowledge about community and relationship building can facilitate cultural communication between states.

Like Signitzer and Wamser, Vujnovic and Kruckeberg (2005) singled out the public relations knowledge about community-building. They offered a model, labeled as the Arab model of public relations, which can foster relationships, including diplomatic, between the Western and the Arab worlds. Vujnovic and Kruckeberg's model views an organization or government as one unit in a much larger organism. According to this model, the focus of the public relations function should exceed the publics who have direct consequences on the organization or government, and include society at large. Public relations should create communities through interpersonal communication and relationship-building.

Empirical Explorations about Public Relations Contributions to Relations between States

A few studies have been conducted to empirically investigate ways that public relations help states gain power in the international system. For example, Yun (2006), who studied foreign embassies in Washington, D.C., identified similarities between the behaviors of public relations and public diplomacy practitioners. The studied public diplomacy practitioners were embassy officials in charge of "policy advocacy in the form of media relations and the overall management of public diplomacy" (p. 300). Yun applied the principles of excellent public relations (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002) to public diplomacy. The study revealed that

excellent public diplomacy includes two-way communication based on formative and evaluative research, symmetrical internal information exchange, ethical communication, involvement of the public diplomacy function in a government's strategic management of foreign affairs, and so forth.

Another group of scholars (e.g., Zhang & Benoit, 2004; Zhang & Cameron, 2003; Zhang, Qui, & Cameron, 2004; Wang & Chang, 2004) studied the U.S. media coverage of various foreign governments' publicity campaigns. They suggested that the mass media significantly influences and mobilizes foreign public opinion. Zhang and Cameron (2003) conducted a content analysis of several U.S. national print media sources to measure the success of the Chinese government's image campaign in the United States. Wang and Chang (2004) conducted a similar study to explore the local and national coverage of a Chinese head of state's visits to the United States. Zhang and Benoit (2004) explored the Saudi government's image campaign and its effects on the U.S. media after September 11. Zhang (2006), who studied the U.S. media after the 2005 tsunami in Southeast Asia, suggested that countries around the world used international relief aid as a symbol that helped them "to cultivate and maintain national identity and to facilitate state policy agendas" (p. 26).

Zhang, Qui, and Cameron (2004) studied the *New York Times*, *Newsweek*, and *National Review* to learn about the communication approaches used by the U.S. government after a collision between an U.S. Navy plane and a Chinese jet in 2001. They applied the contingency model to the media coverage of the Sino-U.S. conflict and concluded that advocacy rather than dialogue was the most appropriate communication approach to this conflict. In another study Zhang (2007) analyzed the speeches of U.S. administrators and the media coverage of those

speeches to learn how the use of metaphors helps the United States define its positions on foreign affairs events.

Relating the Concept of Soft Power to Public Relations

The above described scholarly work involves several concepts and conceptual interpretations, different applications of public relations, and various contexts in which public relations can be used. One of the most frequently used concepts is “public diplomacy.” However, those conceptual and empirical studies do not provide a generic understanding of the concept’s use in public relations. In some situations (e.g., Kunczik, 1997; Yun, 2006) public relations and public diplomacy are the same function, in some others, they are two different functions that have developed along parallel tracks (e.g., Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006; L’Etang, 1996, 2006). Different terms—cultural diplomacy, political communication, policy advocacy in the media, international public relations by governments, and so on—have been used to describe the public diplomacy function. On several occasions scholars have used international relations and public diplomacy interchangeably.

Furthermore, scholars offer different suggestions about ways that public relations can help governments interact with their publics abroad. Most of the empirical studies (e.g., Zhang & Benoit, 2004; Zhang & Cameron, 2003; Zhang, Qui, & Cameron, 2004; Wang & Chang, 2004) approach international public relations, practiced by governments, as a publicity function whose goal is to ensure media coverage. Contrary to these empirical studies, on the conceptual level scholars have suggested that public relations is a strategic management function that helps governments facilitate dialogue and collaboration, scan environments and span boundaries, identify international publics, and build communities (e.g., J. Grunig, 1993b; L’Etang, 1996, 2006; Signitzer & Coombs, 1992; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006; Vujnovic & Kruckeberg, 2005).

Some scholars (e.g., L'Etang, 1996, 2006; Signitzer & Wamser, 2006), who have analyzed public relations in the context of international relations, have suggested that public relations may have the potential to influence global processes. For example, Signitzer and Wamser proposed that, like international relations, public relations can encourage global societal changes on the macro level of analysis. L'Etang (1996, 2006) advised that the public relations scholarly community look beyond symmetrical communication in order to find ways that public relations can assist in the “fulfillment of the human potential” (p. 385).

Public relations contributions to the management of relations between states have also been discussed in various contexts. For instance, Signitzer and Coombs (1992) analyzed cultural diplomacy; Yun (2006) described policy advocacy; Zhang and Cameron (2003), and Zhang and Benoit (2004) focused on the media coverage of foreign government image campaigns in the United States; Zhang (2006, 2007) studied governmental statements about international events and affairs in the media; and Zhang, Qui, and Cameron's (2004) study was concerned with the media reporting on a Sino-American conflict.

In sum, this literature review revealed some conceptual, application, and contextual ambiguity in the public relations scholarship. In order to overcome this ambiguity, this dissertation will propose an element which may unify this scholarship. This unifying element is this scholarship's shared focus on ways that public relations can help nations increase their influence in the international system. This acknowledgment of a unifying element allows viewing public relations as a management function that is inseparable from the nation's overall foreign policy goals and embodies diverse strategies—dialogue, publicity, advocacy, representation, and so forth—that all can be employed in various foreign policy contexts in order to achieve the main goal of a nation, i.e., its increased influence in the international system.

This dissertation will relate this influence to the concept of “soft power” which describes a nation’s ability to enhance its attractiveness abroad (Nye, 2004). This dissertation study will explore ways that public relations as a relationship management function can help nations wield soft power.

Soft Power Described

The term “soft power” was proposed by Joseph Nye, Jr., former dean of Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government and the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs in the Clinton Administration. Soft power is “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion” (p. x). This form of power is different from “hard power” which rests on military and economic might. Soft power derives from “intangible assets.” One such asset is a *country’s culture*. For Nye, a country’s culture is conveyed to international settings through interpersonal communication channels such as educational and scientific exchanges, art exhibits and performances abroad, popular entertainment, sports, and media and internet reports.

Another intangible asset is a country’s *political* ideals. Nye reminds that in order to wield soft power governments must live up to these ideals at home and abroad, as well as understand that one country’s political values cannot be transferred to another country in an unmodified manner. Soft power assets are also *foreign policies* that are not narrowly limited to self-serving national interests. Foreign policies that strengthen a country’s soft power abroad must be perceived by other international actors as legitimate.

Public Good as a Source of a Country’s Soft Power

Nye wrote that a country can enhance its soft power by demonstrating a concern for the “public good” (p. 61). The concern for the public good is especially important for smaller

countries which lack hard power resources. Nye explained, “Some countries enjoy political clout that is greater than their military and economic weight would suggest because they define their national interests to include attractive causes such as economic aid and peacemaking” (p. 9). Nye praised European countries, especially Norway, for their involvement in international development and peace. According to Nye, Norway’s international attraction is founded on its conflict mediation successes, foreign aid contributions, and participation in peacekeeping missions. The Norwegian example demonstrates “how a small country can exploit a diplomatic niche that enhances its image and role” (p. 112). In his discussion of Norway’s successes, Nye focused on behavioral activities rather than communication. “[A]ctions rather than broadcasting” have enhanced Norway’s soft power (p. 112).

A similar opinion about the value of actions that focus on the public good was shared by Atwood, McPherson, and Natsios (2008) who have a combined 16-year experience of heading the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID) under both Democratic and Republican administrations. The three authors believed that development assistance is an effective soft power instrument. They wrote:

In many places, USAID is the most visible face of the U.S. government; its influence at the level of civil society is far greater than the State Department’s or the Pentagon’s, whose representatives tend to remain in capital cities. USAID officers have daily interactions with civil-society leaders, government officials, members of local legislative bodies, businesspeople, and ministries that deal with development issues. (p.125)

Benita Ferrero-Waldner, the European Union’s Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighborhood Policy, saw the European Union’s Neighborhood Policy as a soft power instrument which could “streng[then the European] voice in the world” (Ferrero-Waldner, 2006, p. 139). The Neighborhood Policy is focused on partnerships that lead bordering states toward “prosperity, security and stability” (p. 140).

Soft Power Resource: A Multiplicity of Actors

Soft power does not belong only to governments, especially in the current environment when postmodern publics are often skeptical of governments. In order to overcome the lack of credibility, Nye advises governments “to keep in the background and to work with private actors” (p. 113). Examples of non-governmental actors’ successes in wielding soft power for the United States include the Soros Foundation and Carnegie Endowment that both have helped this country consolidate democracy in East Europe after the Cold War, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, which has actively combated disease in Africa. Businesses also make “public-spirited” contributions by, for instance, sponsoring cultural and educational events (p. 114).

Soft Power and Public Relations

As it was stated before, this dissertation will explore ways that the public relations body of knowledge about relationship management can help nations wield soft power. The concept of “soft power” allows viewing the public relations function in the overall context of a nation’s culture, political values, and foreign policies. It acknowledges that although a nation may engage in purposeful activities to enhance its soft power, the nation’s international standing depends on a broad combination of factors that have developed over long periods of time and may be beyond the governmental control. The concept of “soft power” with its acknowledgement of the public good emphasizes responsible and ethical international behavior. It also reveals that governments are not the only actors in the international system. Soft power provides a complex and realistic context within which the public relations function must be located in order to help nations navigate the international system and increase their power within it.

Now when the concept of “soft power” and its relationships with public relations are described, a detailed discussion of the public relations function will follow. The next section

defines the public relations function and identifies ways that this function can help states wield soft power.

Public Relations as a Relationship Management for Soft Power Purposes

Simultaneously with the increased interest in ways that public relations can facilitate relations between nations, the public relations discipline has experienced a shift of focus from communication to relationships. Ferguson (1984) believed that public relations scholars should select relationships as the unit of analysis because the study of communication does not distinguish public relations from other disciplines. She wrote, “Understanding public relationships requires more than understanding communication processes and effects. It may require understanding organizations, understanding publics, and understanding the large social environment within which these two social units exist” (p. 3). Ehling (1992) provided a similar rationale for the shift of focus by suggesting that public relations should transit from the manipulation of public opinion to the facilitation of relationships.

Hon and J. Grunig (1999) characterized the value that public relations adds to organizations when the function establishes relationships. The two scholars wrote:

When public relations helps the organization build relationships with key constituencies, it saves the organization money by reducing the costs of litigation, regulation, legislation, pressure campaigns, boycotts, or lost revenue that result from bad relationships. Public relations also helps the organization make money by cultivating relationships with donors, consumers, shareholders, and legislators who are needed to support organizational goals. Good relationships with employees also increase the likelihood that they will be satisfied with the organization and their jobs, which makes them more likely to support and less likely to interfere with the mission of the organization. (p. 11)

Defining Public Relations

These theoretical developments led Ledingham and Bruning (1998) to the conclusion that public relations is “relationship management.” In a later article the two authors expanded their definition by suggesting that public relations is “the management of relationships between an organization and its key publics” (Ledingham & Bruning, 2000, p. 56).

Although Ledingham and Bruning's definition of public relations will guide this dissertation study, it will also draw elements from two other definitions of public relations. First, Ledingham (2006) related the role of communication to relationship management by proposing that communication is an instrument that initiates and strengthens the organization-public relationship. To emphasize the role of communication, this dissertation study will also use J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) understanding of public relations as the "management of communication between an organization and its publics" (p. 6).

Second, van Ruler and Verčič (2002), who disagreed with J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) definition of public relations, believed that this function is "a strategic process of viewing an organization from an 'outside' view" (p. 16). The two European scholars described the American definition as "working with the public," whereas their definition meant "working for and in the public sphere."

I believe that both—J. Grunig and Hunt's (1984), and van Ruler and Verčič's (2002)—definitions have great explanatory power for the public relations function. These two definitions reveal the diverse aspects of public relations. As suggested by J. Grunig and Hunt (1984), public relations is employed on behalf of the organization in order to manage communication with its publics. The function of public relations also serves society, which communicates with the organization, by making the "outside view" heard within the organization (van Ruler & Verčič, 2002). In sum, public relations manages the organization-public relationships based on both an in-depth understanding of an organization and a comprehensive knowledge of the outside view.

For the purposes of this dissertation study, public relations is a *function that manages relationships between an organization and its publics through the use of communication strategies that are based on in-depth understanding of the organization and the ways that this*

organization is viewed from the outside. This definition acknowledges public relations as relationships management that is implemented through communication which occurs within the broader social context.

Describing the Unit of Analysis: The Organization-Public Relationship

The public relations unit of analysis is the relationship between an organization and its publics. One of the first organization-public relationship (OPR) definitions was developed by Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997) who described it as “the exchange or transfer of information, energy or resources between an organization and its publics” (p. 94). In a later article the same group of scholars (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 2000) extended the definition by suggesting that OPR consists of “transactions that involve the exchange of resources between organizations . . . and lead to mutual benefit, as well as mutual achievement” (p. 91).

Ledingham and Bruning (1998) approached OPR as a “state which exists between an organization and its key publics, in which the actions of either can impact the economic, social, cultural and/or political well-being of the other” (p. 62). Some other OPR definitions include Huang’s (1998) description of the phenomenon as a “degree that the organization and its publics trust one another, agree [that] one has rightful power to influence [the other], experience satisfaction with each other, and commit oneself to one another” (p. 12). Hung (2005) characterized OPR as an interdependence between an organization and its publics that “results in consequences to each other that organizations need to manage constantly” (p. 398). Hallahan’s (2008) OPR definition involves a “routinized, sustained pattern of behavior by an individual in conjunction with his or her involvement with an organization” (p. 49).

In sum, these definitions reveal that OPR involves interactions between an organization and its publics. These interactions influence each other's well-being. OPR possesses qualities such as mutual trust, influence, satisfaction, and commitment.

For soft power purposes, government substitutes for the organization. Acknowledging the diversity of actors involved in soft power related activities, two types of relationships will be analyzed: (1) relationships between a government and its domestic partners who may help the government increase a nation's soft power, and (2) between a government alone or in coalition with non-state actors and a state's strategic publics abroad.

Understanding the Relationship Management

The public relations literature provides insights into ways that OPR develops and is maintained. Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, 2000) offered a theoretical framework for the OPR management. First, they identified the causes of relationships or the so-called antecedents: social and cultural norms, collective perceptions and expectations, needs for resources, perceptions of uncertain environment, and legal and voluntary necessities. Second, Broom et al. named activities that describe relationships. Those are exchanges, transactions, communications, and other interactions. Third, the relationship activities lead to relationship consequences such as goal achievement, dependency/loss of autonomy, as well as routine and institutionalized behavior. A graphic representation of Broom et al.'s framework is below¹:

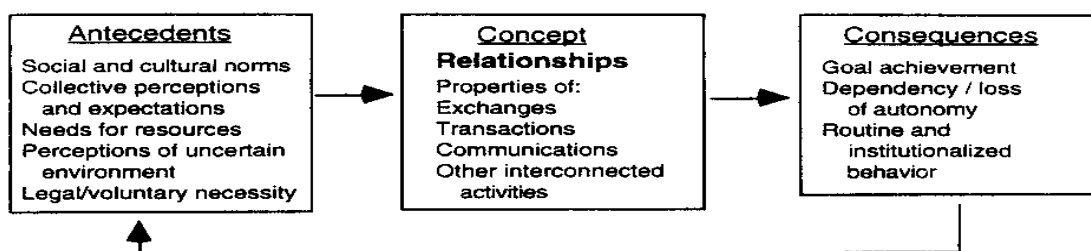


Figure 1: Broom, Casey, and Ritchey's relationship model

¹ The figure was reproduced from Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997).

Hon and J. Grunig (1999), and J. Grunig and Huang (2000) further developed Broom et al.'s (1997, 2000) framework. First, the extended framework posits that people inside and outside an organization become its publics when the organization's decisions have consequences for these people. Publics form around issues, are situational, and can be identified through environmental scanning. The antecedents include instances when

- an organization affects a public.
- a public affects an organization.
- an organization-public coalition affects another organization.
- an organization public coalition affects another public.
- an organization affects an organization-public coalition.
- multiple organizations affect multiple publics.

Second, the extended framework explains strategies that organizations may use to maintain relationships with their publics. Strategies are described as integrative/symmetrical and distributive/asymmetrical. Examples of integrative/symmetrical strategies include disclosure of information, assurance of the other party's legitimacy, mutual participation in networks with other groups, sharing tasks, implementation of integrative negotiation strategies that include the interests and goals of each party involved, cooperation, constructivism, and searches for win-win solutions. These strategies are based on the symmetrical worldview which "balance[s] the interests of publics with the interests of the organizations" (p. 39). Symmetry does not mean accommodation because "total accommodation of the publics['] interests would be as asymmetrical as unbridled advocacy of the organization's interests" (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002, p. 314).

Distributive/asymmetrical strategies prioritize the needs of one party over the needs of the other. Examples include: distributive negotiation that maximizes the gains of one party on behalf of the other; avoidance that involves leaving a conflict unresolved; contending, which

requires the other party to accept the organization's position; compromising, which does not allow any of the parties to fulfill their needs; and accommodation that suggests setting aside one's own interest.

Mutually beneficial relationships result only from integrated/symmetrical strategies. The management of relationships requires the public relations function to conduct an ongoing monitoring of the organization and its publics.

The third step of the extended OPR management model (Hon & J. Grunig 1999; J. Grunig & Huang, 2000) assesses relationship outcomes that result from relationship management strategies. These outcomes are control mutuality (the extent to which parties agree about the power that they have in a relationship), trust (one party's confidence in the other party and the relationship), relational satisfaction (a party's general evaluation of the other party's relational behavior), and relational commitment (a party's willingness to maintain a relationship with the other party). The relationship outcomes can be assessed through co-orientation measures or third party evaluation. A graphic representation of the extended model's three steps follows².

Stages and Forms of Relationships		
<i>Situational Antecedents (Behavioral Consequences on Each Other (Interpenetration))</i>	<i>Maintenance Strategies</i>	<i>Relationship Outcomes</i>
Organization affects public ($O_1 \rightarrow P_1$) Public affects organization ($P_1 \rightarrow O_1$) Organization-public coalition affects another organization ($O_1, P_1 \rightarrow O_2$) Organization-public coalition affects another public ($O_1, P_1 \rightarrow P_2$) Organization affects an organization-public coalition ($O_1 \rightarrow O_2, P_2$) Multiple organizations affect multiple publics ($O_1 \rightarrow P_1$)	Symmetrical Disclosure (openness) Assurances of legitimacy Participation in mutual networks Shared tasks (helping to solve problems of interest to the other party) Integrative negotiation Cooperation/collaboration Be unconditionally constructive Win-win or no deal Asymmetrical Distributive negotiation Avoiding Contending Compromising Accommodating	Control mutuality (Joint acceptance of degrees of symmetry) Commitment (Interdependence, loss of some autonomy) Satisfaction/liking Trust Goal attainment (Complementary behavior)
<i>Measures of Concepts</i>		
Environmental scanning	Ongoing observations of management and publics (such as monitoring of disclosure by management and publics, expressions of legitimacy, building networks with activist groups)	Coorientational measures of management and publics. Perceived by either or both parties. Observed by third party (overlap in coorientation model) Predicted for other party (Accuracy and congruence in coorientation model)

Figure 2: J. Grunig and Huang's relationship model

² The figure was reproduced from J. Grunig and Huang (2000).

Toth (2000) offered an interpersonal influence framework in order to describe OPR. This framework grows out of the personal influence model found in Greece, India, and Taiwan, which suggests that the goal of public relations is to seek personal contacts, based on cronyism, that benefit the organization (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Lyra, & Huang, 1995). Although the personal influence model is predominantly asymmetrical, it also can be practiced in a symmetrical manner if personal relationships are used to achieve mutual understanding between an organization and its publics. The symmetrical potential of the personal influence model allowed Toth (2000) to conclude that interpersonal communication can guide the relationship management. She renamed the below pictured personal influence model, titling it the interpersonal influence model³.

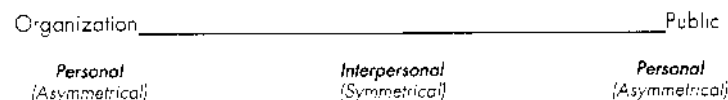


Figure 3: Toth's interpersonal influence model

If any of the parties tries to dominate the relationship, communication is personal or asymmetrical. On the other hand, a mutual exchange of information, which creates understanding, is interpersonal or symmetrical. Only interpersonal or symmetrical communication can lead to long-term relationships between an organization and its publics.

For the purposes of this dissertation, the described OPR frameworks may provide understanding about ways that a government can connect with its domestic partners and international publics. Furthermore, the public relations body of knowledge may reveal relationship maintenance strategies that lead to mutually beneficial goal achievements, as well as

³ The figure was reproduced from Toth (2000).

those that result in negative consequences for relational partners such as dependency, a loss of autonomy, a low extent of trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment, and the asymmetrical influence of one party over another.

Characterizing the Organization-Public Relationship

Another body of public relations scholarly work focuses on the different types of OPR. For example, J. Grunig (1993a) distinguished between symbolic relationships that are communication-centered with a goal to create images and reputations, and behavioral relationships which are based on action-oriented exchanges between an organization and its publics. Both of these relationships are important. However, symbolic relationships cannot replace bad behavioral relationships, but bad behavioral relationships can hinder symbolic relationships and the development of positive behavioral relationships.

Hon and J. Grunig (1999) identified another set of relationships: exchange and communal. Exchange relationships are based on the norm of reciprocity, i.e., relational partners give something in order to receive a later return. Parties enter into the relationship because they expect an exchange of resources. The other type of relationship, communal, is established out of one relational partner's concern for the other. There is no expectation of reciprocity (although the other partner may reciprocate in kind). Hon and J. Grunig advised organizations to develop communal relationships with their publics because this type of relationship leads to trust, control mutuality, relational satisfaction, and relational commitment. The two relationship types are not mutually exclusive, and relationships that began as exchange can transform into communal relationships.

Hung (2005) believed that organizations can develop more diverse types of relationships beyond exchange and communal. After a study of multinational corporations in China, she identified eight relationship types that are demonstrated in the figure below.⁴

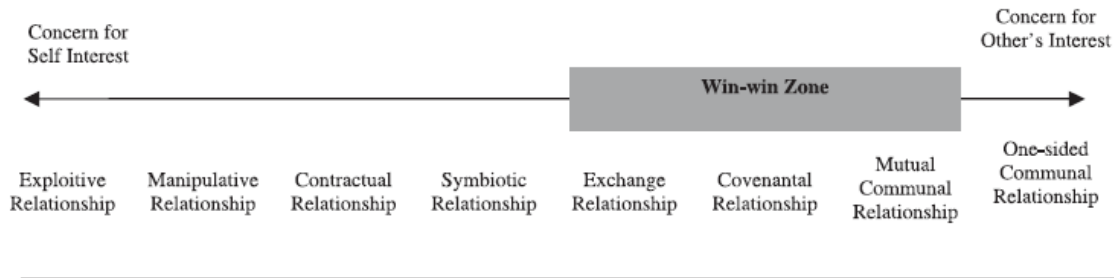


Figure 4: Hung's relationship continuum

In exploitative relationships one party takes complete advantage of the other or abuses its relational partner. Manipulative relationships “happen . . . when an organization, knowing what publics want, applies asymmetrical or pseudosymmetrical approaches in communicating with publics with the intention [of] serv[ing] its own interests” (p. 408). Contractual relationships require parties to enter into a formal agreement about their expectations for each other. The parties contribute to the relationship according to a contract. In symbiotic relationships each party is aware of its interdependency with the other. Parties are not concerned about the relationship but with their own survival; self-preservation rather than shared goals guide the relationship. In exchange relationships each party gives to the other in order to receive. Covenantal relationships are established when parties try to achieve common good through “open exchanges.” In mutual communal relationships both parties show a concern for the well-being of the other. One-sided communal relationships describe one party’s unselfish concern about the other without any expectation that this other party will respond in the same manner.

⁴ The figure was reproduced from Hung (2005).

As the graphic above illustrates, the eight types of relationships are placed on a continuum from exploitive relationships that describe asymmetrical concern for the self to one-sided communal relationship that represents unselfish concern for the other. The exchange, covenantal, and mutual communal relationships lead to win-win relational outcomes. OPR can start as one type of a relationship and transform into another. Several types of relationships can also co-exist.

Bruning and Ledingham (1999) identified three additional types of OPR. In professional relationships both parties work together to reach result-oriented goals. Through personal relationships parties seek emotional satisfaction; they attribute human characteristics to organizations. Communal relationships involve an expectation that parties will become involved together and invest in community-building.

For soft power purposes, the OPR types may describe the different relationships that a government may establish with its domestic partners and international publics. This understanding may explain reasons why some relationships help a government reach its soft power goals, whereas others do not. Furthermore, a study of relationships between a government and its domestic partners and international publics may reveal additional types of relationships that could add to the OPR type continuum.

Relating Relationship Management to a Research Setting

This dissertation study focuses on Latvia which, since joining the European Union in 2004, has tried to increase its soft power by facilitating development in its neighboring region, which includes the countries of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. By positioning itself as a newly emerging international development donor, the Latvian government has attempted to strengthen democratic reforms and economic growth, and reduce poverty in these neighboring

countries (The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2006). A review of governmental policy documents suggests that through international development cooperation programs Latvia attains five specific goals (The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2003).

- **Political:** Through international development programs Latvia reaches its foreign policy objectives of good neighbor relations and a closer integration within European political and economic structures.
- **Economic:** Participation in international development programs facilitates Latvia's economic growth.
- **Educational:** Through development programs the world becomes acquainted with Latvia's history and culture; and general awareness about Latvia is increased.
- **Humanitarian:** International development programs mitigate the impact of natural and other types of catastrophes.
- **Public administration:** International development programs allow Latvia to pass on to other nations its successful public sector reform experiences.

Latvia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an institution in charge of development cooperation programs, emphasizes the role of non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the international development initiatives. The government believes that partnerships between the state and non-state actors are mutually beneficial. The non-state sector provides the government with knowledge and expertise, whereas the international development cooperation programs create new business opportunities for the private sector and grant opportunities for non-governmental organizations.

In relation to this dissertation study, Latvia's development cooperation initiatives are positioned as a strategic soft power instrument. This dissertation explores ways that public

relations as a relationship management function may help the Latvian government implement development cooperation policies and execute development cooperation programs, and thus, lead to increased soft power for Latvia abroad.

Brief History of the Latvian Political Context

The current territory of Latvia was settled by ancient tribes of Balts starting in 9000 B.C. (Fleija, Kehris, Linkaitis, Laizāns, Kabucis, Markots, Treile, & Kanelis, 2000). In the period between the 12th and 20th centuries the territory was occupied by the German Knights of the Sword and Knights of the Teutonic Order, followed by Sweden and Poland, and, finally, was annexed by the Russian Empire in the late 18th century.

On November 18, 1918, Latvia declared its independence from the Russian Empire. Although the independent state was proclaimed, the former occupying forces did not want to cede their influence. The new Latvian military had to fight the Bolsheviks, the local Germans, and the supporters of the Russian monarchy who wanted the renewal of the Russian Empire (Fleija et al., 2000). The last battle against the Bolsheviks was won in 1920 when Latvia and Soviet Russia signed a Peace Treaty that guaranteed that Soviet Russia “unreservedly recognizes the independence and sovereignty of the Latvian State and voluntarily and forever renounces all sovereign rights . . . to the Latvian people and territory” (Grava-Kreituse, Feldmanis, Loeber, & Goldmanis, 2004, ¶ 1). Latvia’s independence was recognized *de iure* in 1921 and the country was admitted to the League of Nations the following year (Treijis, 2003).

In the newly independent Latvia legislative power was executed by the Parliament, which elected the president and gave an approval vote for the executive power—the Cabinet of Ministers. The Parliament consisted of members of political parties elected by the citizens of

Latvia, including women who had an equal right to participate in the political and social life of Latvia.

The world economic crisis of the 1930s affected Latvia's economy (Fleija et al., 2000). The Parliament, which consisted of many small parties, could not facilitate the country's growth and prosperity. To reform the economy, Prime Minister Kārlis Ulmanis organized a *coup d'état* in 1934. Without any bloodshed the activities of the Parliament and political parties were suppressed. A new government with legislative and executive powers was formed. Despite the authoritarian changes, Latvian society perceived the new regime favorably. The new government was able to achieve economic and cultural prosperity (Fleija et al, 2000).

In 1939 the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany signed the Non-Aggression Treaty (later called the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact) that divided East Europe between the German and Soviet spheres of influence (Grava-Kreituse et al., 2004). The treaty included a secret attachment that assigned East Europe, including Latvia, to the Soviets. In 1939 the Soviet Union required Latvia to grant the Soviet military bases on its soil. After the Soviet Army's invasion, Latvia lost its independence and was annexed to the Soviet Union. The period from 1940 to 1941 under Soviet occupation has often been described as the Year of Terror (Fleija et al., 2000, p. 61) when thousands of Latvians were deported to Soviet labor camps in Siberia or murdered in the KGB's (Committee for State Security) basements (Fleija et al., 2000, p. 61).

In 1941, as a result of the war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, the Germans invaded Latvia. That summer the Nazi occupation replaced Soviet oppression; one terror supplanted another (Fleija et al., 2000). However, after the Soviet Union and its Allies—Great Britain, the United States, and France—defeated Germany, the Soviet occupation was renewed in Latvia.

The renewed Soviet occupation resulted in extreme Russification, and a new wave of mass deportations began (Fleija et al., 2000). Meanwhile, more than half a million Russian immigrants settled in Latvia. According to Fleija et al, Latvia's Russian population grew from 7% in 1935 to 47.7% in 1992. The immigrants did not speak Latvian; therefore, Russian became the language of administration, meetings, record-keeping, and everyday conversations. Despite the heavy Russification, many Latvians savored their memories of independence and silently resisted the Soviet occupation.

In the mid-1980s Mikhail Gorbachev, the general secretary of the Communist Party, opened the Soviet economy to restructuring (Kurlovičs & Tomašūns, 2000). Soviet control over political rights such as freedom of speech became less severe than before. Organizations that opposed the Soviet regime (e.g., Helsinki-86, the Environmental Protection Club) began emerging in Latvia. In 1988 the liberal members of the Communist Party established another organization—the *Popular Front* (Tautas Fronte). In 1989, after the Front had gained broad support from Latvian society, it requested absolute independence for Latvia from the Soviet Union.

The Popular Front won the 1990 election of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic's Supreme Council (Fleija et al., 2000). On May 4, 1990, the new Supreme Council adopted the Declaration of Independence which announced the restoration of Latvia as an independent state. The renewed republic of Latvia restored the Constitution that had been adopted by the Latvian Parliament in 1922. Latvia's first post-soviet, democratic parliamentary election took place in 1993. That same year the Parliament elected a new president and approved a new government. In 2004 Latvia joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Union.

Research Questions

The first set of research questions focuses on the quality of relationships between the Latvian government and its domestic partners (whose international development knowledge and expertise may help the government wield soft power). This dissertation study will approach these relationships from the perspectives of both the Latvian government and its domestic development partners. According to public relations scholars Hon and J. Grunig (1999), and J. Grunig and Huang (2000), a third party assessment of relational partner views on relationships is an effective way to create understanding about these relationships.

RQ1: How, if at all, do Latvian government institutions describe their relationships with domestic partners that are established for development cooperation purposes?

RQ2: How, if at all, do Latvian non-governmental sector organizations describe their relationships with governmental partners in Latvia that are established for development cooperation purposes?

RQ3: How consistently, if at all, do Latvian government institutions and their domestic partners describe mutual relationships that are established for development cooperation purposes?

The fourth research question inquires about relationships that Latvian government institutions form with international publics. Because this dissertation study aims to understand ways that a nation's government employs the function of public relations for soft power purposes, international relationships will be approached from the Latvian government's perspective. Although an understanding of different international publics' assessments of the same relationships is important, various constraints including lack of funds, time, and language barriers, do not allow me to explore those assessments. However, an additional perspective will

be added by asking the Latvian government's domestic partners to evaluate those international relationships which they have established together with the Latvian government (fifth research question).

RQ4: How, if at all, do Latvian government institutions describe their relationships with international publics that are established for development cooperation purposes?

RQ5: How, if at all, do the domestic partners of Latvian government institutions describe their relationships with international publics that are established for development cooperation purposes?

The sixth research question focuses on the role that relationships management plays in wielding Latvia's soft power abroad. This question combines the first five questions by trying to understand how the many relationships between various actors interact in order to increase Latvia's influence in the international system.

RQ6: How, if at all, does relationship management for development cooperation purposes strengthen Latvia's soft power abroad?

The next question distinguishes between relationship management and the role of the formal public relations function in the organization. The objective of this question is to understand whether and to what extent the formal public relations function is involved in relationship management for development cooperation purposes and, thus, leads to soft power for Latvia.

RQ7: How, if at all, does the formal public relations function in Latvian government and non-government sector organizations contribute to relationship management for development cooperation purposes?

Transformation Public Relations

The Latvian government's *Development Co-operation Program from 2006 to 2010* (The Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia, 2006) stated that its goal is to strengthen democratic reforms, facilitate economic growth, and reduce poverty in Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. This list of development activities illustrates that the Latvian government has been involved in political and economic transformations in the neighboring region. The following section will relate these transformational activities to relationship management in order to understand whether and how transformational environments influence and shape relationships between Latvian development actors and their publics in developing countries.

Transition and Public Relations

Ławniczak (2001), who studied public relations in Poland during this country's transition from socialism to capitalism, observed that the public relations function was involved in transitional processes. To describe his observation, Ławniczak proposed the concept of "transition public relations" which he described as "public relations performed in the transition economies" (p. 8). The goal of transition public relations is to help a nation undergo changes from "a centrally-planned economy to a market economy, from a party dictatorship to democracy, and from socialism to capitalism" (p. 8).

In the early stages of transition, public relations are used (1) to dispel "the fear of and prejudice toward 'ruthless capitalism' installed during the socialist era" by building "capitalism with a human face" (p. 15); (2) to create awareness about alternative market economy models (e.g., neo-liberal capitalism, social market economy, and so on); and (3) to facilitate the development of the market economy through the promotion of entrepreneurship, facilitation of

the privatization process, attraction of foreign capital, and the encouragement of domestic business participation in the newly emerging market economy.

Ławniczak identified another six tasks of public relations for later stages of transition (pp. 15-16). These are: (1) to secure the acceptance among workers and society at large for the necessary restructuring and possible privatization of state-run enterprises, (2) to secure public acceptance for the concept of private property in privately-owned businesses, (3) to encourage the public to use the services of new market institutions such as stock exchanges, banks, national investment funds, (4) to assist foreign companies in gaining public acceptance for their investments in transition economies, (5) to help cities and regions attract potential domestic and foreign investors, and (6) to secure the support of international financial institutions, attract foreign capital, and achieve acceptance for attempts to integrate within the existing Western supranational institutions.

From Transition to Transformation Public Relations

Transition is a “temporary state between two fixed positions, a movement between the point of departure and that of arrival” (Pine & Bridger, 1998). Bryant and Mokrzycki (1994), who analyzed political and economic changes in East Europe in the early 1990s, believed that “transformation” is a more appropriate term than “transition” to describe these changes.

Transition focuses on a set goal, whereas transformation places the “emphasis on [the] actual process” (p. 4). Transition describes the destination of the desired changes, but falls short of explaining the process of how these changes happen. It does not remain open to unexpected occurrences in the process. Because the end state of economic and political changes in East Europe is still unknown, the term “transformation” with its procedural focus should be applied in order to study East European developments.

Consistent with this reasoning of transformation scholars, in 2004 I renamed “transition public relations” as “transformation public relations” (Pētersone, 2004). My master’s thesis suggested that the focus on the process rather than the end state makes the function of public relations responsive to the context within which transformation takes place. I argued that the above described tasks of transition public relations proposed by Ławniczak (2001) are asymmetrical. Because these public relations tasks prioritize the goals of government and businesses over those of society, transition public relations does not reflect any interactivity or reciprocity between a government or businesses and various groups within the society. Transition public relations does not engage society in political and economic changes, or as suggested by van Ruler and Verčič (2002), does not approach an “organization from an ‘outside’ view” (p. 16).

Transition public relations remain closed to such negative transformational implications as social inequalities among different groups in the society, unemployment, a loss of pension and health guarantees which all could lead to “increasingly explosive situation where social divisions are becoming wider and more obvious” (Cox & Mason, 1999, p. 201). Furthermore, transition public relations does not account for implications related to direct transplantation of Western institutions and market economies in East European societies. Yoder (2000), who described the unification of East and West Germany, suggested that encroachment of Western values and institutions had “serious implications for building trust in the new system” (p. 134).

Therefore, in 2004 I proposed that, in addition to the facilitation of political and economic changes, another role of transformation public relations is to help societies deal with these negative implications resulting from political and economic changes (Pētersone, 2004). After a review of Kaur’s (1997) study in Malaysia, Scholz’s (1998) in the eastern part of

Germany, and my study (Pētersone, 2004) in Latvia, J. Grunig and L. Grunig (2005) also concluded that transition public relations should be renamed transformation public relations in order to fully reflect the potential scope of public relations contributions to societies undergoing changes.

The above described observations about the social role of public relations in East European societies suggests that, rather than working for government or businesses, public relations should build relationships between government or businesses and different groups within the society. Furthermore, if the goal of transformation public relations is comprehensive political and economic change, this form of public relations cannot be practiced only by domestic actors. Part of transformation public relations responsibilities should be assumed by foreign development facilitators. As suggested by an Estonian scholar Tampere (2004), who analyzed the social consequences of East European political and economic transformations on the European society at large, public relations should perform the integrative role, i.e., help Europeans deal with “the experiences of different economic systems and different societies” (pp. 104-105). Public relations practitioners should act as “translators between different approaches to existence” (p. 105).

In conclusion of this conceptualization chapter, I want to link public relations as a relationship management function with the Latvian government's and its domestic partners' development cooperation activities in transformational contexts. The last research question asks:

RQ8: How, if at all, does relationship management as practiced by Latvian government institutions and their domestic partners respond to transformational environments in aid recipient countries?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Value of Qualitative Research

This dissertation study approaches the phenomenon of relationship management from a qualitative research perspective. First, the qualitative approach is used because, as suggested by Lindlof and Taylor (2002), it provides the researcher with opportunities for the “inductive development of theory from intimate knowledge of situated practice” (p. 28). No other studies that I know of have researched ways that relationship management could help a country wield soft power. Therefore, this study explores “situated practice” in order to learn how relationship management may strengthen ties between constituencies of various nations.

Second, H. Rubin and I. Rubin (1995) proposed that the qualitative approach allows understanding of “how . . . things actually happen in a complex world” (p. 38). This focus on “how” is consistent with this dissertation study’s goal to explore relationship building and maintenance processes.

Third, the qualitative approach is appropriate because relationship management is an interactive process that involves exchanges between relational partners. Public relations scholars Moss, Warnaby, and Newman (2000) wrote that the qualitative approach “enable[s] the researcher to gain richer insights into both the functional and social interactions that may occur in different organizational settings” (p. 286). Lindlof and Taylor (2002) also believed that qualitative studies reveal “dialogic encounters between the self and other” (p. 29).

Fourth, this dissertation study also inquires about each relational partner's personal experiences in building and maintaining relationships. Therefore, this study can rely on another strength of the qualitative approach, i.e., to reveal "rich, detailed descriptions of human experiences" (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 28).

Research Method

Qualitative interviewing was chosen as a research method for this dissertation study. This method is appropriate for research that "unravel[s] complicated relationships and slowly evolving events. It is also suitable when [a researcher] want[s] to learn how present situations resulted from past decisions and incidents" (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995, p. 51). Qualitative interviewing accounts for "historical, political, and social context[s]" (p. 52).

The description above is consistent with this study's purpose to explore ways that relationships are built and maintained for soft power purposes. This study focuses on relationship development as a long-term process that involves a variety of complex interactions between relational partners over time. Relationship management is placed within broader contexts of foreign and domestic policies, relations between the state and non-state actors, Latvia's recent history of political and economic transformations, and Latvia's relations with its neighboring region and the European Union.

This study views qualitative interviewing as a "conversation with a purpose" (Bingham & Moore, 1959, as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The method is understood as an "intentional way of learning about people's feelings, thoughts, and experiences" (p. 2). During a qualitative interview "the interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues topics raised by [participants]" (Babbie, 2001, p. 292). Qualitative interviewing provides

“think descriptions” (Geertz, 1973); “depth, detail, and richness” (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995); and “travel[s] deeply and broadly into subjective realities” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002).

For the purposes of this dissertation study, a particular kind of qualitative interviewing, i.e., the so-called long interview was selected. McCracken (1988) described the long interview as a method that is a “sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive interview process [which] seeks to diminish the indeterminacy and redundancy that attends to more unstructured research processes” (p. 7). The long interview “maximize[s] the value of the time spent with the [participant]” (p. 7). This method reveals “cultural categories and shared meanings” (p. 7). Miller, Van Maanen, and Manning (1988) described the long interview as a method that uncovers cultural categories and themes, and suits those situations “when total immersion in the studied scene is impractical and impossible” (p. 5).

The long interview is particularly relevant to this dissertation study because this study involved two research trips to Latvia, each lasting two weeks. During these two trips I tried to capture my participants’ experiences in a “sharply focused, rapid, [and] highly intensive” manner that “maximize[d] the value of the time spent” with the participants (McCracken, 1988, p. 7). In addition to the time and “sharp focus” factors, L. Grunig, J. Grunig, and Dozier (2002) found that the long interview is one of the most frequently used qualitative method’s in public relations research, thus, confirming this method’s appropriateness for the study of relationship management.

Preliminary Study of Documents

Government documents, media reports, and organizational websites about development cooperation were studied in order to prepare for interviews with Latvian development cooperation actors. This preliminary study of documents allowed me to reach three goals. First,

these documents helped me identify participants from government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and businesses which were involved in Latvia's development cooperation initiatives. Second, by researching documents, I learned about the interconnectivity of various parties involved in development cooperation. Third, the studied documents provided me with an in-depth understanding about the development cooperation goals, projects, and processes.

Participants of the Study

The participants in this dissertation study included Latvian government officials and their development cooperation partners from non-governmental organizations and private businesses. Twenty-five individuals were asked to participate in this study. Twenty out of the 25 individuals contacted agreed to be interviewed. Nine participants represented government institutions, seven were from non-governmental organizations, and four participants worked for private businesses. My initial plan was to identify a senior development cooperation officer and a public relations manager in each organization. However, I had to modify my initial plan because in most organizations, except for government institutions, the senior development cooperation officer was also in charge of the public relations function. Table 1 below provides a detailed overview of this dissertation study's participants.

Table 1
Participants

	Government institutions	NGOs	Businesses
Number of organizations	7* * Two organizations were represented by <u>both senior development cooperation and public relations officers</u> . One organization was represented by its <u>senior public relations</u>	7	4

	<p><u>practitioner</u>. This organization's senior development cooperation officer did not respond to my invitation to participate in the study. <u>Only senior development officers</u> represented four organizations. The senior public relations officer at one of these four organizations declined to participate in this study. She believed that her organization's development cooperation officer would be able to inform me about the public relations aspects of this organization's development cooperation work. In two organizations the formal public relations unit had minimal involvement in development cooperation. Therefore, only development cooperation officers were interviewed. These two individuals acknowledged that on several occasions the development cooperation unit implemented what was perceived as public relations activities. Finally, one development cooperation officer said that the public relations function was not part of development cooperation.</p>		
Number of participants	<p>6 (senior development cooperation officers)</p> <p>3 (senior public relations officers)</p>	<p>7*</p> <p>* Senior development cooperation officers were in charge of the public relations function. Most NGOs, with two exceptions, did not have a formal public relations unit. In these two organizations the senior development cooperation officer was also responsible for public</p>	<p>4*</p> <p>* Three organizations did not have a formal public relations unit because they were consultancies that provided services related to public relations. There was a formal public relations unit in one organization. However, this unit's involvement in development cooperation</p>

		relations aspects of development cooperation programs. These two individuals believed that they had the necessary expertise in all areas pertaining to development cooperation.	was minimal. In this organization the senior development cooperation officer was in charge of public relations for development cooperation purposes. Similar to NGO counterparts, this officer felt confident in having the necessary expertise in matters of development cooperation.
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The participants were selected base on three sampling strategies: purposive, snowball, and maximum variation. According to Schwandt (1997), the purposive sampling strategy allows choosing “sites and cases . . . because there may be a good reason to believe that ‘what goes on there’ is critical to understanding some process or concept, or to testing or elaborating some established theory” (p. 128, as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). According to Biernacki and Waldorf (1981), the snowball sampling strategy “yields a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest” (p. 141, as cited in Lindlof & Taylor, 2002). The maximum variation sampling strategy allows learning about the “variation in a communication phenomenon” (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 123). This sampling strategy involves selecting participants with different backgrounds and experiences.

Fourteen research participants were selected based on the purposive sampling strategy. These participants were identified through careful study of various government documents, media reports, organizational newsletters, and websites about development cooperation. Seven individuals were selected according to the snowball sampling strategy. They were suggested by other participants of this study. Throughout the participant selection process I strived for institutional, professional, and personal diversity by applying the maximum variation sampling strategy.

The number of participants was determined by the number of organizations that were involved in development cooperation. An early analysis of formal policy and organizational documents allowed a conclusion that a much larger number of organizations than 18 would be involved in Latvia's development cooperation activities. However, once I started approaching individual organizations, I discovered that many were just interested in development cooperation or planned to get involved in development cooperation in the future. Because this study inquires about the management of relationships between actual relational partners and is based on "situated practice," organizations without real development cooperation programs were not included in this study (Lindlof & Taylor, 2002, p. 28). Despite the above described limitation, I felt that this study was able to reach a saturation point which will be described later in this section under heading *Ensuring the Quality of the Study*.

I made my initial contact with prospective participants via an e-mail letter after I received approval from the University of Georgia's Institutional Review Board. In this letter I explained my general research interest, and asked prospective participants to take part in this study. In a few instances face-to-face or telephone exchanges replaced the e-mail letter.

A Sector Specific Overview of Participants

As it was described in the previous section, participants from government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and businesses were interviewed. A sector specific overview of this dissertation study's participants is below.

Participants from the Government Sector

Nine participants, three men and six women, represented the government sector. They were employed by government ministries and agencies. In Latvia government ministries are

larger organizations that supervise the overall management of governmental areas of specialization. Several government agencies work under each ministry's supervision.

Three participants—**C** (female), **D** (female), and **N** (male)—were senior public relations practitioners at their institutions. Although participants **E** (male), **H** (female), **M** (female), **O** (male), **R** (female), and **S** (female) were in charge of development cooperation, they were also involved with the public relations aspects of development cooperation work.

Currently there is no umbrella government institution similar to the United States Agency of International Development, Canadian International Development Agency, or the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency that coordinates development cooperation work in Latvia. Several government institutions contribute to development in the neighboring region based on their internal resources and, on some occasions, additional funding is provided on a competitive basis by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Government institutions provide development assistance to the neighboring region in their areas of specialization. These include public administration reforms, institution building, law enforcement, justice, sustainable development, education, infrastructure building, free information society establishment, cultural heritage conservation, and so forth.

Participants from the NGO Sector

The NGO sector was represented by seven participants, four men and three women. Two of them—**Participants A** (female) and **Participant B** (male)—worked for small organizations with no more than five employees. These organizations solely focused on international development. In addition to their engagement in projects that facilitated development in Latvia's neighboring regions, these two individuals were involved with development cooperation strategy

planning and policy advocacy at home and abroad. Participants A and B were each in charge of their organization's development cooperation and public relations functions.

The remaining five participants—**F** (male), **J** (male), **L** (female), **P** (female), and **T** (female)—also worked for NGOs. Like Participants A and B, they were responsible for both development and public relations functions in their organizations. Besides their development work abroad, these individuals took part in various development cooperation strategy formulation and policy advocacy activities. However, their organizations did not solely focus on international development. For their organizations, development cooperation was just one program among others.

Two of the NGOs were local representations of international NGOs whose geographic area of operation was the post-Soviet region. Participant F's organization employed no more than five employees, whereas the organizations of Participants J, L, P, and T had 10-15 employees each. All participants, with one exception, were full-time employees at their organizations. One organization consisted of volunteers. This NGO's management, including its director who participated in this study, engaged in development cooperation on a voluntary basis.

The projects implemented by NGOs focused on various areas of development. Some of them were health, environment, sustainable development, cultural heritage conservation, poverty reduction, education, civil society building, and so forth.

Participants from the Business Sector

Four women—**Participants G, I, K, and U**—represented the business sector in this dissertation study. These four individuals worked for private consultancies. Two participants—**G** and **K**—were directly involved in development cooperation work abroad, whereas the two

others—I and U—helped the Latvian government coordinate and strengthen its development cooperation programs at home.

None of the consultancies solely focused on development cooperation. Development cooperation was just one area of specialization among many others. All four individuals were responsible for development and public relations aspects of their work. Each organization employed 10-15 consultants. The development cooperation work abroad focused on such areas as environment, sustainable development, and free information society building.

Data Collection

The data for this dissertation study was obtained through long face-to-face interviews. The interviews occurred during two periods in December 2007 and March 2008 each lasting two weeks. An interview guide that lists the main research questions was used. Two types of interview guides were employed: one for government officials and the other one for non-state sector participants (see *Appendices A and B*). The role of the interview guide was consistent with Moss et al.'s (2000) advice; the interview guide identifies “core dimensions . . . that help focus the lines of inquiry” (p. 286). However, the guide does not eliminate “dialogue that span[s] across the core dimensions” (p. 286).

During the interview three types of questions were asked (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995). First, the main questions represented Moss et al.'s (2000) “core dimensions.” Second, probes inquired about the specific and unclear based on the participant's answers to the main questions. Third, follow-up questions allowed me to pursue new themes generated by the interviews.

Most interviews took place at the participants' offices. However, other public locations were selected if an individual participant found them to be more convenient than his or her office. The interviews were approximately 90 minutes long, but variations occurred. Each

interview was audio tape-recorded for accuracy. Follow-up interviews in person, or via phone or e-mail, were conducted if additional information from participants was needed.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed according to the analytical induction approach that allows that “theories emerge from the interviews [and other data], not as mere extensions of academic literature . . . [which may] operate as blinkers, limiting [the researcher’s] vision” (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995, p. 64). Eisenhardt (1989) also believed that “preordained theoretical perspectives or propositions may bias and limit the findings” (p. 536).

For the purposes of this dissertation study, analytical induction was conducted according to a three-step process suggested by H. Rubin and I. Rubin (1995). The first step involved a search for emerging concepts and ideas within data. During the second step I conducted what Spradely (1979) called “domain analysis,” i.e., relating main concepts and ideas to each other in order to identify major coding categories. The third step included Strauss’ (1987) axial coding which allowed me to link these major coding categories to each other.

I began the process of analysis by coding each individual interview that I had transcribed. Then, the codes were compared among the interviews.

Once the inductive analysis allowed me to develop an understanding about relationship management I “compare[d] it [my findings] to the literature and locate[d my] study with respect to other people’s writing” (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995, p. 64). As proposed by public relations scholars Hon and Brunner (2000), “[qualitative] data analysis ends when you have found overreaching themes and put them into the context of broader theory and answered the question ‘So what?’” (p. 256).

Ethical Considerations

In Latvia development cooperation is a new foreign policy area that involves a small number of actors. These individuals form a closely-knit community and depend on each other for resources such as grant and tender funding. Participants were granted confidentiality in order to provide them with a safe environment for discussing their development cooperation experiences, some of which involved criticism about relational partners. To avoid creating tensions in this closely-knit Latvian development cooperation community, the identities of the participants have not been revealed. In this dissertation their names are replaced by pseudonyms.

I informed the participants about the procedures related to data collection, maintenance, and reporting. The participants were asked to read a copy of an informed consent form. Each participant was encouraged to pose questions about data maintenance and reporting. All of my participants were treated equally. The participants were viewed as “conversational partners” who together with the researcher actively shaped the conversation and pursued shared goals (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995, p. 11). Every participant was invited to contact me at any time after the interview should they have any questions about and suggestions for the study.

Ensuring the Quality of the Study

The quality of this dissertation study was ensured in five ways. First, internal validity was achieved by gathering data from different sources (Potter, 1996). Participants from various state and non-state institutions were interviewed.

Second, the quality of the study was also ensured through transparency. I tried to provide clear and detailed explanations of the procedures used to collect, analyze, and interpret data (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1996). Third, this study strived for consistency that does not avoid conflicting perspectives but rather explains why these perspectives exist. Fourth, I attempted to reach the

goal of communicability by presenting “faithful accounts of people’s own words” (Potter, 1996, p. 199). Whenever it was possible, I integrated direct quotes from my participants in this dissertation report. Fifth, despite the limited number of organizations that were involved in development cooperation, I continued gathering data until this study reached the point of saturation in which additional sources did not add any new themes or ideas (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, as cited in H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995). Relationship management experiences of shared by participants from all three sectors—government, non-governmental organization and businesses—overlapped.

Reflexivity

I am a Latvian who has lived in the United States for the past ten years. My experiences with living in and between two different cultural spaces have facilitated my interest in processes related to relationship building and maintenance among constituencies of various nations. As suggested by Ang (1985), no study can avoid “the traces of the subjectivity of the researcher” (Ang, 1985, pp. 11-12). I am aware that my background may have influenced my worldview and ways that I approach the subject of my dissertation.

However, during the research process I strived for what Reason (1994) called critical subjectivity which does not require the researcher to suppress his or her subjective experiences, but rather to be aware of them. Through “strong objectivity” I attempted to “recognize [my] complicities in the communities research[ed]. [I tried to] substantiate [any] claims with a multiplicity of sources, and . . . a careful explication of argument[s]” (Aldridge, 2003, p. 27). This dissertation study attempted to emphasize the diversity of viewpoints rather than neutrality (H. Rubin & I. Rubin, 1995).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Research Question One:

Government Institution Relationships with Domestic Partners

The first research question focused on those relationships that government institutions established with their domestic partners. This question asked how, if at all, Latvian government institutions describe their relationships with domestic partners that are established for development cooperation purposes.

Interviews with nine participants from government institutions revealed that each of them built and managed relationships with organizations from the non-governmental sector. Relationships were formed with two types of domestic partners: non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and businesses.

Relationship Outcomes

Government institutions expected their relationships with domestic partners to result in certain outcomes. These outcomes allowed government institutions to reach their development cooperation goals at home and abroad.

Outcomes abroad

Resources

Domestic partners helped government institutions implement development cooperation projects by providing resources that the government lacked. Participant H from a government ministry said, “We would not be able to implement our projects without assistance from NGOs.”

Another development officer, Participant E, named several NGO resources that his ministry needed, “NGOs have their own partners [in developing countries] and they know how to implement projects there.” He continued, “NGOs have capacities and connections in developing countries. They have ideas.” Participant R focused on the non-state actor’s experiences that her ministry could use to improve the quality of its development cooperation projects, “I know that [a person] worked on this or that five years ago. . . . I know that we can gain from the person’s experience. I call and ask him [her] to take part in our project.” Participant M suggested that the NGO resource which her organization valued most was the NGOs’ ability to relate to their counterparts in developing countries:

We may have the necessary expertise, but NGOs have another added value. Two who are similar listen to each other better. I, as a civil servant, am more willing to listen to a civil servant from another country than to someone from a private consultancy. NGOs are the same. NGOs in developing countries will listen more to someone from a Latvian NGO than to me, a civil servant. The way you say something is as important as the actual content of the message.

Representation of Latvia abroad

The second outcome that participants from the government sector expected from their domestic partners was their assistance in representing Latvia abroad within the non-state sectors. Participant E observed that “NGOs create Latvia’s image abroad. They operate within their own international networks of NGOs.” Participant O also focused on the role of non-state partners in communicating with international constituencies:

Non-state structures that work in [developing] countries act as Latvia’s ambassadors. Every day they tell people what we have accomplished and what we have changed. The more we have these ambassadors, the better off we are. It is important that people [in developing countries] hear this information directly from us. This way we gain much stronger support.

Outcomes at home

Latvian public’s support

The relationship outcomes were not limited just to the government’s development cooperation initiatives abroad. Relationships between government institutions and their domestic

partners also helped the government gain the Latvian public's support for development cooperation. Several interviews revealed that currently the Latvian public was not favorably disposed toward Latvia's engagement in development cooperation. The role of non-state partners was to connect the government with the public. Participant E explained:

If the public does not understand development cooperation, we cannot hope that they will have a positive attitude toward it. . . . This is where I see the role of NGOs. They become very significant here. They must inform people about development cooperation and explain it to them.

Later during the interview he added, "I expect that NGOs will promote the idea [of development cooperation] and explain it to the public. Their role is to inform the public." Similar observations were shared by Participant H, "We ourselves do not have the time and resources to promote development cooperation. We involve NGOs. They can engage individuals and other organizations. NGOs can explain development cooperation to them . . . inform and educate them."

Both Participants E and H focused mostly on communicative activities such as informing, explaining, promoting, and educating that NGOs could do on the behalf of the government. Participant N, who also believed that NGOs and the business sector can help the government gain the public's support, suggested that such support can be facilitated through examples of actual engagement by domestic partners in development cooperation work rather than simply through communicative activities. He described:

It is important that the public understands development cooperation . . . its value. Therefore, the initiative cannot just come from us . . . the private sector must also get involved. I hope that the commercial sector and NGOs overcome their fears and insecurities . . . that they try to implement real-life development projects. Then the public will also understand it [development cooperation] much better.

Table 2⁵**Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Relationship outcomes**

Relationship outcomes abroad	Relationship outcomes at home
A. Resources a) Knowledge and expertise about development cooperation b) Connections in developing countries c) Ability to relate to non-state counterparts abroad B. Representation of Latvia abroad	A. Latvian public's support

Domestic Partners as Relationship Bridges with Third Parties

The review of the three relationship outcomes—resources, international profile, and the support of the Latvian public—suggested that domestic partners function as relationship bridges that connect government institutions with non-governmental constituencies at home and abroad. A further analysis of the data revealed that Latvian government institutions hoped to reach three types of constituencies through relationships with domestic partners: the non-state sector abroad, the Latvian public, and Latvian development experts.

Connecting with non-state sector abroad

Participants from the government sector believed that domestic partners help them reach the non-state sector in developing countries. For example, Participant E proposed that NGOs created Latvia's image abroad within "their own international networks of NGOs." Participant O suggested that "non-state structures . . . act as Latvia's ambassadors" who created supporting environments for Latvia in developing countries.

Connecting with the Latvian public

Domestic partners were also perceived as bridges between government institutions and the Latvian public whose support for development cooperation the government sought.

⁵ From here on, the findings will be summarized in tables in order to make them more accessible to the reader.

According to Participant E, the “role of NGOs” was to “inform people about development cooperation and explain it to them.” Participants H and N wanted to “involve” NGOs and businesses in order to facilitate public support for the government’s development cooperation initiatives.

Connecting with Latvian development experts

Participant R, whose ministry was in search of non-state development experts, hoped that existing domestic partners could assist her ministry in identifying prospective domestic partners.

She illustrated:

We . . . maintain . . . an expert database. When we have information about development opportunities we send it out to everyone in our database. We hope that each individual in that database communicates our information further to his [her] colleagues who may also find it relevant. It is important that we have our own network of experts.

Table 3

Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Domestic partners as relationship bridges with third parties

A. Connecting government institutions with the non-state sector abroad
B. Connecting government institutions with the Latvian public
C. Connecting government institutions with Latvian development experts

Relationship Maintenance

Several strategies described interactions between government institutions and non-state partners. First, government institutions [E, H, N, O] ***provided funding for the implementation of NGO and business projects in developing countries***. These funds allowed the non-state sector to share their development expertise with aid recipients.

Participants from the government sector also provided NGOs and businesses with ***information*** about development cooperation opportunities and individual ministry development cooperation projects. Participant H’s ministry informed the NGOs about an international donor who was looking for a Latvian NGO to assist this international donor in implementing projects in

a developing country, “One international donor was searching for an NGO that could work in a specific country. We informed our NGOs and got them in touch with the donor.”

Participant N’s ministry organized a seminar for NGOs working in the same field as his institution. “Twice a year we meet . . . with our NGOs in order to tell them what we have been doing,” he reflected.

Businesses also received information about development cooperation opportunities from government institutions. Participant R explained, “When we have information about development opportunities we send it out to everyone in our database.”

Another relationship maintenance strategy used by government institutions involved *debates and dialogue* with NGOs and businesses. Government institutions arranged and co-sponsored meetings, seminars and workshops during which they encouraged domestic partners to discuss development policies, projects, and issues. For example, Participant E’s ministry organized meetings with NGO representatives to hear their opinions about drafts of development cooperation policy documents. Participants E and H exchanged information with an association of NGOs interested in development cooperation. Participant E described these exchanges as an “ongoing dialogue.”

Table 4

Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Relationship maintenance strategies

A.	Providing government funding for the implementation of domestic partner development cooperation projects
B.	Providing domestic partners with information about development cooperation opportunities and projects
C.	Arranging debates and dialogue about development cooperation issues for domestic partners

Factors Influencing Relationship Quality

Participants from the government sector revealed several factors that influenced the quality of relationships that they had established with Latvian NGOs and businesses. The interviews uncovered two sets of influencing factors. One set strengthened relationships, whereas the other interfered with the partners' ability to work together.

Relationship facilitators

Potential for satisfactory performance

Participants expected that their domestic partners would be able to demonstrate the potential to successfully implement development cooperation projects. Participant E described how his ministry sought partners who could offer the "greatest potential to accomplish the task." He said:

They should be able to tell us what they want to achieve within the next three years. They should not say, "We will go there, research the country and then decide what needs to be done. Just give us the money." . . . We need a guarantee that something will be accomplished. Then we are more willing to fund their projects.

Satisfactory performance was also important to Participant N. He explained, "We expect quality work from them. We expect that they have a good track record and reputation. Otherwise, it may end with nothing. In the worse case scenario, the state will need to overtake and complete their projects."

Common vision

The second factor that facilitated relationships between government institutions and partners from the non-governmental sector involved common vision. Participant N summarized, "We are interested in establishing relationships with structures that share with us a common long-term vision."

Commitment to the relationship

The first two relationship facilitators—behavioral contributions and common vision—were something that government participants expected from their domestic partners. However, the third factor that facilitated relationships required contributions from government institutions. This third facilitator, labeled as the government institution’s commitment to the relationship, was described by Participant O:

We must provide funding [for non-state actors] if we do not want to lose their capabilities We do not want to discover one day in the future that their interest is gone and people are doing something else . . . that they are no longer interested in development cooperation. It is necessary that we find funding and increase it every year. Is it enough right now? This is a different question. But, by providing them with some funds, we demonstrate our attitude. We show that they and development cooperation are important to us.

Participant E also suggested that it is important to demonstrate commitment to relationships with domestic partners. Although his ministry lacked funds for business projects in developing countries, he tried to leave the communication channels open in order to show that his ministry valued businesses as prospective development partners. “We try to work with them. . . . although in a very abstract way. We mostly maintain open communication channels,” he said.

Relationship limitations

Government’s limited funds

The first factor that hindered relationships was the government’s limited funds for the non-state sector’s development projects. Participants admitted that the government in general and their institutions in particular lacked money for competitive grants and tenders for NGOs and the businesses. Participant E explained why his ministry had established relationships with just a few business organizations:

With private businesses . . . we work with just three to five companies. There is not much to hide. The private sector will become much more interested when we will have more money that we can offer to them. While our funds are limited, the interest from businesses is as much as it is.

Participant H shared a similar observation, “The main issue is money. If funding is limited, the private sector does not find it to be worth its time.”

The lack of funds also influenced relationships with NGOs. After explaining the relationship limitations with the business sector, Participant E concluded, “It is the same with NGOs. Until we cannot offer much more funding, NGO interest is limited to potential cooperation in the future. Right now we offer small grants which lead to severe competition among various interest groups.” Participant C’s comment was in agreement with that of Participant E, “Money is an issue. We cannot expect a huge return from NGOs if so many of them must compete for such small funding.”

Unwillingness to commit to long-term projects in developing countries

The first relationship constraint—lack of funds—was caused by government institutions, whereas participants from the government sector believed that the second limitation—unwillingness to commit to long-term projects in developing countries—was created by their domestic partners. Although the responses provided by the participants do not allow a conclusion about their partners’ unwillingness to make long-term commitments to development work, these interviews revealed that governmental participants lacked trust in their non-state counterparts’ commitments to development cooperation. This lack of trust was illustrated by an excerpt from an interview with Participant N:

It is not an easy job. You are not involved just for a few days. It is a lengthy process. . . . We have NGOs that are ready to publish books, organize conferences, etc. . . . But we do not have NGOs that can simultaneously talk and work. Nobody in [country with armed conflicts] is interested in conferences and brochures. They need new infrastructure. They need schools. They need young activists who paint walls or, at least, help the locals do it. It requires hard work and willingness to take risks. There are not many material gains from it. We have a lot of people who are ready to travel the world, but I have not heard of many who would be willing to go to [country name] and to help.

Referring to the business sector Participant N said, “It is not easy either morally or financially. It does not mean that your engagement is limited to just one month. It is a long-term process.” A

similar opinion was shared by Participant O, “The most important factor is their willingness to live in developing countries . . . to live away from their families and to be away from the daily comfort that they are accustomed to.”

Table 5

Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Domestic partners’ ability to demonstrate the potential for satisfactory development cooperation performance	A. Government’s limited funds for domestic partners’ development projects
B. Development cooperation vision shared by government institutions and their domestic partners	B. Government institutions’ lack of trust in domestic partners’ willingness to commit to long-term projects in developing countries
C. Government institution commitment to relationships with domestic partners	

Types of Relationships

Several types of relationships emerged from interviews with the participants from government institutions. The participants described these relationships as supportive, supplemental, and personal.

Supportive relationships

Participants E and H described their relationships with NGOs as supportive. Supportive relationships allow one party to provide the other party with necessary resources that the other party lacks. Examples of resources included funding, information, and opportunities for the involvement in development cooperation processes.

“We strongly support NGO activities in developing countries,” noted Participant E.

Asked to characterize relationships with NGOs, Participant H said:

We support them [NGOs]. First of all, financially. . . . Second, we meet with them on a regular basis . . . we exchange our plans and information. They are also involved in our planning processes. They can always express their opinions. We organize various seminars, workshops to which they are invited.

Supplemental relationships

Participant H identified another kind of relationship—supplemental. This kind of relationship involved exchanges of resources in order to reach a common goal. Participant H described a supplemental relationship:

We supplement each other. We would not be able to implement our projects without assistance from NGOs. However, without our funding they would not be able to work effectively. It is possible that they could work effectively if they partnered with someone else. But in that case it would not be about our common process . . . Latvia's development cooperation.

Personal relationships

Participant R discussed the value that personal relationships between two individuals added to her ministry's development cooperation projects. Such personal relationships, not necessarily established for development cooperation purposes, helped Participant R's ministry attract new partners:

We use . . . personal relationships. I know a person professionally. I learn that he [she] worked on this or that five years ago. Today I have a development project. I know that we can gain from this person's experience. I call and ask him [her] take part in our project.

Table 6

Government institution relationships with domestic partners: Types of relationships

A. Supportive
B. Supplemental
C. Personal

Research Question Two:

Domestic Partner Relationships with Government Institutions

The second research question asked participants from the non-governmental sector to describe their relationships with governmental partners that they had established for development cooperation purposes. Each of the eleven participants from the non-governmental sector acknowledged that they had established relationships with government institutions. The first part

of this section discusses those relationships formed by *NGOs* with government institutions, whereas the second part of this section focuses on relationships that Latvian *businesses* formed with their partners in the government.

NGO Relationships with Government Institutions

NGOs formed relationships with governmental development cooperation actors to reach certain outcomes. These outcomes included resources and opportunities to influence development cooperation policies.

Relationship outcomes

Resources

The acquisition of various kinds of government resources was the predominant outcome of relationships formed by NGOs with government institutions. *Government grants* for development cooperation projects are an example of one such resource. Participant P said, “The government provides financial resources. They take care of practical issues. We can focus more on content . . . the implementation of development cooperation projects.” Participant B’s organization also received funding from the government, “Our project, along with projects of other organizations, competes in a grant competition. If ours is of the highest quality . . . if it wins the competition . . . the government gives us a grant. The rest is done by us.”

Another resource valued by NGOs was the government’s *expertise about development cooperation issues*. Participant J hoped that the government would help his organization learn about developing country environments, “We seek assistance from embassies that are located in [developing] countries . . . that know the local situation . . . that can provide opinions about specific issues or aid recipients or partner organizations in these countries.” He continued:

They [prospective aid recipients] will be critical about their own countries, but only as long as it does not hurt them. We do not receive complete information. At least, this is my experience. The role of embassies becomes very important here. They are needed as sources of information about local situations.

Another form of government expertise sought by NGOs included sector specific knowledge that NGOs hoped would enhance development in aid recipient countries. Participant L described an occasion when his NGO sought government expertise for a training workshop attended by aid recipients:

We seek government experts. We cannot provide government expertise by ourselves. We can tell about our experiences, but it is important that the government informs us about its areas of responsibility. . . . We invite individual [governmental] experts on a project basis when we do not have in-house expertise.

Participant P's organization expected that the government provide it with both grants and expertise. The participant said, "We partner with the government because it provides funding for our projects. Sometimes during the project implementation stage, if we feel that we lack internal expertise, we ask government experts to help us."

NGOs also hoped that their governmental partners would provide them with *immigration assistance* for aid recipients who visit Latvia. Participant J hoped that Latvian embassies in developing countries would assist aid recipients in obtaining visitors' visas for admission to Latvia, "Embassies can help us with visas [for aid recipients who visit Latvia]. Visas are a very important logistics question." Participant T described a situation when her organization needed a government ministry make changes in the immigration law:

We need the support of [government ministry] in order to solve problems related to logistics. For example, we required their help in obtaining visas for our visitors [from developing countries]. . . . Recently we discovered that Latvia's immigration law states that civil society organizations cannot host interns from third countries.⁶ Educational institutions and businesses can, but NGOs cannot. This law caused a huge problem for us because we had an internship applicant from [developing country name] . . . an applicant with outstanding qualifications. . . . Her visa application was denied based on the [immigration] law. We understand that this law did not exclude NGOs on purpose. But it created an obstacle for our development cooperation initiatives. We are not able to overcome this obstacle by ourselves. We need assistance from the [government ministry]. It needs to change the law.

Participants from NGOs found that the government can also provide them with *symbolic resources such as status and reputation*. Participant J offered:

⁶ By "third countries" Participant T referred to those states that are not members of the European Union.

Embassies . . . can support us . . . provide us with what I call a hierarchical blessing. In several countries hierarchy is very important. People are concerned about ways that things look . . . whether events are attended by someone with sufficiently high diplomatic rank.

Participant L suggested that his NGO's projects which were supported by the government strengthened his organization's reputation. The government's support acknowledged the NGO's international development expertise:

Working with the government provides us with recognition. We are perceived as experts . . . as an organization that is trustworthy and knowledgeable and is ready to share our knowledge with someone else. It shows that we are an organization that is able to financially manage international projects . . . be transparent about the use of financial resources. Our trustworthiness coefficient is strengthened through these projects. It is important to us that our good reputation is maintained.

Influence on development cooperation policies

NGOs expected that their relationships with government institutions would result in their being able to exert influence on development cooperation policymakers. Participants lobbied the government *to increase budget funding* for NGO development cooperation projects. Participant T summarized the goal of her organization's lobbying activities:

Currently the government has not been fulfilling its financial obligations. Therefore, we lobby the government and parliament. We want them to increase funds for development cooperation. We meet with members of parliament and civil servants from government ministries. We educate them about the importance of development cooperation. We want development cooperation to be on their agendas. We want them to understand that it is important.

NGOs also engaged in lobbying Latvian policymakers because they hoped that through them they could *influence development cooperation decision making by intergovernmental bodies* such as the European Union. Participant A explained:

We want to encourage Latvian politicians to become involved in European development cooperation policy making. . . . Our politicians must take a much more active role in international decision making structures. Latvian politicians lack interest in development cooperation. I understand that one person cannot know everything, but we have signed international documents that promise to reduce poverty and facilitate development in the world.

Table 7**NGO relationships with government institutions: Relationship outcomes**

A. Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Government grants b) Government's expertise about development cooperation c) Government's assistance with immigration issues d) Symbolic resources such as status and reputation B. Influence on development cooperation policies at home and abroad

Relationship maintenance

Interviews with participants from the NGO sector revealed several strategies that these organizations used to maintain relationships with their development partners in the government. One such strategy involved *meetings during which development cooperation policy issues were debated*. Participant A described, "We participate in meetings in which development cooperation plans and policies are discussed. We express our opinions. We are involved. We shape the dialogue." Participant J's NGO "together with other NGOs and government institutions [from Latvia and developing country name], organized a brainstorming session about ways that Latvia's development experiences can be successfully transferred to [developing country name]."

Several NGOs maintained relationships with government institutions by means of *lobbying*. Direct lobbying activities involved individual and group meetings with policymakers, and NGO sponsored workshops about development cooperation for policymakers. Indirect lobbying activities involved publicity in the media, and educational meetings that explained the value of development cooperation to university students.

Participant T described lobbying activities that her NGO conducted together with other Latvian NGOs in order to place development cooperation on policymakers' agendas:

We work with the mass media through which we create awareness about successful development cooperation projects. We meet with the members of the parliament. We speak with parliamentarian

commissions and individual members. . . . We organize publicity events . . . workshops at universities about various development cooperation topics.

Participant A described lobbying activities that her organization undertook after she found that the government had no plans to announce a new grant program for NGO development cooperation projects:

We organized other NGOs. We met with a minister [who was in charge of a national development cooperation initiative]. He was also shocked about it. He understood that our current involvement in development cooperation serves as an investment for the future . . . that it creates awareness about Latvia, establishes connections abroad. If we do not engage in development cooperation now, other new EU member states will be ahead of us. . . . He [the minister] understood us although he said that he could not help us. . . . But we did not stop trying. We met with members of the parliament. We asked them to find funding from the state budget. They were able to do so, but it did require a lot of our energy.

In order to increase the effectiveness of lobbying activities, Participant A's NGO was involved in the ongoing monitoring of governmental development cooperation initiatives. She said, "We monitor how Latvia's development cooperation documents evolve . . . what they include today and what they will include in the future. We closely follow everything that the government does."

NGOs also provided their governmental partners with *information* about development cooperation. Participant L described how his organization submitted written reports to the government about their development projects:

We provide [government ministry] with reports about our projects. We are required to do so. We submit reports not only at the end of each project but also during the project. . . . I think that [government ministry] can learn from these reports. They become informed about specific countries and their political and economic situations.

Although the government requested that each organization receiving development cooperation project funding submit a report, Participant B was willing to volunteer an additional report that he hoped would help the government increase its development cooperation capacities. Participant B explained:

I am planning to provide [government ministry] with an overall report about our projects. I want to focus on our results . . . our solutions to [development] problems. This may serve as our suggestion to [government ministry] . . . how they could improve their projects.

Mutual work on individual development cooperation projects was another strategy that maintained relationships between NGOs and government institutions. Participant J's NGO co-funded development cooperation projects with the Latvian government. He said, "We supplement each other. We see that the amount that the Latvian government can devote to development cooperation is often insufficient." Three participants [F, L, P] invited government representatives as guest speakers to training seminars for development aid recipients.

NGO and governmental partners also worked together on communication projects. Participants A's and B's NGOs and a government ministry were members of the same delegation which represented Latvia at an international development forum. Representatives from NGOs and government institutions also mutually put out publications and created informational materials about development cooperation and Latvia's involvement in it.

Table 8

NGO relationships with government institutions: Relationship maintenance strategies

A. Participation in and organization of meetings between NGOs and government representatives in which development cooperation policies and issues are debated
B. Lobbying of policymakers
C. Providing government institutions with information about NGO development cooperation experiences
D. Mutual work on individual development cooperation projects

Factors influencing relationship quality

During the interviews various factors that participants from the NGO sector believed facilitated or limited their relationships with state institutions were discovered. A review of relationship facilitators and limitations follows.

Relationship facilitators

Personal connections. Participant F felt that personal connections between his NGO's management and government officials served as a foundation for later relationships that his organizations established with government institutions for development cooperation purposes. The participant explained the role of his NGO's president, "Building relationships is easy. Our president is well-known in Latvia . . . not just in the field of development cooperation. He has worked on various projects with members of the government and parliament." In addition to the president's connection, Participant F also engaged his organization's membership in the establishment of relationships with government institutions, "We also recruit help from our member organizations. Our members represent academia, businesses, civil society . . . opinion-leaders, unions. They all have connections in the public sector."

Common vision. Participant J observed that a common vision shared by both relational partners is the foundation of good relationships. He described how this common vision made relationships between his NGO and government institutions possible, "We know that we both are heading in the same direction. We have the same geographic priorities and understanding about social, economic, and civil society development."

Willingness to listen. Asked to describe his NGO's relationships with the government, Participant B said that in the past the Latvian government showed a lack of support for NGO activities in Latvia and abroad. However, he has noticed that lately relationships have begun improving because the government has begun listening to the needs and concerns of NGOs. He described a series of discussions that a government institution organized for NGOs, "The power between the state and civil society gradually becomes balanced." "It is important. Otherwise,

everyone talks about NGOs, civil society and democracy, but in reality you do not feel that anyone from the current Administration listens to us,” Participant B concluded.

Relationship limitations

Government’s lack of commitment for development cooperation. Several participants [A, B, F, T] believed that policymakers and civil servants showed a lack of commitment for development cooperation. Participant A described a workshop which her NGO organized for policymakers, “We invited a development cooperation expert to talk about Latvia’s role in international development. Invitations went out to 60 policymakers. Only one attended. This is a very good indication of their lack of interest in development cooperation.” Participant B was also skeptical about the government’s commitment to development cooperation:

Politicians lack understanding [about development cooperation]. They lack understanding about global processes. They see everything in a very primitive way. Economic interests dominate in Latvia . . . earn as much as possible in a short period of time with as little effort as possible. Consumerism rules. This trend also characterizes most of them [politicians]. Of course, at formal meetings everyone will say, “Yes, we are for development cooperation. It is something that we need to do.” They also know EU rules and regulations. They can talk about effectiveness, monitoring and transparency. But it does not extend beyond formal meetings. As soon as they leave their offices they are no longer concerned about sustainable development. Speaking in analogies, you can work on a governmental campaign about environmental protection . . . tell us how we need to recycle, but if you do not recycle in your own household . . . what’s the use of it?

Participant F suggested that he also expected greater commitment from the Latvian government:

This issue is a low priority on decision-makers’ agendas. We usually hear excuses that it is much more important to solve domestic problems . . . strengthen our own economy . . . that our situation does not allow us to provide support for our neighboring regions or Africa.

Later Participant F continued:

One of the difficulties is fragmentation. It means that many activities lack continuity. The government supports an event or a project for a short period of time, but there is no follow-up or it overlaps with other similar projects. This leads to another problem—lack of coordination. The government should learn how to overcome fragmentation and lack of coordination.

Insufficient support offered by the government. The second factor that participants believed complicated relationships between their NGOs and governmental institutions involved

insufficient support provided by the government to its NGO partners. Participant A suggested that the government did not offer enough opportunities for NGO involvement:

I would like to see more initiative from [government ministry]. Over the past year I have been invited to only one formal meeting in which development cooperation was discussed. This is not enough. [Government ministry] must create an environment that fosters debate.

The same participant described the disappointment that she and her colleagues from the NGO sector experienced after the Latvian government decided to limit funding for NGO development cooperation projects:

If they decide on budget cuts for development cooperation they should consult us. . . . They [representatives from a ministry] said, “We have our own commitments. We must keep them. We value NGO development work . . . it is very important, but we cannot support you. We cannot provide funding for you this year.” We were shocked. Everything that we planned and discussed with our partner organizations [in developing countries] was instantly destroyed. . . . And nobody told us about the changes. There was only one paragraph on page 11. I guess they were afraid to tell us, “We are ending this [the grant competition].” It was very sad. NGOs play a controversial role. On one hand, you are a partner, on the other, you can be “bitten on the leg.”

Participant J was also concerned about the government’s decision to cut a grant program for NGOs. He described:

It is like shooting yourself in the foot. Over the past years at many international donor forums the government declared that we have great experience and great NGOs. But then, in an instant, it cuts a grant program . . . because we have already provided enough international aid. . . . There is no consistency. There is no long-term vision.

Participant L found that the requirements set by the government for its grant competitions did not facilitate relationships between NGOs and the government. The participant explained, “There are too many bureaucratic obstacles. NGOs do not participate in grant competitions because of many, complex requirements . . . some of which are inadequate in comparison to the little funding that they receive in the end.”

Another participant [B] believed that the lack of governmental support was absent in more than matters of development cooperation. He suggested that the Latvian government was not supportive of the overall NGO sector:

The government does not support NGOs. Just recently the Prime Minister⁷ said that NGOs are too active and destabilize the situation in Latvia. This illustrates the general attitude. The number of NGOs has decreased since 2005. Those who are truly committed to making changes . . . they do not have money. . . . Overall, governmental policies are not supportive of NGOs . . . either financially or morally.

Embassy lack of knowledge. Participants found that Latvian embassies lacked knowledge about development cooperation and the role of NGOs in development cooperation [A, B, J]. For example, Participant B said:

I would like to receive more support from our embassies. . . . Their employees are absolutely uninterested in development cooperation. They know nothing about it. They are civil servants who do not care. It is quite contradictory. We [participant's NGO] want to help them with development cooperation . . . reach the same goals . . . facilitate development. They represent the state. Development cooperation is their responsibility, but they do not want to do anything. There is no balance. It is hard to believe that we have common goals.

Participant A also observed that embassies lacked knowledge about development cooperation:

Embassies have very little information about development cooperation . . . and even less information about NGOs. The Latvian NGO sector developed when many diplomats were already abroad. These diplomats currently lack understanding about the role of civil society in Latvia and how it can help in development cooperation.

Similarly to Participants A and B, Participant J was faced with situations when Latvian embassies were not able to provide his organization with local expertise about developing countries. He shared his experiences:

Embassies lack the capacity to serve as a point of support and contact for Latvian organizations that work in their host countries. In some countries we do not have an embassy at all . . . just a representative. The embassy is in a neighboring country where it knows nothing [about the country where the participant's NGO works].

Table 9

NGO relationships with government institutions: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Personal connections between representatives from NGOs and government institutions	A. Government's lack of commitment for development cooperation
B. Development cooperation vision shared by NGOs and government institutions	B. Insufficient support offered by the government to its NGO partners
C. Willingness to listen to one's relational partner	C. Embassy lack of knowledge

⁷ This interview was conducted in the first part of December 2007.

Types of relationships

NGO representatives discussed two types of relationships that they had developed with government institutions. The relationship types were described as informal and supportive.

Informal relationships

Four participants [A, F, P, T] discussed informal relationships that they had established with individuals from governmental institutions. Participant T described the informal relationship that her organization had with a government ministry, “We maintain informal relationships. [Government ministry] is interested in our viewpoints and experiences. They want to know what we have done in specific countries. We meet with them [representatives from the ministry] and share our experiences.” Another participant [A] suggested that an informal relationship meant that “any time we [her NGO] have questions we are able to meet with them [individuals at a government ministry] and receive answers.” Participant P explained how her organization could visit several government institutions with delegations from developing countries because her organization “had formed personal connections in the government.”

Supportive relationships

The second type of relationship—supportive—was mentioned by Participants A and J. Asked to describe the relationships between her organization and its partners in the government, Participant A said:

They are supportive of us. This year we received a grant for our development project. They are also very supportive of our educational activities. They provide us with a shoulder to lean on. Just recently they invited us to an international forum about development cooperation and also sponsored us.

Participant J, who also characterized relationships between his organization and government institutions as supportive, described his organization’s contributions to the government, “In 2007 the government could not provide funding for its [NGO] grant program. It created a lot of fuss. We stepped in. We supported them. We offered an alternative grant program for NGOs.”

Table 10**NGO relationships with government institutions: Types of relationships**

A. Informal
B. Supportive

Business Organization Relationships with Government Institutions***Relationship outcomes: Resources***

Businesses expected that relationships that they established with government institutions for development cooperation purposes would allow them to acquire new resources. The first form of resource was *profit* that businesses earned from the government's tenders. Participant I summarized, "We approach this very pragmatically. We work with the government because it allows us to earn money."

Another form of resource that businesses expected included *government expertise* about specific development issues. Participant G described, "Relationships with experts from [ministry name] are important. [Ministry name] has the best experts in the [area of expertise] in Latvia. . . . We occasionally ask the ministry's experts to assist with our projects." Participant G's consultancy sought a similar outcome from its relationships with government institutions, "We ask [government] experts to join us on a project-to-project basis. We want our aid recipients to have great and diverse learning opportunities."

In addition to profit opportunities and experience, the relationships between government institutions and businesses allowed Participants G and K to make *connections with prospective aid recipients*. Participant K said, "[Ministry name] and Latvian embassies help us identify prospective partners [aid recipients]. . . . [Latvian] embassies introduce us to people and arrange meetings for us [in developing countries]." "[Ministry name] helps us establish contacts with prospective aid recipients. If a foreign delegation visits [ministry name], they invite us to meet

the delegation. Sometimes we start our own communication [with prospective aid recipients] afterwards,” said Participant G.

Relationships with government institutions also provided businesses with *new knowledge that allowed them to diversify their services*. Asked to explain these business growth opportunities, Participant G from a consulting business responded, “We gain experience. It increases over time. . . . It allows us to expand the range of services that we offer to our clients.” Like Participant F, Participant U discussed the benefits that her firm gained from mutual projects with a Latvian government institution, “We acquire new information and contacts. We can make a good use of this information and contacts for our own projects in the future.”

Table 11

Business organization relationships with government institutions: Relationship outcomes—resources

A. Profit earned from government tenders
B. Government expertise about development cooperation issues
C. Connections with prospective aid recipients made through governmental partners
D. New knowledge that allowed businesses to diversify their services

Relationship maintenance strategies

Business sector participants maintained relationships with Latvian government institutions in several ways. Each of them, independently or together with their government colleagues, *implemented government funded development cooperation projects in developing countries*.

Three participants [G, I, K] provided government with *information* about their ongoing and completed development cooperation projects in the form of written reports. All four participants attended *meetings* organized by government institutions in which mutual projects were discussed and development cooperation information exchanged.

Table 12**Business organization relationships with government institutions: Relationship maintenance strategies**

A. Implementation of government-funded development cooperation projects in developing countries
B. Providing government institutions with information about the development cooperation experiences of businesses
C. Attendance of meetings organized by government institutions

Factors influencing relationship quality

Certain factors influenced the quality of relationships that businesses established with their governmental partners. These influencing factors had positive and negative effects on these relationships.

Relationship facilitators

Government's commitment to relationships. Asked to describe the relationships between government institutions and her organization, Participant K said that the government's commitment to relationships was important to her. She enjoyed opportunities, offered by partners in the government, to discuss development cooperation and individual projects. Participant K explained:

I like when [ministry name] thinks about strengthening our relationship . . . when it gathers everyone who has worked with development cooperation projects . . . when they want to find out what we like and what we do not like. [Ministry name] tries to maintain ties with us. We value their efforts.

Common interests. Another factor that facilitated relationships between businesses and government institutions was common interests. Participant K noted, "Good relationships require that the government's priorities correspond to our experiences and interests."

Relationship limitations

Government's lack of coordination. Participant G acknowledged that the relationships between her consultancy and the Latvian government were hindered by the government's lack of coordination of development cooperation issues on the national level. She explained:

If development cooperation is Latvia's priority, the future of these projects should not depend solely on individual businesses. . . . I wish each [government] ministry had a strategic plan for development cooperation . . . a higher level plan. Not like now when each business writes an individual report about its individual projects. A little bit more coordination on the national level would be helpful. I wish that a minister, visiting a recipient country, would not be surprised when he [she] hears about our projects in that country.

Lack of continuous grant opportunities. Three participants [G, I, K] acknowledged that relationships between their organizations and government institutions were affected by the lack of continuous grant opportunities provided by the government. One of them, Participant I, said:

Our project is short. It will be over in a few months. Of course, if there were funds available we would like to apply . . . compete with others for them, but currently the government does not devote sufficient funding for development cooperation projects. Although the development cooperation budget is supposed to increase each year, next year it will not.

The lack of continuous funding opportunities also weakened relationships between Participant G's organization and its governmental partners:

There are certain problems with the overall Latvian development policy. . . . Funding does not cover more than a few month-long projects. We constantly wonder if there will be any funding opportunities in the future. If not, we cannot ensure that the current projects will be continued.

Table 13
Business organization relationships with government institutions: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Government's commitment to relationships with partners from the business sector	A. Government's lack of coordination in matters of development cooperation
B. Interests shared by businesses and government institutions	B. Lack of continuing grant opportunities offered by the government

Types of relationships

Supportive relationships

Relationships between businesses and government institutions were described as supportive by two participants, G and I. They both believed that the government's support was demonstrated through tenders that funded their development projects abroad. "[Ministry name] supports us. It finances our projects," noted Participant G.

Research Question Three: Comparison of Relationship Descriptions Offered by Government Institutions and their Domestic Partners

The third research question asked about the consistency of relationship descriptions that were offered by participants from the government and non-government sectors. This section, organized around issues that were shared by participants both from government and non-government organizations, combines answers to the first two research questions. Additional information that exceeds answers to research questions one and two is added to provide a complete comparison of relationship descriptions offered by government and non-government development cooperation partners.

Relationship Outcomes

Conversations about relationships outcomes revealed several points at which the interests of government institutions and their domestic partners intersected. Each point of intersection is discussed below.

Resources

Both types of domestic partners—government and non-government—expected that their mutual relationships would provide them with the resources that would be necessary for successful implementation of development cooperation projects. Government institutions hoped

that their NGO and business partners would offer them resources such as knowledge and expertise about development cooperation, connections, ideas, and an ability to relate to the non-state sector abroad.

Non-state partners also sought resources from government institutions. Government partners provided NGOs with grants for their development cooperation projects, expertise about development cooperation, assistance with immigration for visitors from developing countries, and status and recognition. Like participants from the NGO sector, their business counterparts hoped that their relationship with government institutions would result in new resources. Businesses valued profit earning and business growth opportunities, the government's expertise about development cooperation, and connections that government institutions had with aid recipients.

The resources fell into two categories—operational and symbolic. The operational resources such as grants, tenders, connections, expertise and knowledge ensured effective day-to-day implementation of development cooperation projects, whereas symbolic resources guaranteed status and reputation. Participant J illustrated an example of a symbolic resource. He hoped that Latvian embassies would provide his organization with a “hierarchical blessing” in societies that had a high regard for power inequalities. Participant L from another Latvian NGO observed that relationships with the government demonstrated that his organization is “trustworthy and knowledgeable and is ready to share knowledge with someone else.”

Diverse international representation of Latvia

Participants from government institutions expected that domestic partners could help them to reach non-state publics in developing countries. Participant E discussed “international networks of NGOs” in which his ministry's domestic partners participated. His colleague,

Participant O, from another government institution saw non-state partners as “Latvia’s ambassadors” abroad.

Several participants from the non-state sector acknowledged their contributions to the international representation of Latvia. They formed relationships with international constituencies other than foreign government institutions. Participant T from an NGO believed that relationships between state institutions and NGOs of different nations must “supplement [each other] and function parallel to each other.” Participant J suggested that the involvement of governmental and non-governmental actors establish relationships “between two societies” and serves as a basis for “people’s diplomacy.” For Participant L, NGOs “reach[ed] people on the grassroots level in ways that may not be always possible for governments.” Participants F and P, as well as Participant K from a private consultancy, believed that the non-state sector involvement was crucial for a strong international representation of a country.

Latvian public’s support

Participants from the three sectors—government institutions, NGOs, and businesses—acknowledged that currently the Latvian public did not support the government’s development cooperation initiatives. Government institutions hoped that the involvement of the non-state sector in development cooperation would legitimize their development cooperation efforts in the eyes of the Latvian public. The government’s partners agreed that they can bring the public and the government closer to each other. Mostly through the use of public relations instruments, NGOs and businesses tried to create a general understanding about the value of development cooperation. The specific role of public relations will be reviewed later in this dissertation when the seventh research question will be discussed (see pp. 121-125, 131-137, 144-145).

Shaping development cooperation policies

Participants from NGOs found that relationships with government institutions provided them with opportunities to influence the development cooperation policy making process at home and abroad. NGOs sought opportunities to draw the government's attention to development cooperation issues and the need for an increased development cooperation budget, including NGO grant programs. Participant A suggested that through lobbying of Latvian decision-makers her organization shapes development cooperation policy making at international structures such as the European Union.

Participants from government institutions did not discuss issues related to NGO advocacy activities. The government representatives believed that they provided non-state partners with a sufficient number of opportunities to discuss development cooperation issues. They organized debates about development cooperation which allowed exchanges of information between government institutions and their domestic partners.

Despite the opportunities that the government sector believed it offered to NGOs, non-state partners remained skeptical about the government's true commitment to development cooperation and relationships. A discussion about the effects of the perceived lack of commitment to relationships between NGOs and government institutions follows in this section under heading *Factors Influencing Relationship Quality* (see pp. 78-82).

Table 14

Domestic partners: Relationship outcomes

A. Exchanges of resources
B. Diverse international representation of Latvia
C. Legitimizing development cooperation efforts in the eyes of the Latvian public
D. Shaping development cooperation policies at home and abroad

Relationship Maintenance

This section discusses relationship maintenance strategies that were used to manage ties between Latvian government institutions and their development partners at home. Most of these strategies with a few exceptions were shared by both relationship parties.

Mutual contributions to development projects

Conversations with participants from government institutions and non-state organizations revealed that both parties contributed to mutual development projects. Participants from the government sector singled out grants and tenders that they offered to NGOs and businesses as their main contribution to these mutual projects.

NGO representatives acknowledged the government's financial contributions. However, they named additional activities that were involved in the implementation of mutual projects. For example, Participant J's NGO co-funded several development cooperation initiatives with the Latvian government. His colleagues, Participants L, F, and P, invited the government's experts to speak at training seminars for aid recipients organized by their NGOs. Participants A and B, together with a government ministry, communicated about development cooperation and Latvia's involvement in it at home and abroad. Participants from the business sector also shared project related responsibilities with government institutions. In addition to the funding that they received from the government, Participants G and K invited government experts to educate aid recipients that visited Latvia for training purposes.

Information

Another relationships strategy that was shared by governmental and non-governmental partners was information. Government institutions provided NGOs and businesses with information related to development cooperation. Participant H and R informed NGOs and

businesses about domestic and international funding opportunities of development projects, whereas Participant N convened domestic NGOs to tell about his ministry's development cooperation work.

The non-government sector also provided their government partners with information. NGOs and businesses submitted reports about their development projects and developing countries in which they worked.

Discussions and dialogue

In addition to the above described one-sided flow of information, state and non-state participants described exchanges of information and opinions as another relationship maintenance strategy. The government organized meetings with non-state representatives in which development policies, projects, and issues were debated. Participants E and H were engaged in ongoing information exchanges with NGOs that exceeded formal events.

NGOs and businesses also acknowledged debates and discussions as a relationship maintenance strategy. Participants valued opportunities to express their opinions about issues pertaining to development cooperation.

Lobbying

Only the participants from the NGO sector acknowledged that they employed lobbying to maintain relationships with government institutions. Through direct lobbying (i.e., meetings with members of parliament and government ministries) and indirect advocacy (i.e., publicity in the media and discussions with college students), NGOs tried to persuade the government to allocate more funds for international development projects and attempted to influence development policies in Latvia and in international structures to which Latvia belonged. The NGO lobbying activities were not acknowledged by participants from government institutions.

Table 15**Domestic partners: Relationship maintenance strategies**

A. Mutual contributions to development projects
B. Providing information to relational partners
C. Discussions and dialogue about development cooperation issues
D. Lobbying of policymakers

Factors Influencing Relationship Quality

Factors that influenced relationship quality also provided insights into the relational partners' understanding about their mutual relationships. The discussion begins with relationship facilitators and concludes with obstacles to effective relationship management.

Relationship facilitators**Commitment to relationships**

Interviews revealed that the other party's commitment to mutual relationships was a factor valued by participants from each sector—government, NGO, and business. Several government representatives believed that good relationships depended on their partner's commitment to deliver satisfactory development cooperation performance. Participant E expected that his organization's partners provide him with detailed strategies about ways that they planned to implement government sponsored development projects. Participant N requested that partners from the non-state sector demonstrate a sound record of previous development experience. "We expect quality work from them. We expect that they have a good track record and reputation," he said.

Like participants from government institutions, NGOs and businesses also emphasized the importance of their partners' commitment to relationships. Participant B, who thought that the government was not supportive of NGO activities, believed that lately the situation has improved because the government had started listening to its domestic partners. Participant B

suggested that this new commitment to relationships has strengthened them and facilitated the balance of power in the relationships. Participant K from a private consultancy also valued discussions that allowed her organization to be heard by the government. She suggested that these discussions made relationships strong.

Although most of the discussion about commitment to relationships centered on what participants expected from their partners, Participant O from a government institution acknowledged that his own institution had a responsibility to demonstrate its commitment to its partners. He believed that, despite the budgetary constraints that the government experienced, it must continue NGO grant programs and, thus, demonstrate its appreciation of its partners' work. He noted that it was important not to "lose their capabilities. . . . One day in the future we do not want to discover that their interest is gone and people are doing something else." Participant E thought that although his ministry lacked resources for business tender competitions, it was important to "keep information channels open," thus, demonstrating his ministry's commitment to possible future cooperation with businesses.

Common vision

Another factor that participants from each sector identified as a relationship facilitator was shared vision about development cooperation issues. Participant N from a government ministry said that his institution valued partners with a "common long-term vision."

The importance of a shared vision was also acknowledged by non-state partners. Participant J from an NGO discussed the significance of "heading in the same direction," and having the "same geographic priorities and understanding about social, economic, and civil society development." Participant K from the business sector said that the quality of relationships

depended on the overlap between the “government’s priorities” and her organization’s “experiences and interests.”

Relationship limitations

Limited funds

“Limited funds” was a topic that was present in every interview whether it was with a participant from the government, NGO, or business sector. These financial constraints made some domestic relationships impossible and existing ones weak. Government institutions were able to provide their partners with only limited grant and tender opportunities. Participant H summarized the difficulties that her ministry encountered in its efforts to establish relationships with private businesses, “The main issue is money. If funding is limited, the private sector does not find it to be worth its time.” Limited grant opportunities also complicated relationships with NGOs. “Money is an issue. We cannot expect a huge return from NGOs if so many of them must compete for such small funding,” said Participant C.

Although domestic partners acknowledged the complexities related to limited funds, they were less concerned about the shortage of funding than about ways that their government colleagues communicated about it. The government’s handling of communication created distrust about its commitment to development cooperation and domestic partners, issues that are discussed in the following section.

Distrust in other party’s commitment

Distrust in other party’s commitment to development cooperation and relationships was a frequently discussed relationship limitation. Participants from government institutions questioned the willingness of the NGO and business sectors to commit to long-term projects in developing countries. The participants thought that their domestic partners did not want to spend

long periods of time in developing countries where hard work and readiness to undertake risks were required, few material gains were offered, and living conditions were less comfortable than those in Latvia.

NGOs and businesses questioned the government's commitment to development cooperation and its domestic partners. The participants believed that the government's lack of commitment to development cooperation was demonstrated by failure to attend development cooperation events organized by NGOs, formal declarations rather than support for real-life development projects, emphasis on short-term economic gains for Latvia rather than a true concern for long-term improvements in the human living condition, and low priority of development cooperation on the decision-makers' agenda. Both the NGO and business sector participants said that the government's lack of commitment to development cooperation was also revealed through fragmented, discontinued, and uncoordinated policies and activities.

The perceived lack of commitment from the government did not apply only to development cooperation. NGOs and businesses also did not trust in the government's commitment to domestic partners. For example, several participants were disappointed in the ways that the government decided to cut NGO grant programs. Participant A said that this decision was made without consultations with the affected parties. She described her reaction to the government's decision as a "shock." Participant A stated, "[N]obody told us about the changes. There was only one paragraph on page 11 [on a government document]." Another NGO representative, Participant J, pointed out inconsistencies in the government's communication about development funding. He related, "Over the past years at many international donor forums the government has declared that we have great experience and great NGOs. But then, in an

instant, it cuts a grant program. . . . There is no consistency. There is no long-term vision.” The NGO concerns were shared by the participants from the business sector.

In addition to discontinued grants, participants from NGOs felt that the government did not provide them with a sufficient number of opportunities to discuss development cooperation, and created grant application procedures that were too complicated. Participant B felt that the government was not supportive of the overall NGO sector in Latvia.

Several participants from NGOs doubted that Latvian embassies had much knowledge about and devotion to development cooperation. Their expectations that the embassies would serve as sources of information about developing countries were not met. The participants found that embassies did not share their goals and interests.

Table 16
Domestic partners: Relationship quality factors

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Relational partner’s commitment to relationships	A. Limited funds offered by government to its non-governmental partners
B. Vision shared by relational partners	B. Distrust in other party’s commitment to development cooperation and the relationship

Types of Relationships

Latvian development cooperation actors identified two sets of relationships. One set was described as supportive and supplemental, whereas the second set can be labeled as personal and informal.

Supportive and supplemental relationships

The first type of relationships was ***supportive***. Parties in supportive relationships provided partner institutions with resources that these partner institutions lacked for successful implementation of development cooperation projects. Participants from government institutions

supported their non-state partners through grants and tenders, and information about development cooperation policies and opportunities for involvement.

NGOs and businesses also described their mutual relationships as supportive. Participants acknowledged that government institutions supported their development work. Participant A valued grants that the government provided for her NGO's projects. In addition to grants, she believed that a particular government ministry served as a "shoulder to lean on" for her NGO. For two of her business sector colleagues, Participants G and I, the governmental support involved tenders that paid for their international development projects.

NGOs did not simply expect support from the government. Participant J, who described his organization's relationship with the government as supportive, also assisted the government. His organization assumed the funding of a government started grant initiative for Latvian NGOs when the government lacked resources for this initiative. "In 2007 [government ministry] could not provide funding for its [NGO] grant program. . . . We stepped in. . . . We offered an alternative grant program for NGOs," Participant J explained.

The description of another type of relationship, labeled as *supplemental*, was similar to the supportive. However, supportive relationships focused on giving resources to someone else, whereas in supplemental relationships the parties exchanged resources in order to reach a common goal. Participant H from a government ministry illustrated, "We supplement each other. We would not be able to implement our projects without assistance from NGOs. However, without our funding they would not be able to work effectively."

Personal and informal relationships

Two other relationship types—personal and informal—that were similar to each other emerged. Participant R from a government ministry identified *personal* relationships that were

based on previous connections formed between individuals at her ministry and non-state development experts in Latvia. Through these personal connections Participant R's ministry hoped to improve the quality of its development work. She employed personal connections to invite non-state experts to join her ministry's development cooperation initiatives on a project-to-project basis. She said:

I know a person professionally. I know that he [she] worked on this or that five years ago. Today I have a development project. I know that we can gain from this person's experience. I call and ask him [her] to take part in our project.

Relationships similar to Participant R's personal were described by participants from the NGO sector. They labeled these relationships as *informal*. NGO representatives maintained informal relationships with individuals from government institutions in order to exchange information beyond formal meetings and documents, and to gain access to government institutions when delegations of aid recipients visited Latvia for training purposes.

Table 17

Domestic partners: Types of relationships

A. Supportive and supplemental
B. Personal and informal

Research Question Four: Government Institution Relationships with International Publics

The fourth research question explored relationships between Latvian government institutions and their international publics. The question asked how, if at all, Latvian government institutions described their relationships with international publics that were established for development cooperation purposes.

The interviews revealed that each government institution represented in this study managed relationships with international publics. Relationships were developed with two groups abroad—aid recipients and international partners. The first part of this section discusses

relationships with aid recipients; the second part focuses on relationships with international partners.

Relationships with Aid Recipients

Relationship outcomes

Each government institution formed relationships with aid recipients to reach certain outcomes. These included securing Latvia's national interests, improving human living conditions, and personal and organizational growth opportunities.

Securing Latvia's national interest

Participants acknowledged that through relationships with aid recipients their institutions helped Latvia ensure its national interests. Participant N discussed how these relationships helped Latvia reach its *security* goals:

If we do not help [developing country name] we will feel consequences here in Latvia. . . . These consequences already impact us. Terrorist organizations have activated throughout the world. The prices of illegal drugs are already down while the demand for them has increased. We cannot ignore it. We cannot pretend this does not happen.

Another participant, R, focused on benefits that relationships with aid recipients provided to Latvia's *economy*. She said:

Through these relationships we create a good environment for our entrepreneurs in each country where we have successfully implemented a development project. They say, "Latvians are innovative and capable." They want us. It creates a supportive environment for our businesses. And these new business opportunities have a positive effect on Latvia's economy. We get a good return.

Participant O also discussed Latvia's economic and *political* interests. He believed that relationships that were established for development cooperation purposes allowed Latvia to compete with other EU member states:

We have foreign policy priorities, national political and economic interests that can be facilitated through them [relationships that are established with aid recipients for development cooperation purposes]. Every EU member state does it. Development cooperation is employed to lobby national interests and demonstrate the good quality of products made in a country. It may not be right or fair, but it is life. There is strong competition among EU member states [in ensuring national interest in developing countries]. We must adequately react to this competition.

A group of participants suggested that relationships with aid recipients created an *international image* about and a *reputation* for Latvia. Participant O believed that through relationships with aid recipients “we create and influence our image.” A similar observation was shared by Participant E, “We create our image among those who receive our aid.”

“I am absolutely convinced that our involvement in development cooperation facilitates international awareness about Latvia. It helps Latvia shape its image,” noted Participant S. She added, “What does an image involve? It is how many people know your country. It is not something abstract. And working with people . . . certainly improves our image and creates awareness.”

Participant R discussed ways that Latvia’s international reputation was established. She said:

It may sound very selfish. You help someone else, but in the end you benefit from it. . . . But I think we do not need to be shy about it. We should acknowledge that it is a two-way process. We help them . . . we support them and provide them with our advice, but we also gain from it. We gain international recognition. Any successful project adds to Latvia’s international reputation.

Improving human living conditions

Through relationships with aid recipients government institutions hoped to improve human living conditions in developing countries. This aid recipient-oriented relational outcome co-existed with the above described interests of the aid providers to secure their own national interests.

For example, Participant E perceived relationships with aid recipients as a “moral obligation.” He said, “We help them because it is something that we must do.” Participant R provided a similar rationale, “Latvia is a responsible member of the international community. As such, we simply must help those in need.” According to Participant N:

We want people to be able to live better . . . so that they can have a much more positive outlook on life. We want them to be encouraged . . . that they can function as positive viruses which spread optimism and a desire for a respectful human living condition.

Participant O provided a list of sectors in which his institution hoped to facilitate changes. “We want to make sure that they have control over their own situation. We want them to have effective public administration, education, and law enforcement systems,” he noted.

Two participants expressed a particularly strong sense of responsibility because other countries had helped Latvia develop after it regained independence from the Soviet Union. Participant O said, “After 1990 we received assistance from many countries. They helped us, therefore, we must help others.” Participant R from a government ministry stated, “We need to take part in development processes. Other countries helped us. . . . Now it is our turn.”

Personal and organizational growth opportunities

Another set of outcomes that resulted from relationships between Latvian government institutions and aid recipients included personal and organizational growth opportunities.

Participant S described how relationships with aid recipients provided new challenges for her institution’s employees:

These relations motivate our employees. Now, when the situation has stabilized here in Latvia, daily work has become routine and lacks challenges . . . new possibilities. Helping others means that people can engage in something creative. There is an additional motivation for them.

Participant M suggested that relationships that were established during development cooperation projects allowed her organization to keep qualified employees. She illustrated:

We are able to maintain professionals in the public administration sector . . . provide them with opportunities to develop their capacities. Public administration is a hierarchical system and as any hierarchy it has a ceiling. There is a limitation for professional growth opportunities. It becomes boring. People get tired of doing the same thing year after year. They need something new. Helping others allows us to keep people. They learn about things . . . countries . . . establish relationships. They acquire new knowledge and resources. They stay in the public sector.

Participant S saw relationships with aid recipients as a future organizational growth opportunity that could ensure institutional cooperation between her organization and those that had been helped by her organization. She said, “We want to extend our contact base with other similar institutions. It serves as a foundation for [institutional] cooperation in the future.”

Table 18**Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Secured Latvia's national interests <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Security interests b) Economic interests c) Political interests d) International image and reputation B. Improved human living conditions in developing countries C. Personal and organizational growth opportunities

Relationship maintenance

Each participant's institution maintained relationships with aid recipients through formal and informal **meetings** during which development needs, and projects and their results were discussed. Participant N described the significance of such meetings with aid recipients:

If we want to make true changes, we cannot do it from Latvia. Such efforts would be absolutely absurd. Here in Latvia we do not know where a water pipe needs to be built. We need to meet with the locals and discuss it. It may turn out that one part of the village already has a water pipe, but another one does not. You can learn this only after you visit and meet with them.

Latvian government institutions also maintained relationships with aid recipients through the ***implementation of development cooperation projects***. Examples of development cooperation projects include training seminars for civil servants from developing countries, assistance with policy planning and execution, advising on institutional reforms, the development of study guides and other educational materials, study trips to Latvia, and consultations about ways that recipient countries can integrate in intergovernmental and international structures.

Table 19**Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Meetings B. Implementation of development cooperation projects
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Factors influencing relationship quality

Several factors influenced the quality of relationships between Latvian government organizations and aid recipients. A set of factors facilitated relationships, whereas another set interfered with successful maintenance of relationships.

Relationship facilitators

Shared vision. Participant S believed that for relationships to be successful both parties must have a shared vision. She said, “Both parties must understand each other. . . . If there are completely different environments, goals, and values . . . we may not be able to work together.”

Respect for local culture. Participant N observed that good relationships for development cooperation purposes required aid providers to have respect for local cultural values. He described the importance of this relationship quality:

Just recently I read an article in the *International Herald Tribune*. It was titled *Repeating Soviet Mistakes*. The article told about an Italian organization in Afghanistan. Instead of helping people, they built a Christian church there. . . . How can we hope that these people will not turn against us? They are in a state of war. But the Westerners build a church. It is unacceptable. People must think about what they do. We must understand that our contributions . . . cannot come with our Western religious and cultural symbols. Just imagine, they have had wars for 20 years without a break. Everything is destroyed, but we build a church.

Local involvement in development. The same participant, as well as his colleague from another government ministry, believed that aid recipient involvement in their development was another factor that improved the quality of relationships. Participant R illustrated:

Development cooperation is not a simple process. You cannot say, “This issue is on our agenda, therefore, this is what we will do for you.” At first, you must determine whether they need it at all. You don’t want to create a situation in which they do not know what they can do with your help. A mutual, careful analysis is always important. You must let them make their own contributions.

Relationship limitations

Aid recipients’ lack of involvement in their own development. Participant R, whose experience showed that involvement by aid recipients in their own development improved the quality of relationships, observed that the opposite happened when recipients exhibited a lack of

commitment to take part in development processes. She characterized her disappointment following a development program that did not provide the desired results:

We continuously evaluate their willingness to implement reforms. If we feel that our assistance has not been used effectively, the relationship becomes less intense. . . . We asked them what they needed most. We did not say, “This is what we want to do for you.” Quite to the contrary, we had meetings with them [aid recipients]. We even talked to their ambassador. We carefully planned each step of the project. We listened to them. But the results were disappointing. . . . Now we want to take a break. We are not ending the relationship, but we are taking a break.

Lack of resources. Two participants, R and S, identified another relationships limitation—shortage of Latvian financial and human resources. This limitation did not allow the participants’ institutions to establish long-term relationships with diverse groups of aid recipients. Participant R provided an explanation of how financial and human resources limited her institution’s relationships with aid recipients:

If we want to deliver real results to development recipients, we can concentrate on just one country. . . . Our resources are limited. Our institution cannot afford to let people live in another country for three to five months. We need them here in Latvia. The financial resources that are available [for development cooperation] are also limited. . . . We simply cannot support heavier projects. We cannot simultaneously fund projects in more than one country.

The shortage of financial resources also limited Participant S’s ministry’s relationships with aid recipients, “We cannot afford to actively seek aid recipients. . . . We do not have unlimited resources. We fund development cooperation with our limited internal resources.”

Table 20

Government institution relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Shared vision	A. Aid recipients’ lack of involvement in their own development
B. Respect for local culture	B. Lack of resources offered by Latvian government institutions
C. Local involvement in development	

Relationships with International Partners

In addition to aid recipients, several [H, M, O, R, S] participants from Latvian government institutions established relationships with international partners. Examples of

international partners included the World Bank, United Nations Development Program, and the European Union.

Relationship outcomes

The outcomes that Latvian government institutions expected from relationships with international partners included learning and growth opportunities, reputation building opportunities, and project funding in exchange for Latvian expertise. Each outcome is discussed below.

Learning and growth opportunities

Latvia's involvement in development cooperation is very recent. Therefore, participants from government institutions believed that they could learn about development cooperation from more experienced international partners. Participant H described how her ministry worked with international donors to improve, what she called, "our capacities." She said, "We try to involve third country donors . . . those with more experience. We strongly believe that it is important to work with them. It is important to engage older donors. They can always advise us."

Participant O organized a seminar for his institution to which an ambassador from a West European country was invited to share his nation's development cooperation experiences. The participant wanted to learn "how his [the foreign ambassador's] country institutionalizes its development cooperation work . . . how much it spends on development cooperation . . . what its priorities are . . . what instruments it uses." Another participant, M, focused on personal rather than institutional learning and growth opportunities:

We work with experts from Old Europe It is not just development cooperation in the traditional sense when you help someone with reforms. It is an interesting professional growth opportunity. These mutual projects have an added value. . . . We work together with the Finns, British, and Italians. Once you have been involved in an international project, you can send an e-mail to another person and ask him [her] for an advice at any time. This is how professional relationships develop.

Reputation building opportunities

Relationships with international donors were also perceived as opportunities to demonstrate Latvia's achievements. Participant R believed that, "Development cooperation is an important issue on the United Nation's agenda. Sooner or later we all come together somewhere. Information about your successes and failures . . . your good and bad reputation . . . spreads out fast."

Participant S believed that through relationships with international donors Latvia was able to communicate about the level of development that it has achieved within a short period of time. "Through mutual projects we signal that our development level is sufficient . . . that we can take part in international programs. We demonstrate that we have something to share . . . that our values and goals are the same [as those of other developed countries]," she explained.

Exchange of Latvian expertise for project funding

Relationships between Latvian government institutions and their international partners allowed exchanges of resources. International donors funded development cooperation programs that were implemented by experts from Latvian government institutions. This Latvian expertise was exchanged for project funding. Participant S summarized, "Our people provide expertise [to international organizations]. And they fund us." Participant O provided a more elaborate explanation:

Some countries have money, but they do not have the necessary expertise to make use of it. Therefore, they give their money to us. They do not take part in the actual implementation [of the project]. They trust that we have the necessary skills and capabilities. For example, it is much easier for us than the Swedes to work in [developing country name]. Latvia and [country name] have common history. We both suffered because of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939⁸.

⁸ The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of 1939 is a secret treaty between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany that divided Europe into Soviet and Nazi spheres of influence in 1939.

Table 21**Government institution relationships with international partners: Relationship outcomes**

A. Learning and growth opportunities
B. Reputation building opportunities
C. Development cooperation project funding in exchange for Latvian expertise

Relationship maintenance

Latvian government institutions employed two main strategies to maintain relationships with international partners. The first strategy was the ***implementation of mutual development projects*** that were funded or co-funded by international partners.

The second strategy involved ***exchanges of information***. The Latvian government and its international partners identified mutual development interests and coordinated projects at formal and informal meetings. Participant E described the purpose of such meetings, “We meet and we make sure that there is no overlap between us and them. We want to learn how we can cooperate and support each other.” Participant H, who attended international forums in order to find new partners, said, “We try to identify others with similar interests. We search for someone with whom we could work.” Latvian government institutions also assisted international partners in ***making connections with development NGOs in Latvia***. For example, Latvian government institutions invited international partners to speak at workshops for Latvian development practitioners organized by the government.

Table 22**Government institution relationships with international partners: Relationship maintenance strategies**

A. Implementation of mutual development projects
B. Exchanges of information
C. Connecting international partners with domestic, non-governmental development actors

Relationship facilitator: Common interests

Interviews with participants from the government sector revealed a factor that facilitated relationships with international donors. Participant H believed that common interests served as the basis for relationships:

We identify common interests. . . . For example, a few weeks ago I attended an international forum in Brussels. It was for donors who work in the Caucasus region. This region is our government's priority. We already know what needs to be done there and how it needs to be done. We tried to identify other donors with similar interests. We looked for someone with whom we could work.

Research Question Five: Domestic Partner Relationships with International Publics

Like the fourth research question, the fifth question also inquired about relationships between parties from different nations. This question asked how, if at all, the domestic partners of Latvian government institutions described their relationships with international publics that had been established for development cooperation purposes. This section begins with an analysis of relationships between Latvian NGOs and aid recipients, and concludes with a review of relationships between Latvian businesses and their constituencies abroad.

Relationships between Latvian NGOs and Aid Recipients

Four types of relationship outcomes emerged from interviews with participants who represented the NGO sector. These outcomes were improved human living conditions for aid recipients, secured national interests for Latvia, opportunities for Latvian NGOs to share development expertise, and new experiences acquired by Latvian NGOs.

Relationship outcomes

Improved human living conditions

The most commonly identified outcome that participants from the NGO sector expected from relationships with aid recipients was improved human living conditions in developing countries [A, B, F, J, L, P, T]. Participant A stated, "We want to help societies develop. We

want to expand people's opportunities to make decisions about their lives. We want their lives to be fulfilling." She continued:

This is what drives us . . . not some mercantile motives to gain profit. . . . Over the past 15 years many Latvians who have been engaged with development cooperation have been led by mercantile motives. Neo-liberal and capitalistic interests have dominated. But we need to think about overall social development. . . . I have quite often heard people saying, "Oh, yes! Development cooperation! We need consulting projects. They are great opportunities to earn money. Look, the French do the same." But this is not why we do it. We want to increase the human welfare.

Two participants [F, P] emphasized the importance of helping developing countries because Latvia received development assistance from other states and organizations after it regained independence from the Soviet Union. Participant P suggested, "For us, it is a mission. We ourselves were helped in the past. We know what development assistance means. . . . We feel a greater sense of responsibility to help others." Participant F had similar reasoning:

There are more than 100 countries in the world that are poorer than Latvia. Among them are states in our close neighborhood. We and they have similar goals. They also want to take part in European peace and prosperity In the 1990s Swedish and Danish assistance was important to Latvia. Today Latvia must help Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova. We cannot remain indifferent. Latvia is not an isolated island. We are a developed nation that not only has rights, but also responsibilities.

Securing Latvia's national interest

Although two participants, A and B, believed that securing a country's national interests conflicts with a true desire to help others, a group of participants acknowledged that both outcomes can result from the same relationships with aid recipients. After suggesting that his NGO helped to improve the quality of aid recipients' lives, Participant J concluded, "Of course, there is always the moral aspect of helping others, but I also see the *political* and *economic value* of these relationships. They help Latvia's interests in the region."

Participant T also explained how Latvia's national goals can be reached through relationships that are established with aid recipients. In the same way as Participant J, she acknowledged that the relationships can simultaneously result in improved living conditions for

aid recipients and national gains for Latvia. She focused on the *international image* and economic opportunities:

It does not mean that we are only giving. Latvia also gains from these ties. Our international image improves. Our businesses have more opportunities. These are real gains that can be financially measured. . . . Our motivation is not mercantile, but there is nothing wrong with admitting that there are material gains.

“Each lat⁹ that we invest in development cooperation brings back a larger return later. The relationships that we have established by helping others provide international growth and development opportunities for our businesses,” agreed Participant F with his two NGO colleagues, Participants J and T.

Opportunities to share development experience

Latvian NGOs found that relationships with aid recipients provided them with opportunities to share their development expertise with those who could benefit from it [A, J, L, P, T]. Participant L revealed, “We feel that we have the necessary expertise. We know that through development cooperation we can transfer our knowledge to others.” According to Participant P:

Our people [development experts at her NGO] believe that the systems which we implemented in Latvia are very effective. We think that others can learn from us. We also want to share what did not work . . . so that others can avoid making the same mistakes.

Participant J also named opportunities to share knowledge as an outcome that his NGO expected from relationships with aid recipients. He explained:

We want to transfer our experiences . . . experiences that we gained by reforming our institutions and transforming our society in order to become an EU and NATO member state. We have learned a lot and we want to transfer our knowledge to others.

Acquiring new experiences

Two participants, L and T, believed that relationships with aid recipients allowed them to acquire valuable development and personal experiences. Participant T noted, “It is such a

⁹ Lat is Latvia’s national currency.

rewarding and emotional experience. We learn so much through our projects.” Similar opinion was shared by Participant L, “These international relationships are important to us. They extend our knowledge about other countries and development.”

Table 23

NGO relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes

A. Improved human living conditions for aid recipients
B. Secured national interests for Latvia
C. Opportunities to share development expertise
D. New experiences acquired by NGO representatives from Latvia

Relationship maintenance

Participants from the NGO sector used several strategies to maintain relationships with aid recipients. The first strategy involved ***activities that helped Latvian NGOs learn about local situations***. Participants B and L visited developing countries to study their development needs. Participant B described such an exploratory visit, “I travel to [country name]. I stay there for several days. I try to understand the local situation. I meet people . . . visit NGOs. I collect information. I want to understand how I can help them.”

In Latvia, Participants [A, B, F, P, T] also organized and participated in meetings during which aid recipients helped the Latvians identify ways that would facilitate development. Participant F described such a meeting, “We discussed our possible contributions. And they [aid recipients] told us what they expected from us.”

Another relationships maintenance strategy involved ***working together on the actual implementation of development cooperation projects***. Four participants [A, F, L, P] organized educational and training seminars for aid recipients who visited Latvia. During these seminars aid recipients learned about Latvia’s development experiences. Participant P explained educational visits for aid recipients organized by her NGO, “We organize study visits to Latvia.

We provide them [aid recipients] with a theoretical overview about Latvian institutions and introduce them to these institutions. We visit government ministries, Saeima,¹⁰ and local municipalities.”

A group of participants [B, F, T] consulted their counterparts in developing countries. Participant B explained the consultation process, “I consult NGOs. I stay in their organizations for a few days and advise them about how to manage their work and improve their capacities.”

Table 24

NGO relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies

A. Learning about local situations
B. Mutual implementation of development cooperation projects

Factors influencing relationship quality

As with any other relationship discussed so far in this chapter, ties between Latvian NGOs and aid recipients revealed factors that affected relationship quality. Participants identified both relationship facilitators and limitations.

Relationship facilitators

Understanding of local cultures. Participants believed that good relationships with aid recipients depended on their understanding of local cultures. Participant A said, “We must understand local cultures . . . mentalities. The more experience we have, the better relationships we can develop with aid recipients.” Similar experiences were shared by Participant L, “When you work with international partners . . . you must always remain open-minded. . . . You must always remember that people come from different cultures and they see things differently.” Participant T concluded, “We pay close attention to cultures. We must be sensitive. We must

¹⁰ Saeima is the name of the Latvian parliament.

show respect for local traditions and values. We would not be able to have successful relationships without it.”

Participant J illustrated how his NGO had to obey the local power tradition in a developing country in order to implement development projects there. He said:

In [country name] hierarchies are important. I cannot form close ties with a subordinate if the supervisor has not given his [her] blessing. There is very little bottom-up initiatives. . . . Once you start forming relationships you need to understand these factors.

Participant B also observed that relationships between international NGOs and aid recipients were influenced by the international NGO willingness to understand local situations. He explained:

Decisions about development work . . . what and how it needs to be done . . . cannot be made from somewhere far away. It is so characteristic of Europeans. They think that they know everything from some distant location. . . . You cannot build relationships this way. There is a need for people to be present at the grassroots level . . . people who know what needs to be done there. . . . We must reject our European ambitions. . . . I am trivializing now, but it is quite laughable to observe how Scandinavian feminists try to convince a traditional Muslim family . . . community . . . to accept our Western understanding of women's rights. I understand that they are very experienced and academically qualified in Western interpretations of human rights, but they completely lack understanding about the historic or any other aspects of Islamic societies. . . . We cannot force people to do something without truly understanding their needs.

Local involvement in development. A set of participants from NGOs believed that they were able to form strong relationships when aid recipients themselves were involved in development cooperation projects. For example, Participant B explained, “Good relationships are possible only when we have good ties with the environment in which we work. . . . We must involve local people. It cannot come only from us. It cannot be one-sided. Local people must be engaged.” Later in the conversation he added, “There are aid recipients with whom we have worked for years. . . . They continuously demonstrate their interest. We see that they need us. However, with some others our interactions are not successful. We discontinue [interactions] with them.”

Participant P believed that the involvement of aid recipients in the early stages in decision-making about development projects is important. “We always involve the local organizations there. . . . We ask what issues are the most important and urgent to them,” she said.

Previous contacts with aid recipients. Several participants [F, L, P] believed that previous contacts between them and aid recipients made relationships successful. Participant L explained, “Relationships are much easier to form if you have already worked with these organizations and people in the past . . . even if it was not related to development cooperation.”

“Development cooperation often comes after relationships have been established. Development cooperation often strengthens existing relationships. . . . Often . . . we have already been communicating and working together,” Participant P described the role of previous connections.

Participant F illustrated ways that previous connections helped his NGO build new relationships for development cooperation purposes. His NGO established “networks of European organizations, including organizations in developing countries.” He said, “We have met these people before. When we need to form connections for our development projects, we use our earlier connections. . . . Our connections introduce us to their contacts. It is how we meet each other.”

Common vision. Participant F believed that both parties must have a common vision for the future. He analyzed the role of a common vision:

It is easier to maintain relationships with those who share a common vision for the future. The common future is much more important than the common past. The common past is often based on a combination of colonial and corporate ties. These ties often contain resentment. They are not useful. . . . We want to work with those who look forward to a Europe that is peaceful and prosperous . . . who share our understanding of European values.

Relational limitations

Insufficient support provided by the Latvian government for its domestic partners'

projects. The dominant factor that influenced the success of relationships between NGOs and aid recipients was the insufficient support that the Latvian government provided to its domestic partners—Latvian NGOs [A, B, F, P]. The lack of support had two dimensions—organizational and financial. Participant F described how the government's organizational ineffectiveness prevented his NGO from engaging in long-term relationships with aid recipients. According to Participant F, the Latvian government continuously changed the countries whose development it funded:

In 2005 the government prioritized five developing countries. Every following year these countries changed. One year one country is taken off the list . . . two more the following year. Some other countries are added. . . . There is a lack of continuity. . . . Development cannot be achieved in such a short period of time. You cannot forcefully increase the extent of democracy . . . or eradicate corruption in two or three years. You need to gain trust. You want societies to get involved. These problems cannot be solved in a couple of years. You need to have long-term vision.

Participant A also suggested that her NGO could not establish long-term relationships with aid recipients because of the lack of consistent government policies over time. “There is a lack of continuity. We often base our work on a few month-long projects rather than a long-term dialogue,” she said.

Participant P acknowledged that the length of her organization's relationships with international aid recipients was affected by the small amount of funding that the Latvian government could afford for NGO work in developing countries, “Latvia's development cooperation budget is too small. They [aid recipients] have expressed their willingness to continue working with us. It is our lack of funds that interfere with our ability to work with them.” Later in the conversation she continued, “we would like to start a project and continue with it . . . go into more details with the same people. However, the funds are limited which does not permit long-term cooperation.”

Participant B also noticed that relationships with aid recipients were influenced by the shortage of funds. He said:

You ask me if our relationships [with aid recipients] are long-term. Yes, I would like them to be. But if this year the government provides less grant money than the year before . . . what kind of long-term relationships can we talk about? The level of longevity drops when there is no money.

Participant B emphasized the importance of government grants. He believed that currently there was not an alternative source of funding for development cooperation in Latvia:

Money should not be the main factor, but how can I implement a project without resources? As of now, we do not have private money for these kinds of activities. . . . There are no businesses that are interested in development cooperation. Our businesses want to buy social . . . corporate responsibility, but they are not interested in something that does not bring an immediate profit or generate a lot of publicity in the media.

Lack of Latvian NGO internal resources. The second factor that had a negative effect on relationships between NGOs and aid recipients was the lack of Latvian NGO internal resources.

Participant L explained how the shortage of human resources influenced the length of relationships with aid recipients:

Our current situation does not allow long-term relationships. We are a small organization. We are nine or ten people who have enough work here in Latvia. Our primary focus is on Latvia. If we have an international project then our people are away and we do not have enough staff for our projects here in Latvia. We cannot cover both at the same time.

Table 25

NGO relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Understanding of local cultures	A. Insufficient support provided by the Latvian government for NGO international projects
B. Local involvement in development cooperation	B. Lack of Latvian NGO internal resources
C. Previous contacts with aid recipients	
D. Vision shared by Latvian NGOs and aid recipients	

Relationships between Latvian Businesses and Aid Recipients

Two, Participants G and K, out of the four business sector participants established relationships with aid recipients. The remaining two business sector participants, I and U, did not

have experiences with international publics because their work involved domestic initiatives that served as the foundation for the Latvian government's international development cooperation programs.

One [G] of the two private businesses that had formed relationships with aid recipients focused on public sector institutions in developing countries, whereas Participant K's consultancy had established ties with diverse kinds of aid recipients, including public sector institutions, NGOs, universities, and a business association. Participant K summarized, "We do not work with just one group [of development cooperation aid recipients]. We work with diverse groups. . . . We work with everyone who wants to work with us."

Relationship outcomes

The two participants, G & K, revealed that through relationships with aid recipients they acquired new experiences, gained opportunities to share their development expertise, and secured Latvia's national interests. Each outcome is reviewed separately in the paragraphs below.

Acquiring new experiences

Both business sector participants believed that relationships with aid recipients provided them with new professional and personal experiences. Participant G said, "We learn. With each new country and recipient we gain more knowledge." Participant K's experiences were similar:

Our professional lives become more exciting. . . . You are not attached to one project. You see that the scope of your work can be broader . . . that you can meet people from other countries. It is interesting. . . . You experience a sense of fulfillment. You see that people need what you do. You are aware that what you do is useful. . . . You cannot get the same feeling just by working here in Latvia.

Opportunities to share development expertise

Participant K identified a second outcome from relationships between her consultancy and aid recipients, i.e., opportunities to share knowledge with those in need. She illustrated:

We believe that our people have knowledge that is deeply relevant to the former Soviet republics. We do not view development cooperation in the very broad sense that includes South America and Africa. We focus on the former Soviet republics . . . and also on the Balkans. These are regions that want to become part of the European Union. And our experts have the best knowledge about ways to do it. We ourselves have gone through these processes. We are ready to help those who need us.

Securing Latvia's national interest

Participant K saw relationships with aid recipients as opportunities to facilitate economic relations between Latvia and recipient countries. During the interview she described how her relationships with aid recipients assisted other Latvian businesses in finding partners in developing countries:

Although we work in one sector, we are exposed to people from other sectors. For instance, our acquaintances in Latvia say, "Help us find someone in Moldova who would be interested in exporting pecans to Latvia, or find a vintner in Georgia who wants to export its wines to Latvia."

Table 26

Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Relationship outcomes

A. New experiences acquired by Latvian businesses
B. Opportunities to share development experience
C. Secured national interests for Latvia

Relationship maintenance

The interviews allowed learning about two strategies that business organizations used to maintain relationships with aid recipients. The first strategy involved ***working together on the implementation of development cooperation projects***. Both business sector participants consulted aid recipients. For example, Participant G explained how her firm assisted a developing country to adapt its laws and regulations to EU legislation:

We consult them [aid recipients] on how Latvia adapted EU regulations in [sector name]. We start by studying their laws . . . we measure the consistency of their legislation to EU legal norms. Then we offer our suggestions. We advise them on how their laws need to be modified.

She continued to describe her organization's consulting projects, "We give them [aid recipients] suggestions about what needs to be done to increase the effectiveness of their systems. . . . We develop strategies of action and we help them implement these strategies."

Other forms of project implementation included training seminars and study trips. Participant K described a program that consisted of both a seminar and study trip for aid recipients, "First, we tell them about Latvia's experiences . . . about institution building. We discuss our successes and failures. . . . They visit us after these seminars. We show them the institutions that we discussed in the seminars." The same format of seminars and study was employed by Participant G, "Aid recipients visit us in Latvia where we organize seminars for them. They ask us questions and we answer them. . . . We organize seminars with experts who answer their questions."

The second relationship maintenance strategy was *continued communication with aid recipients* after formal projects had been finished. Participant K believed that open communication channels lead to future projects:

We remain in touch. We even communicate through *Skype*. We send birthday greetings and so on. Communication continues. One never knows at what moment we can restart our professional relationship . . . when something new might show up. Projects come and go. . . . We like to maintain relationships. They [aid recipients] are also interested in continuing communicating with us.

Table 27

Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Relationship maintenance strategies

A. Mutual implementation of development cooperation projects
B. Continued communication with aid recipients

Factors influencing relationship quality

A review of relationships between Latvian businesses and aid recipients concludes with issues related to relationship quality. This section focuses on both relationship facilitators and limitations.

Relationship facilitator

Lack of political constraints. An important factor that enhanced relationships between Participant G's consultancy and organizations in developing countries was the lack of political constraints. She suggested that her organization's international relationships were not affected by political systems that shaped relationships between two government institutions. She explained:

Political regimes have no direct effects on our relationships. They can affect relationships on a higher level . . . when ministries are involved . . . but on our level . . . the regime does not have much significance. We do not represent a government ministry. We are free to help both government and non-government structures [abroad].

Relationship limitations

Different approaches to professional communication. The first limitation, noted by Participants G and K, involved different approaches to professional communication between Latvian businesses and some recipients. Participant G shared her experiences:

We definitely must take into consideration different national mentalities. It is possible that in the beginning we did not pay enough attention to them. Our levels of activity and involvement are different. Here in Latvia we assumed that everything will proceed quickly. But they [aid recipients] are slower in responding to our communication . . . our e-mails. Communication differed from what we are accustomed to. And it can not be explained by differences between individual people. These are different national mentalities.

Participant K also discussed different patterns of communication between her organization in Latvia and some aid recipients:

They often do not answer our e-mails. . . . You send them a note. But there is no reaction. You start bombarding them with your e-mails. You want to know what has happened. And they say, "What? Everything is fine." We simply expect a short confirmation . . . we would like them to let us know that everything is all right or that they have received our e-mails. But it does not work that way. Now each time we write something we ask them to confirm that they have received our information . . . which, of course, does not always happen.

Lack of continuous funding opportunities offered by the Latvian government. The lack of continuous funding opportunities offered by the Latvian government also limited relationships between Latvian businesses and aid recipients. Participant K suggested that this limitation did not permit her consultancy to establish long-term relationships with aid recipients after individual projects were completed. She hoped to overcome this problem by attracting funding

from other international aid donors, “We would have liked to continue working with our partners,¹¹ but, unfortunately, the government does not plan to announce a new grant competition for us [the business sector]. However, we will try to find other funding opportunities . . . maybe the EU.”

Table 28

Business organization relationships with aid recipients: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Lack of political constraints	A. Different approaches to professional communication B. Lack of continuous funding opportunities offered by the Latvian government to its business sector partner projects abroad

**Research Question Six: Relationship Management Contributions
to Latvia’s Soft Power**

This section provides an answer to the sixth research question—how, if at all, does relationship management for development cooperation purposes strengthen Latvia’s soft power abroad. This section links the concepts of relationship management and soft power.

Enhancing Latvia’s Soft Power Capital through Relationship Management

The relationships that were established between Latvian government institutions and their partners at home and abroad strengthened Latvia’s soft power capital. Government institutions enhanced their soft power capabilities through these relationships. In return, their partners received resources and opportunities from Latvian government institutions. These resources and opportunities helped the domestic and international partners reach their own international development goals, and also contributed to Latvia’s attractiveness abroad in case of domestic partners.

¹¹ By “partners” Participant K means aid recipients in developing countries.

Partners' contributions to the government's soft power assets

Domestic partners

The domestic partners that strengthened the government's soft power capital included Latvian NGOs and businesses. Through relationships with domestic partners, government institutions acquired ***new resources*** such as knowledge, expertise, and ideas about development cooperation, as well as connections in developing countries. Relationships with domestic NGOs and businesses allowed the government to expand the ***international representation of Latvia*** beyond the governmental sector. As suggested by Participant O, domestic partners served as "Latvia's ambassadors" abroad. Besides the domestic partners' contributions to the government's international soft power capabilities, domestic partners also assisted government institutions at home by facilitating the ***Latvian public's support*** for development cooperation. Their ability to connect with the Latvian public helped the government legitimize its international soft power initiatives.

International partners

The government's international partners, such as intergovernmental structures and international NGOs, also made Latvia's soft power capital stronger. Latvian government organizations formed relationships with more experienced international development actors in order to learn from them. These ***learning opportunities*** allowed government institutions to increase the effectiveness of their development cooperation policies and programs.

Relationships with international partners also helped Latvian government institutions attract ***funding*** for their development cooperation projects. These projects, although sponsored by international donors, permitted Latvian government institutions to engage in direct exchanges with aid recipients and, thus, provided an opportunity to demonstrate Latvia's soft power.

Reciprocating partners contributions

In return for the assets that partners added to Latvia's soft power capital, they expected the government's assistance in reaching their own development goals. The partners hoped that the Latvian government would provide them with certain resources and opportunities.

Domestic partners

Domestic partners were interested in ***resources*** that could help them increase the quality of their own development cooperation projects. The government contributions valued by NGOs included grants, government's expertise about development cooperation, assistance with immigration issues for visitors from developing countries, and a formal recognition from the government that strengthened a partner's reputation. Businesses wished to acquire profit and business growth opportunities, government expertise about development cooperation, and connections with prospective aid recipients. In addition to resources, NGOs believed that relationships with government institutions allowed them to take part in the ***shaping of development cooperation policies*** in Latvia and international structures.

International partners

International partners who funded Latvian government institution projects sought the ***development knowledge*** that experts from Latvian government institutions could offer to them. This knowledge was especially important for projects that were implemented in regions undergoing transformation similar to that experienced by Latvia in the early 1990s.

Table 29**Enhancing Latvia's soft power capital**

A. Partners' contributions to the government's soft power assets
a) Domestic partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) New resources B) International representation of Latvia C) Latvian public's support b) International partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Learning opportunities B) Funding
B. Reciprocating partners contributions
a) Domestic partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Resources B) Influence on development cooperation policies b) International partners <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Latvian knowledge about development

Relationship Outcomes Leading to Supportive Environments Abroad

Nye (2004), who proposed the concept of soft power, suggested that a country's concern for the public good enhances its international attractiveness. Such a concern for the public good was also described by this dissertation study's participants who believed that their relationships with aid recipients resulted in improved human living conditions in developing countries. Following Nye's reasoning, it is possible that this relationship outcome—improved human living conditions—may have fostered supportive international environments for Latvia.

Government institutions

Participants from government institutions found that relationships with aid recipients provided them with opportunities to improve human living conditions in developing countries. Participant E suggested that Latvia had a “moral obligation” to assist various constituencies in its less developed neighborhood. A similar opinion was shared by his colleague, Participant R, from another government institution, who said, “We must help those in need.”

Participant N suggested that his institution “want[ed] people to be able to live better” and have “respectable human living conditions.” Participant O was concerned that aid recipients

should be given the opportunity to “have control over their own situation.” Participants from two government institutions, O and R, expressed a particularly strong sense of responsibility to improve human living conditions because other countries had assisted Latvia’s development after it regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

Domestic partners

Each participant from the **NGO sector** believed that relationships with aid recipients helped them facilitate improved human living conditions and, thus, possibly had a potential to increase Latvia’s attractiveness in developing countries. Participant A’s organization wanted to “help societies develop” and people have “fulfilling lives.” Participants P said that she felt a “great sense of responsibility to help others.” Participant P reminded that the Latvian civil society “cannot remain indifferent” to problems in its neighboring region, especially after it received development assistance from others in the past.

A participant from the **business sector** believed that her consultancy must make use of its development knowledge, acquired during the years of Latvia’s transformation, in order to help those in need. She said, “Our experts have the best knowledge about [development]. We ourselves have gone through these processes. We are ready to help those in need.”

Latvia’s Soft Power Gains from Relationships with International Publics

Participants from both the government and the non-government sectors acknowledged that their relationships with aid recipients provided benefits for Latvia. International relationships allowed Latvian development actors to reach Latvia’s foreign policy goals and improve Latvia’s standing in the international community.

Securing national interests in aid recipient countries

Government institutions

Participants from government institutions believed that relationships with aid recipients allowed them to fulfill Latvia's national interests. According to Participant N, the Latvian government hoped that relationships with aid recipients would increase Latvia's *security*. This participant observed that working together with relational partners from developing countries resulted in the elimination of external threats such as terrorism and the flow of illegal drugs.

Relationships with aid recipients also contributed to Latvia's *economy*. Participant R believed that these relationships "create a supportive environment for [Latvian] businesses" in developing countries. Her colleague, Participant O, also acknowledged the economic gains from relationships with aid recipients. He proposed that, besides economic interests, relationships with aid recipients strengthened Latvia's *political interests* such as "democratization and civil society [development]" in the neighboring regions.

A group of participants [E, O, R, S] from government institutions believed that relationships with aid recipients enhanced Latvia's *international profile*. These participants suggested that relationships formed for development cooperation purposes created, improved, and influenced Latvia's image [E, O, S], facilitated awareness about Latvia [S], and built Latvia's international reputation [R].

Domestic partners

Although some domestic partners from the NGO sector [A, B] believed that the securing of Latvia's national interests conflicted with the main purpose of development cooperation—improved living conditions in recipient countries—a group of NGO participants expected that relationships with aid recipients would lead to a favorable environment for Latvia's foreign

policy goals. Participant J said that relationships with aid recipients had “*political* and *economic* value. . . . They helped Latvia’s interests in the region.” Participant F appreciated relationships with aid recipients because they provided “international growth and development [opportunities] for [Latvian] businesses.” The economic value of these relationships was also mentioned by Participant K from the business sector. Participant T said that relationships with aid recipients *improved Latvia’s image* in developing countries.

Two NGOs [F, J] tried to introduce developing countries to *values* that were cherished by their organizations through relationships with aid recipients. As summarized by Participant J, these values included a “free market economy, individual freedoms and rights, power of law, antidiscrimination, and so on.” The NGO values were consistent with those of the Latvian government and, therefore, may have helped the Latvian government achieve its foreign policy goals.

Standing in the international community

Government institutions

Latvian government institutions tried to establish Latvia’s standing in the international community through relationships with international partners. Participant S believed that these relationships with international partners formed for development cooperation purposes “signal . . . [to others in the international community] that our development level is sufficient . . . that we can take part in international programs. We demonstrate that we have something to share . . . that our values and goals are the same [as those of developed countries].” Participant R suggested that information about each state’s contributions to development circulates within the international community and can have positive or negative effects on a state’s international reputation. She also thought that Latvia’s involvement in development cooperation demonstrates

to its non-domestic partners that Latvia is a “responsible member of the international community.”

Table 30

Latvia’s soft power gains from relationships with international publics

A. Securing national interests in aid recipient countries
a) Government institutions
A) Security interests
B) Economic interests
C) Political interests
D) International profile
b) Domestic partners
A) Political interests
B) Economic interests
C) Latvia’s image
D) Latvian NGO values
B. Standing in the international community

Encouraging Diverse Coverage of Latvia’s Soft Power through Relationships

By joining their relationship capitals, Latvian government institutions and their domestic partners were able to reach various international publics within the government and non-government sectors abroad. Government institutions enhanced Latvia’s reputation among its international counterparts, whereas domestic partners focused on the nongovernmental sectors. The relationships that Latvian development actors established with aid recipients also helped them reach other groups that did not directly benefit from Latvia’s development assistance.

Reaching the public sector

Participants from government institutions observed that their soft power influence was limited to their relational partners—direct aid recipients, all which were government institutions. Their reach did not extend beyond the government sector. Participant M from a Latvian government institution explained her observations in a recipient country:

The name of Latvia is recognized among civil servants in [country name]. Our work does not have a massive resonance in this country, but our aid recipients know us . . . we have a good reputation. Because of our work, their civil servants know Latvia much better than any other country.

Participant S shared similar experiences, “We are known within the sectors that we help develop. I have not conducted an empirical study, but I am convinced that people in the public sector recognize Latvia.” Participant C also emphasized the importance of groups that directly gained from her ministry’s development cooperation projects. She said:

I do not think that relationships that are established while working on development cooperation projects abroad . . . have significant impact on Latvia’s overall international image. . . . But I do believe that specific publics . . . know about us.

Reaching non-governmental constituencies

Participants from NGOs and businesses formed relationships with their counterparts in developing countries, thus, extending Latvia’s soft power reach to the non-governmental sector. Participant T from a Latvian NGO described ways that relationships between NGOs of two different countries strengthened Latvia’s soft power:

We need relationships on various levels . . . governmental . . . diplomatic . . . official visits. . . protocol . . . civil servant exchanges . . . and also on the level of civil society organizations. Each level is important . . . and affects the image of a country. The levels supplement and function parallel to each other.

Participant J also described the value of NGO relationship resources. He believed that a combination of relationships between Latvian government and non-government institutions, and their counterparts in other nations could enhance Latvia’s soft power:

When the government partners with the civil society . . . when it provides money for the civil society . . . the civil society is able to build relationships with civil societies in other countries. Relationships are not just established between two governments, but much more . . . between two societies. There is mutual goodwill and reciprocity. If another society is favorably disposed toward the Latvian society, the relationships between the governments also improve. The societies support their governments. That is how the so-called people’s diplomacy functions.

Like Participants T and J, Participant L emphasized the importance of NGOs in forming relationships with non-governmental sectors in developing countries. Asked to describe NGO contributions to soft power, he answered, “There are things that NGOs can do better than governments. . . . They can reach people on the grassroots level that may not be possible for governments.” His colleague from another NGO, Participant P, described how her NGO’s

relationships with aid recipients facilitate the development of new relationships between other Latvian organizations and groups from developing countries:

We work independently from the government. We work with groups in our sector. Aid recipients visit us here in Latvia. We introduce them to other Latvian organizations. They form their own relationships. We are no longer the center of these relationships. They have their own exchanges. They visit each other. They introduce each other to additional organizations. A new set of relationships is formed. . . . And I do believe that through these relationships Latvia becomes better known [abroad].

Participant F believed that only through the involvement of diverse Latvian actors in international development can Latvia demonstrate its active role on the international stage. “For Latvia to be an active player, individuals from NGOs, state, and businesses must get involved,” he noted.

In addition to NGOs, business organizations also helped to reach the non-government sector abroad. Like their NGO colleagues, business organizations established Latvia’s soft power among those groups with which they worked directly. Participant K from a consultancy said, “Latvia’s reputation as an aid provider remains primarily among the recipients. It stays on that level . . . among institutions that we work with.” She continued by describing the importance of relationships between Latvian non-governmental actors and groups in developing countries, “We create awareness about Latvia among aid recipients. . . . But there are also higher level relationships . . . relationships between state officials. This variety of relationships allows Latvia to cover [developing country name].”

Reaching the general public

Latvian development actors expected that their relational partners abroad—direct aid recipients—inform their general publics about Latvian contributions. Participants from the government and nongovernmental sectors in Latvia believed that their relational partners would be more credible sources of information in their own countries than would any Latvian organization. Participants from government institutions suggested that there was a lack of

awareness in their organizations about the local communication traditions in aid recipient countries. Participant M was concerned that her organization “may not know what is acceptable” and “may not sense what is or is not appropriate.” Participant R said that her ministry “do[es] not know specifics in [each] country.”

Latvian NGOs and businesses had similar expectations about communication from aid recipients. Participant J suggested that his organization is not an “authority for their media . . . their own local NGOs and academia are.” Participant G from the business sector concluded, “Our relationships are with specific organizations which we help. . . . We expect that these organizations will further work with their own societies.”

Table 31

Encouraging diverse coverage of Latvia’s soft power through relationships

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Reaching the public sector B. Reaching non-governmental constituencies C. Reaching the general public |
|--|

Relational Orientation and its Effects on Latvia’s Soft Power

This study revealed two relational orientations: (1) self-promotional communication and (2) work. Participants believed that only work-related relationships that brought real development results could serve as a basis for supportive international environments. Although participants acknowledged that self-promotional communication may be employed to reach soft power goals, they were convinced that self-promotional communication must not precede the actual development work.

Government institutions

Participant H from a government ministry summarized:

I think that hard work is the most important public diplomacy instrument. . . . You can go around telling everyone that the Latvians are great and how much they have helped [country name], but it would have no effect unless we deliver true results.

“It is our work . . . development cooperation initiatives . . . that create Latvia’s reputation among our partners. . . . First, we must help. The rest . . . reputation and recognition . . . will follow,” said Participant S. She added, “We must not focus on how many recognize us. We must remember the content. In the long-term, empty statements without substance are useless.”

Her colleague from a government ministry, Participant N, believed that “the more successful our projects are, the more people will recognize Latvia and the more favorable their attitudes will be toward our country.” Later in the conversation he described the link between work and self-promotional communication:

Of course, we must know how to present what we have accomplished. We cannot excavate a well and hope that everybody will know that it was dug by the Latvians. We must find ways that we can document our contributions publicly. . . . But we also cannot boast that we will dig a well and then not follow through. Communication and actual work need to go hand in hand. . . . It is not a cynical public relations vision. It is how the contemporary world works. Good deeds are quickly forgotten, therefore, you must learn to get them on the public record.

Domestic partners

NGO representatives also believed that Latvia’s international attractiveness depended on work-related rather than self-promotional communication-centered relationships. Participant B said, “We work on real projects. We always try to complete them according to our best conscience. Only well-done work can strengthen our international reputation.” Participant J contrasted image campaigns and development work:

You can organize television and press campaigns. But people in smaller nations want to feel and sense what they have seen or read about. If there is no real work . . . people understand that everything you say is a bogus. For any kind of public diplomacy activity within the development cooperation framework . . . real contributions are crucial. People need to see the house that was built. You can attach a plate that says the house was built by the Latvians, but you cannot have a plate without a house. . . . Empty declarations can be easily discovered. . . . I believe that if we are able to devote more money to more projects [in developing countries] Latvia will be [internationally] recognized.

Participant A was also skeptical about placing too much emphasis on such communicative activities as image-making:

True development work helps create an image for Latvia. But the image is only one minor aspect of development cooperation. I would not like to be overly concerned about the image. I think that the image follows actual work. What use does an image have if there is nothing behind it?

Participant A shared a colleague's story about another new EU member state that was concerned about its international image:

Over the last five years [name of EU member state] has become a country with a high gross domestic product. And this country wanted the world to know about its success. Its government asked an international nation branding expert to create an advertising supplement for *Time* magazine. It wanted to create a positive image. The international expert was surprised, "You have two million and you want to spend it on an image? Nobody reads these advertisements. Better invest your money in development cooperation and send out a press release afterwards." So, that is what [country name] did. Shortly after, the international community noticed and wanted to know where the money came from. [Country name] answered, "It's our own money." Everyone was impressed. International opinion about the country changed. The international community started taking it much more seriously.

Work and self-promotional communication was also contrasted by Participant K from a consulting business. "You can create awareness through advertising, but nobody will love you for it. But through development cooperation relationships you slowly build positive attitudes toward your country . . . one step at a time," she concluded.

The Influence of Relationship History on Latvia's Soft Power

A group of participants [B, F, P] from the NGO sector believed that relationship history, even if it did not involve development cooperation, served as the foundation for Latvia's soft power. The participants suggested that international perceptions about Latvia are not based just on recent relationships that were formed for development cooperation purposes, but that they have been established over time through various exchanges. Participant B said:

I do not think that our short-term projects help us reach any public diplomacy goals. My experience shows that the history of our development cooperation relationships is very short. I do not think that it allows any [international] evaluations about Latvia. But we have always supported, for example, Georgia's democratization efforts. The long-term history is what counts.

During the interview Participant F described how his NGO had worked on several international projects that did not involve development cooperation with its counterparts from developing countries. He noted, "Our relationships did not start with development cooperation. . . . We have had earlier bonds. And these have also created an image for Latvia." Participant P

expressed a similar view, “Relationships between us and them [aid recipients] are not limited to development cooperation. Their perceptions of us have accumulated over time . . . through any communication or project that we have had.”

Research Question Seven: Public Relations Contributions to Relationship Management

The seventh research question asked about the role of the formal public relations function in relationship management for development cooperation purposes. The question inquired how, if at all, the formal function of public relations in Latvian government and non-government sector organizations contributed to relationship management for development cooperation purposes.

The interviews revealed that the formal function of public relations was involved in relationship management between the participants’ institutions and their publics. However, public relations was not the function that was primarily responsible for relationship management. Public relations often supported the efforts of development officers who were in charge of relationship management.

In this section public relations contributions to relationship management are discussed. Each organization type—government, NGO, and business—is analyzed separately in the following three subsections.

Public Relations in Government Institutions

Each participant’s organization had a formal public relations unit. But the division of public relations work was different in each institution: (1) the formal public relations unit was in charge of the public relations aspects of development cooperation, (2) both the public relations unit and the head of the development cooperation program worked together to reach their institution’s public relations goals, and (3) the public relations aspects of development

cooperation work was the responsibility of the development cooperation program director. Only one participant thought that public relations was not involved in her organization's development cooperation activities.

Of the nine participants from government institutions eight said that public relations was part of the relationship management between their organizations and their publics who were involved in development cooperation. The public relations function at government institutions managed relationships with four different constituencies. Those were the Latvian public, domestic partners, aid recipients, and international partners.

Public relations and the Latvian public

Public relations goals

Seeking the public's support. The dominant public relations goal was to seek the domestic public's support for the government's development cooperation initiatives. Participant C described the significance of the public relations work at home:

Public relations is very important. Money does not fall from the sky. Our spending must be transparent. We must be accountable for our activities. Public relations plays a great role here. Through public relations we demonstrate how much and in what ways we invest in development cooperation. Through public relations we encourage the public to express their opinions. The public opinion then tells us if we may increase the funding [for development cooperation]. Our policies and international obligations are one thing, but let's be realistic . . . public opinion is our priority. We must know what the public thinks about development cooperation. It is the public's money that we spend.

A group of participants named ***domestic socioeconomic problems*** as the greatest source of public resistance to development cooperation. For example, Participant N explained how his ministry's public relations function approached this challenge:

The most difficult part is to explain to the Latvian public why development cooperation is necessary in a situation when we have so many domestic needs. People want to know why we must invest in other countries. It is an important question. And it is not easy to provide answers. . . . Our approach is to explain that we are working on domestic problems . . . improving the situation, but problems in [developing country name] cannot wait any longer.

A similar concern was voiced by Participant R from another government ministry:

There will always be a dilemma. On one hand, we have too little money for the range of activities here in Latvia . . . salaries need to be increased and many other problems must be solved. On the other hand, we give money to others. We must use public relations to explain people that we do not live on the moon . . . we are not isolated from the rest of the world. We must share with others because in the past others shared with us.

Participant D also discussed the conflict between domestic needs and Latvia's engagement in development cooperation abroad:

We must explain the importance of development cooperation to the Latvian people. A development cooperation project worth 100,000 lats may not be a large investment for the state, but for our retirees it seems like a lot of money. We must find arguments that demonstrate the value of development cooperation . . . we must tell them that prosperous neighboring regions provide economic and security benefits to the Latvian people.

Several participants believed that another reason for the resistance toward development cooperation was the public's perception of development cooperation as a ***requirement imposed on Latvia by the European Union***. Discussing his institution's public relations challenges,

Participant E said:

I have to admit that we started thinking about development cooperation just because we joined the European Union. We have avoided connecting these two things. We do not want the public perceive development cooperation as an EU ultimatum. . . . But it has caused a public relations problem for us. We have difficulties explaining why Latvia must get involved.

Participant D also found that Latvia's legal obligation to the European Union posed a public relations challenge for her institution. She described the circumstances in which her institution's public relations work was situated:

Latvia is an EU member state with certain obligations that need to be fulfilled. . . . The EU does not care whether we have domestic issues or not. We have signed documents and therefore must participate in development cooperation.

Information about development cooperation. Although several participants believed that the main goal of public relations is to gain the Latvian public's support for development cooperation, Participant O held a different view. He suggested that the role of public relations is purely informative. His institution used public relations to inform the public about its development work rather than to try to convince it about the value of development cooperation:

I believe that we should provide the public with information [about development cooperation]. But I do not think that we need to convince it. We need to tell the public where, whom, and how we help. We do not need to persuade anybody. The public already understands that development cooperation is important. . . . I think that the Latvian public understands that we must help others. I have not heard any serious argument against it. Nobody has said, “No, we should not help.” Overall, the public’s attitude is positive.

Increasing the public’s confidence. Another public relations goal was identified by Participant R. She hoped that through information about development cooperation successes her institution would be able to increase the Latvian public’s confidence. She said:

It is in our interest to inform the public about development cooperation projects. This information increases the confidence of the Latvian public. For long years, we were those who received help from others, but now it is us who can help. Now we can do something good for others. I think this understanding can do no harm to anybody. It can only improve our public’s confidence.

Third party involvement

Several participants from government institutions believed that third parties could assist them in gaining the Latvian public’s support for development cooperation. These third parties were domestic partners from the non-government sector and the Latvian media.

Domestic partners from the non-governmental sector. As the first section on domestic relationships illustrated, government institutions expected that their non-state partners—NGOs and businesses—would help them reach the Latvian public. Discussing ways that public relations could increase the support for development cooperation, Participant C reconfirmed the importance of NGOs:

Money comes from the state’s budget . . . from our citizens . . . from our taxpayers. If we spend this money on development cooperation we must explain it to our citizens. It is crucial We cannot do it alone. We need NGOs. They connect and involve people on the grassroots level. They know how to inform and educate the Latvian public.

Mass media. In addition to domestic partners, government institutions also relied on the media to help them bond with the Latvian public. Participant D summarized the role of the media, “If development cooperation becomes an issue on the media’s agenda . . . when the media starts discussing it . . . then the rest of the public follows. People will also become interested and involved in it.”

Participant R explained that her ministry's public relations activities were predominantly focused on the media, "It is mostly work with the media. . . . We send out press releases after events or when we feel that something has been accomplished . . . or when we have something new to announce." Relations with the media were also valued by Participant C:

We have started working with journalists. Just recently we organized an event to which journalists were invited. I think that we are slowly creating a good working relationship with them. . . . They produced a report about our projects in [developing country name]. They have started to promote our work. It is not really promotion, but simply . . . reports and programs that show to the public what we do.

Public relations activities

Government institutions placed a heavy emphasis on *relations with the media* in order to reach such public relations goals as public support, information, and confidence building. Media related activities included press releases and conferences, videos and photos about developing countries for reporters, commissioned programs for public television channels, government sponsored trips for Latvian reporters to developing countries, and op-ed pieces in newspapers and magazines written by government's development officers.

Some other public relations activities undertaken to reach the Latvian public involved *information about development cooperation policies and projects on government institution websites*. Two participants—C and E—said that their institutions conducted *public opinion polls* to learn about the Latvian public's attitudes toward development cooperation.

Questioning the value of public relations

Although the function of public relations was used to reach the Latvian public, two participants believed that public relations is publicity that is inconsistent with the main development goal—to help others. Participant M, who perceived public relations as "boasting about your own achievements," suggested:

I don't know. It may increase a few citizens' self-esteem . . . it may show that we are not the last . . . that we also have something good . . . that there is something others can learn from us. But, quite frankly, this

boasting about one's own achievements . . . goes against the Latvian national identity. Latvians do not like to praise themselves.

Her colleague, Participant S, from another government institution said that although the formal public relations unit was informed about her institution's engagement in development cooperation, this unit was not directly involved in development cooperation. She said, "We do not like to create publicity for ourselves when we help others."

Table 32

Government institutions: Public relations and the Latvian public

A. PR goals
a) Seeking the public's support
A) Sources of public resistance
aa) Domestic socioeconomic problems
aaa) Development cooperation perceived as a requirement imposed by the European Union
b) Informing the public about development cooperation
c) Increasing the public's confidence
B. Third party involvement
a) Domestic partners from the non-governmental sector
b) Mass media
C. Public relations activities
a) Relations with the media
b) Dissemination of information about development cooperation on government institution websites
c) Public opinion polls
D. Questioning the value of public relations

Public relations and domestic partners

Public relations goals

Participant R perceived public relations as an instrument that helped her institution ***inform domestic partners about development cooperation opportunities***. For example, her ministry's public relations function tried to attract new partners to its development cooperation programs:

We try to make our information publicly accessible to experts through the media. At first, it may seem that nobody reads papers, listens to radio or watches television. But only one person needs to read it and tell about it to someone else. It is another way to stay in touch with experts. On several occasions, I have been

surprised that people have heard about something [through the media] and responded to it. It pays off sooner or later.

The function of public relations in three government institutions [C, E, N] ***provided opportunities for development actors to debate issues related to development cooperation.***

Ministries tried to learn about development issues that were important to their partners through seminars and other meetings.

Public relations activities

Public relations activities that were focused on informing domestic partners involved ***press releases*** to the media, preparation and posting of ***information on institutional websites***, production and dissemination of ***brochures about development cooperation***, and ***educational seminars*** in which domestic partners learned about development cooperation opportunities abroad. In order to provide a forum for debate about development cooperation, the public relations function in government institutions organized ***workshops and debates for domestic partners.***

Table 33

Government institutions: Public relations and domestic partners

A. Public relations goals
a) Informing domestic partners about development cooperation opportunities
b) Providing various development actors with opportunities to debate issues related to development cooperation
B. Public relations activities
a) Writing press releases
b) Preparing and posting information on organizational websites
c) Producing and disseminating brochures about development cooperation
d) Organizing educational seminars
e) Arranging workshops and debates for domestic partners

Public relations and international publics

Factors limiting international practice of public relations

In most government institutions the formal public relations function was very little involved in the relationship management with international publics. The interviews revealed two factors that limited the international practice of public relations.

Participant H viewed *public relations as a communication activity that did not facilitate development*. She contrasted development work and public relations:

Real work rather than communication matters. Specific results are what counts. I have observed ‘experts’ from other countries. They organize a seminar, write a paper . . . but the aid recipient is left empty handed. He [she] says, “This report did not change anything.” It is clear to me that such an approach is useless. And we will not do it like that. If we do something we want to see real results.

Two other participants believed that they *lacked the local awareness* necessary to practice public relations in other countries. They expected that the direct aid recipients would serve as bridges between Latvian government institutions and non-governmental public in developing countries. Participant M illustrated her observations:

When we have accomplished something we encourage our counterparts to send out press releases. . . . Our capacities are limited in other countries. . . . I am very cautious about communication there. I may not know what is acceptable. I cannot afford to say the same things there that I would say in Latvia. Our partners should communicate with their own societies. We may not sense what is or is not appropriate.

“Our public relations is centered on the Latvian public. We do not work with the public in [developing country name],” said Participant R. She continued, “We leave it for their own domestic organizations. Of course, we expect that they will inform their own people. . . . But we do not directly work with them. We do not know the specifics in this country.”

In addition to local aid recipients, Participant N suggested that some aspects of public relations can be practiced by Latvian embassies in developing countries. His institution relied on the embassies for information about individual countries, “For people at the embassies . . . it is their unwritten responsibility to monitor the press and other sources of information in their host

countries. It is important that they deliver that information to us.” Participant E also mentioned the importance of the embassy local awareness, “Embassies are in a better position to understand what is happening and what should be done. . . . Their evaluations [of local situations] are more objective.”

International public relations activities

Although Latvian government institutions often did not practice international public relations, the interviews revealed several activities that contributed to relationship building with international publics. To some extent, the public relations function was involved with both types of international publics—aid recipients and international partners.

Public relations with aid recipients. Public relations in developing countries were used *to create awareness* about Latvian development cooperation programs. Participant M arranged events for development aid recipients:

In each country we organize an opening conference to mark the start of a new project. In this conference we discuss our plans. Although it depends on each country, in addition to civil servants [who directly benefit from development aid], we often invite representatives from NGOs and universities as well as journalists.

Participant N’s institution organized visits by journalists from developing countries to Latvia. He hoped that these visits would result in increased awareness about Latvia in general and his institution in particular.

Besides these awareness building activities, Participant N’s organization employed the function of public relations *to learn about the local context* in developing countries. He described:

We talk to local leaders . . . tribal leaders. . . . Every day one of our people meets with them. He arrives at the town hall, sits in a lotus pose, drinks tea and discusses issues. Things are done this way in [country name]. . . . We must find local leaders and speak with them. . . . These interpersonal contacts are much better public relations than brochures and TV programs that have been produced in Latvia.

Public relations with international partners. Public relations was used among international partners ***to create awareness*** about Latvia's development cooperation work in order to attract funding for Latvian projects. For example, Participant E's institution's public relations function produced a short film and brochure about Latvia's development work. These public relations tools were distributed at international forums for donors. The same institution's public relations function also arranged exhibit booths at international events.

Public relations at Participant H's ministry ***connected his institution's international and domestic partners***. The public relations function organized a seminar in which representatives from the European Commission informed Latvian development practitioners about international development cooperation opportunities. Participant H said, "We organized a seminar for our domestic partners. Our colleagues from the European Commission discussed [development cooperation] opportunities with our partners here in Latvia."

Table 34

Public relations and international publics

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| <p>A. Factors limiting the international practice of public relations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public relations as a communication activity that does not facilitate development b) Lack of local awareness necessary to practice public relations abroad <p>B. Public relations and aid recipients</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public relations goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Creating awareness about Latvian development cooperation programs B) Learning about local contexts b) Public relations activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Arranging informative events in developing countries B) Organizing developing country journalist visits to Latvia C) Holding meetings with local opinion leaders <p>C. Public relations and international partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Public relations goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Creating awareness about Latvian development cooperation work B) Connecting international and domestic partners b) Public relations activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Producing informative materials B) Exhibiting at international development forums C) Organizing seminars about development cooperation |
|---|

Public Relations in NGOs

Only two out of the seven NGOs represented in this study had a formal public relations unit—a public relations department or practitioner [J, P]. Despite this formal public relations unit, in both NGOs the public relations aspects of the development cooperation projects were mostly the responsibility of development cooperation program directors. For example, Participant J described the formal public relations unit's role in development cooperation as “minimal.” He said:

Our organization has so many activities. One PR practitioner cannot be responsible for all of them. We lack resources [to hire another public relations practitioner], and as always, it is difficult to measure PR results . . . which further limits the allocation of additional fund for PR. It is a vicious circle.

The remaining five NGOs [A, B, F, L, T] did not have a formal public relations unit. The function of public relations was practiced by development cooperation directors or their assistants. The interviews allowed the identification of two reasons why the NGOs did not have formal public relations units. First, they lacked funds for such units. Participant A said, “We have included a [full-time] public relations practitioner in each of our organizational plans, but you need actual money to implement those plans in the real life.” Participant L summarized the second reason—division of work in NGOs—for the lack of a formal public relations unit, “In our organization each program director knows his [her] area the best. The program director also knows what needs to be communicated.”

Despite the lack of formal public relations units, each participant from the NGO sector acknowledged that the function of public relations was involved in their organization's relationship management for development cooperation purposes. Public relations activities were focused on three constituencies—the Latvian public, policymakers, and aid recipients.

Public relations and the Latvian public

Public relations goals

Encouraging the public's involvement in international development. Several participants believed that the goal of public relations in their organizations was to encourage the Latvian public to get involved in development cooperation [A, B, L, P, T]. Participant L explained the purpose of his NGO's public relations function:

The Latvian society needs to be informed . . . especially those groups that have know-how . . . even if they have never thought about development cooperation. This information can encourage them to think about ways that they can help other states.

Participant B believed that through public relations his organizations can educate the Latvian public about the causes of international development problems and encourage it to take the action necessary to overcome these problems. He said:

We must educate the public here at home Most causes of development problems can be found here in Europe. It is our lifestyle and consumption traditions. . . . Our goal is to encourage the Latvians to participate in development cooperation. It is important that they gain direct experience.

Like Participant B, two other NGO representatives [A, T] encouraged the Latvian public's involvement by linking Latvia to other parts of the world. Participant A explained:

We help our citizens understand the situation . . . we help them understand that people live in much worse circumstances in other parts of the world. We want them to understand that what we do here [in Latvia] affects people somewhere else. It is important that we explain to them how development cooperation works and how they can employ development cooperation mechanisms to help others.

“For all of us, it is important to understand that Latvia is part of the world. . . . We must be aware that we are in a privileged situation . . . that we can afford to help others,” noted Participant T. She continued, “I strongly believe that it is very important to use public relations to educate people about it. It is important to encourage them to act.”

Seeking the public's support for the government's development cooperation initiatives. Another goal of the public relations function in NGOs was to assist the government in gaining the Latvian public's support for the state's involvement in development cooperation. Most of the

public relations work was focused on explaining why the Latvian budget must support foreign development projects, including grant programs for NGOs. Participant J described the importance of public relations:

The success of development cooperation initiatives depends on good public relations. On a conceptual level, the state's development cooperation plans are okay. But the greatest obstacle is the lack of sufficient funding. This obstacle cannot be overcome if the Latvian public does not support development cooperation. . . . It asks, "Why do we give money to Georgia and Moldova? Look, our retirees do not have enough." And it is a very important question. . . . The only way we can solve this problem is through public relations . . . by explaining why we must provide help to others.

Participant T also suggested that the success of development cooperation projects depended on the public's support for development cooperation. "Development cooperation policies cannot be successfully implemented without the public's support. Politicians are not willing to use the state's budget for development cooperation without permission from the public," she said. Later in the conversation Participant T illustrated how NGOs could help policymakers:

Members of the parliament are elected. They must explain to their electorate why a hundred thousand lats from Latvia's budget must be spent not on our retirees, but somewhere else abroad. Why is it important? We must help them put these issues on the public agenda.

Participant F believed that the role of NGOs is to identify the link between Latvia and those countries that receive its development aid. He proposed that such a link would assist the public in understanding the value of Latvia's involvement in development cooperation:

We must inform people about development cooperation. . . . If we look at European public opinion polls, we see that the Latvian attitude toward development cooperation is less favorable than that of an average European. . . . But when people learn that our aid benefits better known countries in Latvia's proximity, for example, Ukraine, the attitudes become positive. We must use public relations to inform people that money does not go to some unknown country.

Participant L, who also believed that through public relations his NGO can facilitate the Latvian public's support for development cooperation, emphasized the possible returns that the Latvian public can expect from development work abroad. He said:

The Latvian public is very skeptical about development cooperation . . . because of the local problems. People say, "Why should we spend on others?" . . . We must explain that Latvia is part of a larger world . .

. . . that global processes connect us . . . that today we help someone else and it pays back after five, seven years.

Participant F, whose NGO used public relations to seek the public's support for development cooperation, believed that the public must also understand that development cooperation is part of Latvia's international obligations that the state undertook by joining international organizations. He explained Latvia's international commitments:

It is important to create awareness among the members of the Latvian public . . . that we do not live in some isolated corner of the world. We are an active part of the international community. We have been an EU and NATO member state since 2004. We are also members of other international structures. Our state has obligations that need to be fulfilled within certain deadlines.

Public relations activities

Educational events. The function of public relations was involved in the organization of events that educated various groups of the Latvian public about development cooperation.

Participant A described the purpose of such an educational event for other *Latvian NGOs*, "We, together with another group, organized several events for NGOs in Latvian towns. We encouraged them to hold their own community events. We want them to tell their communities about their development cooperation projects."

The public relations function at several NGOs was also involved in the organization of educational events for *college students*. Participant A characterized the importance of events that provided students with opportunities to learn about developing countries and their situations:

We organized an event with a poverty reduction expert from [African country name]. He met with Latvian students. Young people are very interested in these issues. We try to emphasize the cooperation aspects of development. Someone from [African country name] knows much more about poverty reduction than any expert here in Latvia. It is important that we all come together and learn about cultures. It teaches us how to avoid prejudice and stereotypes.

Participant A's NGO was also involved in a series of educational events organized at colleges where hers and another NGO held seminars that explained development cooperation.

Like Participant A, Participant B said that his organization held seminars at colleges. “College students are much more open. They have a potential. They think about issues that nobody else thinks about. They are the opinion leaders of the future,” he concluded.

Participants from NGOs believed that two publics—community groups and college students—serve as bridges between NGOs and the general public in Latvia. After describing events that her organization arranged for other NGOs, Participant A noted, “Through these NGOs we reach the local communities . . . the broader public.” Participant B believed that college students “carry that [development cooperation] message further to others.”

Strategy development events. The public relations function arranged discussions during which development cooperation strategies were worked out. Participant A explained how her NGO co-organized a working group, consisting of representatives from various sectors, in order to identify ways that would ***educate the public about development cooperation***:

We and others established a working group on development cooperation. It consisted of representatives from NGOs, academia, government, intergovernmental organizations, and international NGOs. We discussed what needs to be done by 2015¹² and what our plans of action should be. . . . We summarized everything that was discussed during the meetings. And now we are organizing educational seminars for five stakeholder groups that are critical for development cooperation. One group is decision and policymakers. Another group is the media. The next stakeholder groups are academicians and other researchers . . . students . . . and entrepreneurs. These groups must understand what development cooperation is and what they can do.

Participant A worked with a group of media experts to learn about those aspects of ***development cooperation that might interest the media***. The participant believed that through media the Latvia public can be educated about development cooperation, “We organized a discussion for media experts. We wanted to know how we can educate the media about development cooperation.”

¹² In 2015 Latvia is expected to assume the rotating presidency of the European Union. This year of presidency also coincides with the time frame that the United Nations has set for its Millennium Development Goals.

Mediated activities. Mediated communication was oriented toward the general public as opposed to interpersonal activities that were focused on specific publics: college students and NGOs. In order to reach the general public, participants engaged both traditional mediated channels such as press releases, television, newspapers, magazines, brochures, as well as non-traditional mediated channels—blogs, photo exhibits, films, and websites.

The mediated communication activities in NGOs had two different goals. These included education and information.

Participants from NGOs used mediated channels of communication ***to educate*** the public about development cooperation. In Participant B's organization consisting of volunteers each member was responsible for educating the publics about his or her development experiences. Participant B described, "Each person who returns from a developing country organizes educational activities here in Latvia. . . . It can be a photo exhibit or a film." Asked to describe his personal involvement in his NGO's public relations aspects, Participant B said, "I produced a film that I posted online. It was also shown by [public television channel]. I also wrote a blog. It attracted quite a lot of visitors. Based on my blog entries, I wrote articles for Latvian newspapers and magazines . . . for each major publication that reaches the general public. . . . I try to educate and motivate people by explaining why they should help others."

Participant F explained how, after an event during which NGOs and government institutions discussed development cooperation, his organization paid for several newspaper supplements about development cooperation, and published a brochure about the same topic. Participant J's organization used mediated communication in a similar manner, "We try to initiate television reports about development cooperation. . . . Recently we published a newsletter

about development cooperation that went out as a supplement to [national newspapers name]. . . . Occasionally, we also write op-ed pieces.”

In addition to education, mediated communication was also used for *informational purposes*. The public relations function in Participant L’s and P’s organizations wrote and disseminated press releases, and organized press conferences to inform the general public about their development cooperation projects. Participant L explained, “We never pass up an opportunity to create awareness about development cooperation. . . . We send out press releases in which we tell about . . . our projects. We also inform about significant events . . . when a foreign delegation visits us or there has been a conference.” The same information was also posted on his NGO’s website.

Public relations in Participant P’s organization played a similar role. This function was mostly involved with informing the media about the organization’s development cooperation work:

We always send out press releases about our visits [to developing countries] or about a group that visits us in Latvia. We reveal our plans. We try to provide detailed information. . . . There have been occasions when we organize a press conference. We have invited members of Saeima and government officials to join us during the press conference.

Table 35

NGOs: Public relations and the Latvian public

A. Public relations goals
a) Encouraging the public’s involvement in international development
b) Seeking the public’s support for the government’s development cooperation initiatives
B. Public relations activities
a) Organizing educational events for other Latvian NGOs and college students
b) Arranging strategy development events that
A) educated the Latvian public about development cooperation
B) allowed to identify development cooperation aspects that might interest the media
c) Mediated activities that
A) educated the public about development cooperation
B) informed the public about development cooperation

Public relations and the government

Public relations goals

Influencing domestic policymaking. Several NGOs [A, J, T] used their public relations function to influence domestic policymaking in the area of development cooperation. The participants tried to convince policymakers to increase funding for development cooperation activities. “Currently Latvia does not allocate enough funding for development cooperation. Saeima and the government are responsible for development cooperation budget. We, as a civil society organization, lobby them to increase the funds,” Participant T explained.

Participant J’s organization also tried to affect the policymaking process. He believed that the role of public relations was to make politicians accountable to the publics. He described a meeting in which his organization together with other members of the civil society “encouraged policymakers to make public statements.” He added, “Once they [policymakers] make their intentions public it is easier for us to make sure that these promises are kept. We use these promises as instruments of advocacy.”

PR activities

Debates. The public relations function in four NGOs [A, F, J, T] organized debates for policymakers. Participant J described one such seminar, “We arranged a workshop for policymakers and other opinion leaders. . . . We encouraged them to debate issues related to development cooperation.”

The public relations function in Participant F’s NGO held a seminar for policymakers during which participants identified the best ways to utilize Latvian development aid. “Together with [ministry name], we organized a discussion about Latvia’s role in development cooperation.

Members of the parliament, NGOs . . . participated. After this successful debate, we decided to arrange three follow-up discussions,” he said.

Lobbying. The public relations function in three NGOs [A, J, T] was also involved in lobbying policymakers and the government. Participants arranged meetings with individual members of the parliament or groups of them to advocate the importance of development cooperation and the need for additional funding. In addition to these direct lobbying efforts, indirect lobbying instruments, such as meetings with various social groups that could pressure the government, were used. An excerpt from an interview with Participant T describes her organization’s lobbying activities:

We meet with members of the parliament in person. We speak at parliamentary working group meetings. Together with other NGOs we organize events [about development cooperation] for the public . . . lectures for college students and other groups. We participate in forums that educate about the Millennium Development Goals.

The function of public relations in Participant T’s organization engaged in lobbying policymakers through the mass media. Her and other NGOs “worked with the media to create publicity about successful development cooperation projects.” She hoped that through information learned through the media the Latvian public would become supportive of development cooperation and begin to pressure the government to allocate additional funding for it.

Table 36

Public relations and the government

A. Public relations goals
a) Influencing domestic policymaking
B. Public relations activities
a) Organizing debates with policymakers
b) Lobbying policymakers

Public relations and aid recipients

Public relations goals

Learning about the needs of aid recipients. In several NGOs the function of public relations researched the needs of aid recipients. Asked to explain her organization's public relations goals, Participant A answered, "We use public relations to find out what they [aid recipients] need. We cannot go into another country with the naïve belief that we know everything."

Participant B, who was in charge of the public relations function in his NGO, described a research trip that he took to a developing country. During this trip he met with several NGOs. He described the purpose of the trip, "It help[ed] me understand how I can assist them."

Participant F also suggested that his organization's public relations function was involved in activities that helped it understand aid recipients. His organization learned "how they [aid recipients] perceive a situation, what they believe effective development solutions are and what we can do to help their countries."

Creating awareness about Latvia. The function of public relations was also involved in creating awareness about Latvia in aid recipient countries. Three participants [F, J, L] hoped that through the media and interpersonal channels publics in developing countries would learn about Latvian development cooperation work. For example, Participant F, who responded to developing country journalist requests for information about Latvia, said, "We like to use these public diplomacy multipliers who further disseminate . . . information [about Latvia] to their publics."

Explaining motivation for helping. Participant B's experiences showed that aid recipients wanted to learn about Latvian motivations for helping them. He illustrated a situation which he believed required what he called a "two-way communication:"

People [in developing countries] are educated and smart. They often ask questions. They want to know why we help. Our answers cannot be one-dimensional . . . self-serving . . . we help because we have political and economic interests. . . . One-dimensional communication does not do any good. Communication must be two-way. . . . We must identify common ties between our countries . . . our people.

Helping aid recipient NGOs improve their public relations capacities. The public relations function in Participant B's organization consulted its NGO sector counterparts in developing countries to discuss ways that they could use public relations to increase organizational effectiveness. Participant B shared one of his most recent projects, "Because my area of expertise is PR and marketing I helped an NGO in [developing country name] improve its PR capacity. I consulted it."

Public relations activities

Strategy planning activities. A set of public relations activities involved the identification and planning of development cooperation strategies. The public relations functions in two NGOs [A, F] were involved in ***group meetings*** in which the needs of aid recipients were discussed. Participant A described one such event, "We, together with an international NGO, organized a forum in [developing country name]. We invited local NGOs. . . . We wanted to learn about their needs." Participant F, who also discussed the role of public relations in strategy development, noted, "Every discussion that we have here in Latvia must involve the recipients of our aid. We invite ambassadors from developing countries to our discussions. We want to know how they perceive the situation."

Several participants said that people in charge of the public relations function went on ***individual information gathering trips*** to developing countries. Participant A described her

assistant's visit to a developing country, "During her trip she tried to understand how and whom we can help. She met with international organizations . . . met people . . . and read various reports." Participant B's personal experiences were similar, "I travel to a [developing country name]. I meet with people there. I visit local NGOs . . . collect information."

Participant F's organization's public relations function used a combination of personal information gathering opportunities and *monitoring of the media* to develop strategies for development cooperation programs. He described the value of such a combined approach:

We always monitor local politics and social developments. . . . We ask local people to provide us with information. We also read the local press. Of course, it is much easier [to obtain information from the local press] in those countries that enjoy freedom of speech. If that's not possible, we use our connections. You can always find information. You just need to figure out how.

Information activities. Most informational activities focused on reporters from developing countries. Participant F's and L's NGO's disseminated press releases with a goal, as Participant L said, "to create awareness about our projects and Latvia." In addition to press releases, Participant F's organization "welcomed any request for information from developing country journalists," as well as provided them with informative materials. During the interview he described a DVD and brochure about Latvia, both produced by his NGO's public relations function.

Consulting activities. Participant B consulted NGOs in developing countries about the effective use of public relations and marketing, his two areas of expertise. He described one of his consulting projects:

I helped an NGO improve its PR capacity. I consulted it. In the first week I learned that the receptionist who answered the phone did not speak English although they received international phone calls once or twice a day. This organization works with several international organizations, including the United Nations. I told the organization's director that he should provide the receptionist with an opportunity to learn English. . . . I also helped them to develop their own organizational graphic style . . . letterhead, logo, and so on. These things could help them increase their capacity.

Direct aid recipients as bridges to the general public

Two NGO representatives [J, L] said that their public relations activities in developing countries were not focused on the general public. They hoped that aid recipients, who directly benefited from Latvian development aid, would create awareness about their NGO projects and Latvia among the members of the general public. Participant J and L expected that direct aid recipients would use their national and local media to reach the general public. Participant J cited the limited authority that he believed his organization had in another country:

We do not focus on the mass media because our access to the public sphere [in developing countries] is very limited. . . . Our good practice principles do not include paying for advertisements that promote us. . . . We work with [country name] civil society organizations . . . NGOs . . . and we hope that they work with their own media. . . . We are not an authority for their media. . . . their own local NGOs and academia are.

Participant L also believed that the responsibility of the direct aid recipients is to connect them with the general public. “We expect that our partners will inform their general public. . . . We expect that they will send out a press release at the beginning and end of each project,” he said.

In addition to the use of the mass media, Participant L hoped that information about his organization’s projects and Latvia would reach groups other than those of direct aid recipients through interpersonal channels. He explained:

Public awareness is not created only through the traditional media. It also happens between people and organizations. . . . Before we start to implement a project, we always want to involve someone who is active in his [her] region . . . someone who will also deliver our message to others beyond themselves.

Table 37**Public relations and aid recipients**

<p>A. Public relations goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Learning about the needs of aid recipients b) Creating awareness about Latvia c) Explaining Latvian motivation for helping d) Helping aid recipient NGOs improve their public relations capacities <p>B. Public relations activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Strategy planning activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Arranging meetings B) Organizing individual information gathering trips to developing countries C) Monitoring the media in developing countries b) Informative activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A) Writing and disseminating press releases B) Responding to developing country journalist requests for information C) Producing and disseminating informative materials c) Consulting activities <p>C. Direct aid recipients as bridges to the general public in developing countries</p>

Public Relations in Business Organizations

Of the four business organizations represented in this study three did not have a formal public relations unit because these organizations were consultancies that provided public relations, public affairs, and communication services. The participants felt that each person who worked on development cooperation projects had the necessary public relations expertise.

A formal public relations unit existed in the fourth participant's organization. Although the majority of this organization's public relations work for development cooperation purposes was done by the head of the development cooperation program, the formal unit provided advice on public relations issues and helped the head of the program prepare informative materials and organize events. Similarly to the participants from the government and NGO sectors, the business sector participants agreed that the function of public relations helped their organizations manage relationships for development cooperation purposes.

Public relations and the Latvian public

Public relations goals

Seeking the public's support for the government's development cooperation initiatives.

The domestic goal of the public relations function in business organizations was to seek the Latvian public's support for the government's development cooperation initiatives, including tender competitions for businesses. Participant G explained:

We need more support from the [Latvian] public. When we use public relations . . . it is not just for our own projects. Our public relations activities help create a general understanding about everything that Latvia does. We always explain what development cooperation means . . . why we need it. People often misunderstand it. They say, "Not everything is developed in Latvia. Why should we give anything to anybody else?" We believe that specific projects provide opportunities to explain [about development cooperation]. In financial terms Latvia's contributions are not big. These are not large scale investments that require thousands of lats. Our economy is not impacted by these contributions, but they have a positive effect on Latvia's relations with other countries. And the society needs to understand this.

Participant K's consultancy also used public relations to explain the importance of development cooperation to the Latvian public. "Here in Latvia we must explain why we help other countries. People think that we should not do it. They say we have too many local problems that need to be fixed first," she noted.

Public relations activities

Most public relations activities implemented by business organizations were mediated. Participants G and K sent out press releases that informed and educated about development cooperation, and also wrote *opinion pieces* for newspapers and magazines. "We educate the Latvian public about development cooperation. We explain why we must help. . . . We have published a few articles about our projects for the general public," explained Participant G.

Although Participant K tried to educate the public through the media, she observed that reporters often lacked interest in issues related development cooperation. Participant K said:

We have tried to reach the public through the media, but the media does not find it interesting enough. . . . On those occasions when our information has appeared in the media, it has not contained in-depth reflections about development cooperation. It has generally remained limited to announcements about one delegation's visit to Latvia in the brief news section.

In addition to media relations, the participants' organizations also engaged in other mediated public relations activities. They maintained *websites with information about development cooperation and individual projects*, prepared *brochures about development cooperation*, produced *videos* and organized a *photo exhibit*.

Table 38

Business organizations: Public relations and the Latvian public

- A. Public relations goals
 - a) Seeking the public's support for the government's development cooperation initiatives
- B. Public relations activities
 - a) Writing opinion pieces for the Latvian media
 - b) Maintaining websites with information about development cooperation
 - c) Preparing brochures about development cooperation
 - d) Producing videos about development cooperation
 - e) Arranging a photo exhibit

Public relations and the Latvian government

Public relations goals

Consulting government institutions about public relations. Two participants [I, U] said that their public relations function consulted government institutions about ways that they can increase the effectiveness of their external outreach activities. For example, the assistance that Participant U's consultancy offered to a government institution involved the development of the general communication strategy. She observed:

Public relations departments at government ministries are responsible for sector specific policy issues. They perform certain functions. They do not focus on the overall picture. They provide information . . . press releases . . . about specific activities, but they do not work strategically. . . . Therefore, they need to consult third parties in order to develop strategies and plans.

Participant I's observations were similar. She said:

[Government] ministries are overwhelmed with various policy issues. They do not have time for development cooperation. If development cooperation takes up only one seventy-fifth of the overall ministry's activities, believe me, nobody will care about development cooperation. They do not have time for it. Public relations departments at ministries are small.

Public relations activities

The two participants provided government institutions with public relations advice by arranging discussions and seminars about public relations contributions to development cooperation, and by preparing educational materials about strategies for communication about development cooperation.

Table 39

Business organizations: Public relations and the government

- A. Public relations goals
 - a) Consulting government institutions about the possible public relations contributions to development cooperation
- B. Public relations activities
 - a) Arranging discussions and seminars about the role of public relations in development cooperation
 - b) Preparing educational materials about the role of public relations in development cooperation

Public relations and aid recipients

Public relations goals

Creating awareness about Latvian contributions to development. The goal of the public relations function in both Participant G's and K's organizations was to create awareness about Latvian contributions to the development of their countries. Participant K described, "It is important that the broader public knows what we do. . . . You must make sure that you not only complete a project, but also tell the public what you did."

Consulting aid recipients about public relations. Participant K's organization consulted state and non-state organizations in developing countries about ways that they can increase their public relations capacities.

Public relations activities

Participants G and K believed that their organizations could reach the goal of awareness building about Latvian contributions to development through ***publicity in the developing country***

mass media. However, both participants believed that aid recipients should serve as bridges between the Latvian organizations and their national media. “Our work involves specific organizations. We hope that they will communicate to their media about our projects,” explained Participant G. Another business sector representative, Participant K, said:

We encourage our partners to contact their regional press. . . . We do not work with their media. We believe that local organizations are much more trustworthy sources of information for their own societies. We do not speak their language. How would we send out a press release?

The second public relations goal that involved increasing public relations capacities at aid recipient organizations was reached through *educational seminars* in developing countries, by arranging *study trips* to Latvia for aid recipients, and through the production of *educational materials*.

Table 40

Business organizations: Public relations and aid recipients

<p>A. Public relations goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creating awareness about Latvian contributions to development in aid recipient countries b) Consulting aid recipients about public relations <p>B. Public relations activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Creating publicity about Latvian contributions to development in the developing country media b) Organizing educational seminars c) Arranging study trips to Latvia d) Preparing educational materials
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Research Question Eight: Relationship Management and Transformation

The final research question linked relationship management and transformational contexts in the aid recipient countries. The question asked how, if at all, relationship management as practiced by Latvian government institutions and their domestic partners responded to transformational environments.

Participants from the three sectors identified connections between relationship management and transformation. They suggested that Latvian organizations that were involved with development had certain qualities that helped them understand relationship management in

transformational contexts. These qualities—direct experience with transformation, common past, success with development at home, favorable attitudes toward Latvia in aid recipient countries, and Russian language skills—are discussed below.

Direct Experiences with Transformation in Latvia

A group of participants [G, H, J, K, L, M, O, P, R, S, T] from all three sectors—government, NGO, and business—suggested that Latvia’s recent experiences with transformation from a centrally-planned, totalitarian state to a free-market democracy was helpful in understanding the needs of development aid recipients in other former Soviet republics. Participant L described his observations in a country that was formerly part of the Soviet Union, “Their current problems are similar to those that Latvia experienced 10 years ago. . . . We know what needs to be done.”

Participant O, who represented a government institution, also believed in the relevance of Latvian reform experiences to those of other former Soviet republics. He noted:

Our experiences with transformational processes are unique. We have gone through them by trial and error. We have learned a lot. If there are willing listeners on the other side . . . we can tell them about our experiences . . . and help them avoid our mistakes. . . . It is our advantage compared to Old European states. We have the necessary expertise to make structural changes . . . help transform from one economic formation to another.

Like Participant O, a set of others—Participants R, H and T—contrasted Latvia and other European states that had not been part of the Soviet sphere of influence. Participant R from the government sector observed:

We have professionals who have direct experiences with reforms that were implemented here in Latvia during the first years of regained independence. . . . These are valuable personal experiences. These experiences are live and present. Our knowledge does not originate from textbooks. . . . The Germans and the British have more money . . . more textbooks, theories, and methods . . . but we have lived the experiences.

Her colleague, Participant H, from another government institution agreed:

We have directly experienced the process of transformation. We know how it feels. Transformation is still embedded in the memories of our people. We have living people who remember it. The French and Germans may have better expertise in other areas . . . for example, in relations with African countries . . .

but they do not have experience in the former USSR countries. They do not know how to implement reforms there.

A representative from the NGO sector, Participant T, had an opinion similar to that of his two counterparts from governmental institutions:

We are more qualified to give advice than Western experts. . . . We know the causes of many problems . . . and we know how to solve those problems. We know how to overcome them because we have already done it in Latvia.

Participant O was concerned that once the generations of professionals change in Latvia this country's reform experiences will disappear. He believed that the next generations will not differ from development consultants in those parts of Europe that were never under Soviet influence:

As soon as generations change . . . when this and the next generations retire from professional service . . . our advantage will disappear. We will be like the rest of the European states. Our experts will travel abroad and spread their theories about reforms. . . . Even now when I talk to my younger colleagues they do not know much about reforms. They say, "We do not know this or that." Of course, how would they know? They were in the third grade when the reforms were implemented.

Common Past Shared by Latvia and Other Former Soviet Republics

A set of participants [F, L, M, O, P, R, T] suggested that Latvia and some other former Soviet republics have shared a past that helps Latvians understand the cultures, values, thinking patterns, and attitudes of the aid recipients. This common history made Latvians sensitive to various nuances in relationships that were formed with aid recipients. Participant M summarized her observations in several former Soviet republics:

We share cultural experiences and attitudes [in the post-Soviet part of Europe]. . . . We all were Soviet people. It may have changed here in Latvia . . . it is hard to tell . . . but you can still see that people do not feel free and relaxed [in other post-Soviet countries]. They are afraid to demonstrate any initiative. They put brakes on themselves. They believe that management is much more important than it really is or should be. This common psychological heritage allows us to sense those moments when something should be said or when it is better to remain quite . . . when something needs to be changed or explained. I do not know how to describe it . . . but we remember how it was . . . at least, better than those who have never experienced it.

Participant L said, "It is easy for us to maintain relationships [with aid recipients]. . . . We have a common past . . . a common understanding about things." Similar thoughts were

expressed by Participant R, “We have the common history of being part of the Soviet Union. . . . We understand how they feel . . . what they need . . . where they stand now and where they want to be.” Participant F also focused on similarities between the Latvians and aid recipients who formed relationships with his NGO, “We, Latvians, have common life and history experiences with people from Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. In the past we all shared a single sphere of information.”

Only one participant [E] doubted the usefulness of the common past. He felt that knowledge about the past did not contribute to transformations that focus on the future:

Europe and the rest of the world are hopeful we are experts in the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] region. I doubt it. One thing is your historical knowledge, whereas another one is your ability to offer valuable suggestions for the future. Unfortunately, we are somehow unable to provide any innovative contributions to the future. Our expertise goes as far as the knowledge of history, but it is not enough.

Latvia as a Real-Life Example of Development Success

Latvia’s domestic development successes over the last two decades were another factor that helped the Latvians relate to aid recipients. Several participants [J, L, T] believed that these real-life examples added credibility to their relationships with aid recipients. As suggested by Participant J, “People see that we have been able to achieve a certain extent of development. Our success serves as evidence that they also can do it.” Similar reasoning was shared by Participant L:

Our success motivates people. They see that Latvia, which was also part of the Soviet Union and had a similar starting point, has achieved a lot. . . . If they were being helped by the Germans they could say, “You have had 50 years of prosperity. You do not understand us. Your view on life is very different from ours.” But with us Latvians, they see that it [development] can really be achieved. They understand that they also have an opportunity.

Participant T suggested that Latvia’s success and that of the whole Baltic region added credibility to her NGO’s development cooperation work in the former Soviet region. She said:

People know that the Baltic states were in the Soviet Union, but that we got out. They know that we are a success story in the history of development. Within 15 years we transformed from a Soviet republic to a European Union state. . . . We serve as real-life proof that it can be done. Our example adds credibility to our development advice.

Favorable Attitudes toward the Latvians

Two participants [J, T] from the NGO sector observed that recipient countries had formed favorable attitudes about Latvia and two other Baltic states during the Soviet years. These attitudes have persisted and serve to strengthen the current relationships established for development cooperation purposes. Participant T illustrated:

In former Soviet republics I have noticed that people cherish a positive nostalgia about the Baltic states. . . . As soon as they find out that you are from the Baltics, people open up and show a positive attitude toward you. They remember the life in the Baltic states that they perceived as Western . . . different and modern during the Soviet years. These feelings still have remained. . . . Of course, these feelings facilitate good working relationships.

Her experiences were shared by Participant J:

People have positive inclinations toward us In most regions of the former Soviet Union we . . . Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania . . . are well perceived . . . maybe even glorified a bit. . . . Our common history in the Soviet Union contributes to these positive inclinations. People still cherish memories of Jūrmala¹³ . . . and the Baltic as a window to the West. People remember that we were always friendly and open.

Russian Language as a Necessity for the Former Soviet Region

Most participants [F, G, H, J, K, L, M, O, P, R, T] from each sector—government, NGO, and business—emphasized the value of Russian language skills in the former Soviet territory. The Russian language, which everyone was required to learn in all Soviet Union republics, has helped participants establish relationships with aid recipients whose countries are undergoing transformations.

“People are happy that our experts can exchange information in a language that they understand well,” said Participant H from a government institution. Participant O explained how relationships became more open when Russian rather than English was used as the language of communication:

I have noticed that people [in some countries] do not understand English well. However, as soon as I switch to Russian, everything changes. This is a language that they have spoken for 40, 50 years. They start asking questions . . . inviting you to places. Relationships become more transparent. People open up.

¹³ Jūrmala is a Latvian beach resort that was a popular tourist attraction for people from across the Soviet Union.

Two other participants [L, T] discussed how Russian language skills helped them overcome communication barriers between their NGOs and aid recipients. “We can communicate in Russian. Our language skills tear down barriers. People start feeling closer to us,” noted Participant L. His colleague, Participant T, from another NGO said:

Our [Russian] language skills are a great plus. If you try to help but do not speak their language How open can your communication be . . . how can you ensure good relationships if you need a translator? Your ability to communicate in Russian does not simply save time and money. It creates credibility. And the elimination of language barriers also eradicates psychological barriers.

Finally, Participant M suggested that Russian language skills allowed Latvians to serve as interpreters between aid recipients and development experts from other countries. She believed that the Latvians “sometimes act as star interpreters between the Western experts and the locals.”

Table 41

Factors facilitating good relationships between Latvian development actors and transformational contexts

A. Direct experiences with transformation in Latvia
B. Common past shared by Latvia and other former Soviet republics
C. Latvia as a real-life example of development success
D. Favorable attitudes toward the Latvians in transformational countries
E. Russian language skills

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS

This chapter analyzes the results of this dissertation study. It begins with a review of participant experiences related to relationship management. Second, this chapter discusses the role of the formal public relations function in relationship management. In the third section, the focus is on ways that relationship management influences Latvia's soft power. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the link between relationship management and transformation.

Relationship Management for Development Cooperation Purposes

As it was acknowledged by this dissertation study's participants, they formed and maintained relationships with various constituencies involved in development cooperation. In this section, the participants' experiences are related to the current relationship management literature in order to learn about this literature's applicability to development cooperation contexts with soft power implications.

Relationship Outcomes

Asked to discuss relationships outcomes, participants focused on very specific, task-oriented goals. These goals can be divided into two groups. One group consisted of those outcomes that were centered on *gaining something from the relational partner*, whereas the second group of outcomes resulted in *gains for the relational partner*.

Gaining something from the relational partner

Relationships between domestic partners

Examples of relationship outcomes that fall into the first group—gaining something from the relational partner—are *resources* that domestic partners exchanged in order to successfully implement their development cooperation policies and programs. Government institutions hoped that their relationships with domestic partners would result in additional knowledge and expertise about development cooperation, connections in developing countries, and an improved ability to relate to non-governmental publics abroad. Domestic partners from NGOs hoped that relationships with government institutions would help them acquire such resources as government grants for NGO development cooperation projects abroad, government's expertise about development cooperation, and the government's assistance with immigration issues, as well as symbolic acquisitions in the form of strengthened status and reputation.

Resources were also important to the government's partners from businesses. For this group of development actors, relationship outcomes that resulted in resources involved opportunities to earn profit from government tenders, the government's expertise about development cooperation, connections with prospective aid recipients that businesses made through their governmental partners, and new professional knowledge that allowed businesses to diversify their services.

In addition to resources, relationships between domestic partners led to a number of other outcomes that allowed one party to gain something from the other. For instance, government institutions expected that domestic partners would *represent Latvia abroad* within the non-government sector and help them to secure the *Latvian public's support* for the government's involvement in development cooperation abroad. Participants from NGOs said that their

relationships with partners in the government provided them with *opportunities to exert influence on development cooperation policies* in Latvia and within intergovernmental organizations to which Latvia belonged.

Relationships with international constituencies

Like relationships between domestic partners, the outcomes from Latvian development actors' ties with international constituencies—aid recipients and international partners—fell under the first relationship outcome category described as “gaining something from the relational partner.” All three types of Latvian development actors—government institutions, NGOs, and businesses—hoped that their relationships with aid recipients would allow them to *secure Latvia's national interests* in aid recipient countries. Participants were concerned about Latvia's security, economic, and political interests, as well as international image and reputation. It must be noted that two NGO representatives believed that relationship outcomes that are focused on national interests are self-serving. According to these two individuals, the goal of relationships must be development in aid recipient countries rather than the donor's well-being. However, another group of participants from NGOs believed that the two relationship outcomes—secured national interests and development in aid recipient countries—can co-exist without threatening to weaken relationships between Latvian development actors and aid recipients.

Learning opportunities was another outcome from relationships with aid recipients that provided gains for Latvian development actors. Participants from the government sector discussed personal and organizational growth opportunities, whereas participants from NGOs and businesses found that they could acquire new knowledge from relationships with aid recipients.

Besides the bonds that government institutions formed with aid recipients, they also established relationships with international partners who were involved in development cooperation in Latvia's neighboring regions. The outcomes of these relationships also resulted in gains for Latvian government institutions. Examples of these gains were *learning and growth opportunities* from experienced development donors, *reputation building opportunities for Latvia* within the international donor community, and *funding for Latvian development cooperation projects*.

Gains for the relational partner

Relationships with aid recipients

Some relationship outcomes can be characterized as resulting in gains for the relational partner. This group of outcomes described relationships that Latvian development actors established with aid recipients. In these relationships Latvian organizations were concerned about the well-being of the aid recipients. Government institutions and NGOs hoped that relationships with aid recipients would lead to *improved human living conditions* in aid recipient countries. Participants from NGOs, as well as their business counterparts viewed relationships with aid recipients as opportunities to *share their development experiences* with those who would benefit from these experiences.

Summarizing knowledge about relationship outcomes

During the interviews participants were able to describe specific, task-oriented outcomes that resulted from their relationships with various constituencies involved in development cooperation. These outcomes can be compared to what Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, 2000) called "*goal achievement*," and J. Grunig and Huang (2000) described as "*goal attainment*." The relationship outcomes can be further divided into two subgroups: (1) self-centered outcomes that

focused on gaining something from the relational partner and (2) other-centered outcomes that allowed one relational partner improve the well-being of the other.

Possibly, the issue of unbalanced “*control mutuality*” (J. Grunig & Huang, 2000) emerged during the discussion about relationship outcomes with two participants from the NGO sector. These two individuals believed that a donor nation’s concern for its national interests runs counter to one’s true commitment to improved human living conditions in developing countries. This tension between two relational outcomes—secured national interests for a donor nation and improved human living conditions in aid recipient countries—may suggest that relationships between donors and aid recipients lacked what J. Grunig and Huang called “joint acceptance of degree of symmetry” (p. 34).

The discussions about relationship outcomes did not allow making conclusions about other elements—commitment, satisfaction/liking, trust, dependency/loss of autonomy, routine and institutionalized behavior—included in the relationship consequence stages of Broom et al.’s (1997, 2000), and J. Grunig and Huang’s (2000) models. However, the importance of some of these elements emerged during conversations about factors that influenced relationship quality. The analysis of these factors follows in the next section.

Table 42**Analysis: Relationship outcomes**

A. Gaining something from the relational partner	
a. Relationships between domestic partners	
	A) Development cooperation resources
	B) Latvia's representation in the non-state sector abroad
	C) The Latvian public's support for governmental development cooperation policies
	D) Opportunities for NGOs to exert influence on development cooperation policies
b. Relationships with international constituencies	
	A) Secured national interests for Latvia in aid recipient countries
	B) Personal and organizational growth opportunities
	C) Reputation building opportunities for Latvia within the international donor community
	D) Funding for Latvian development cooperation projects
B. Providing gains for the relational partner	
a. Relationships with aid recipients	
	A) Improved human living conditions in aid recipient countries
	B) Development experiences shared with those in need

Factors Influencing Relationship Quality

This dissertation study revealed several factors that influenced the quality of relationships between various parties involved in development cooperation. The first set of factors strengthened relationships, whereas the second set diminished their quality.

Relationship facilitators

The first factor that facilitated relationships both at home and abroad included ***common vision, goals and interests***. Latvian development actors from each sector believed that good relationships with domestic partners required mutual understanding about development issues. Participants from government institutions and NGOs found that the quality of relationships with aid recipients improved when both parties shared a common vision about development. Shared interests were also important for government institutions when they formed relationships with their international partners.

The second factor that facilitated relationships between parties involved in development cooperation was ***one relational partner's trust in the other***. J. Grunig and Huang (2000)

described “trust” as a relationship outcome that involved one party’s confidence in the other party and their mutual relationship. Although this dissertation study’s participants did not view trust as a relationship outcome, the interviews illustrated that strong relationships were based on one party’s confidence in the other party. For instance, participants from the government sector found that they were able to form strong relationships with those domestic partners who could demonstrate a potential for satisfactory development cooperation performance. NGO and business representatives believed that relationship quality improved when their governmental partners were willing to listen to their interests and concerns.

Trust in relational partners also facilitated ties between Latvian development actors and aid recipients. Participants from government institutions and NGOs suggested that the best relationships were built with those aid recipients who were truly involved in their own development.

Another, third, set of relationship facilitators were also similar to one of J. Grunig and Huang’s relationship outcomes—*commitment to the relational partner*. The two scholars interpreted commitment as one party’s willingness to maintain a relationship with the other party. This dissertation’s participants discussed similar commitments. Participants from government organizations said that although they currently lacked funds for NGO grant and business tender programs, they at least tried to find symbolic amounts of money for or maintained open communication with domestic partners in order to demonstrate their commitment to these partnerships.

Participants from government institutions and NGOs observed that their willingness to understand local cultures was a factor in creating strong relationships with aid recipients. It is

possible that this concern also demonstrated the participants' commitment to their relational partners.

Previous personal connections between the individuals from participant organizations and the parties involved in development cooperation were the fourth relationship facilitator. A participant from an NGO observed that it was easy to form relationships with individuals from government institutions because of the connections that this organization's president had formed in the government while working on other projects, even when those projects were not related to development cooperation. The same NGO also used its members' personal connections in the government. A group of participants from several NGOs noted that previous contacts with aid recipients had resulted in strong relationships for development cooperation purposes.

The role of previous personal connections may suggest that Toth's (2000) interpersonal influence model was present in relationships between Latvian development actors and their publics at home and abroad. This interpersonal influence model proposed that personal contacts help both parties achieve mutual understanding, leading to strengthened relationships. As it was shown by this dissertation study, personal connections allowed participants to enter into relationships with government institutions that led to collaboration on mutual projects, as well as added credibility to Latvian NGOs when they formed relationships for development cooperation purposes with aid recipients.

The fifth and final facilitative factor applied to relationships between Latvian businesses and aid recipients. A business representative believed that non-governmental actors enjoyed *freedom from any political constraints* that might have limited or made impossible relationships between government institutions and some aid recipients in other countries.

Relationship limitations

Interviews uncovered factors that weakened relationships between parties involved in development cooperation. One such limitation was *a shortage of financial resources for development cooperation projects*. Government institutions lacked money for competitive NGO grant and business tender competitions. Participants from the government sector believed that without these resources they could not expect domestic NGOs and businesses to take great interest in partnerships with government institutions.

Relationships between Latvian organizations and aid recipients also were affected by limited resources. Participants from government institutions and an NGO explained that they could neither afford to fund long-term development projects nor send their employees to other countries for long periods of time.

The quality of relationships was also hindered by *one relational partner's distrust in the other*. According to J. Grunig and Huang (2000), trust is a party's confidence in its relational partner.

Issues related to distrust weakened relationships between domestic partners. Participants from the government sector described their doubts about their domestic partners' willingness to commit to long-term projects in developing countries. Similar concerns were voiced by domestic partners from the non-governmental sector. Participants from NGOs suggested that government institutions were not truly committed to development cooperation, did not provide sufficient support to their NGO partners, and that the government's representations abroad—Latvian embassies in developing countries—lacked sufficient knowledge about development cooperation and the role of NGOs in it. Business organizations did not trust in their governmental partner's ability to manage national activities related to development cooperation.

Conversations with a few participants from government institutions also allowed a conclusion that distrust characterized some relationships between them and aid recipients. These individuals believed that some aid recipients were not willing to get involved in their own development.

Finally, relationships between some businesses and aid recipients were hindered by *different approaches to professional communication*. The aid recipients were slow in responding to communication initiated by the Latvians. One of the participants concluded, “Our levels of activity and involvement are different.”

Table 43

Analysis: Factors influencing relationship quality

Relationship facilitators	Relationship limitations
A. Common vision, goals, and interests	A. Shortage of governmental financial resources for development cooperation projects
B. One relational partner’s trust in the other	B. One relational partner’s distrust in the other
C. Commitment to the relational partner	C. Different approaches to professional communication
D. Previous personal connections	
E. Freedom from political constraints enjoyed by the non-governmental donors	

Different Levels Characterizing Relationship Outcomes

Relationship outcomes that resulted from relationships between various parties involved in development cooperation can be characterized on four different levels: international, national, organizational, and personal. So far, the public relations literature has focused on the organizational level. However, this dissertation study may suggest that in soft power settings relationships also have international, national, and personal dimensions.

International level outcomes were present on those occasions when government institutions and NGOs expected that relationships with aid recipients would result in improved human living conditions for aid recipients and their societies.

A set of relationship outcomes were *nationally* focused. For instance, relationships with aid recipients allowed government institutions, NGOs, and businesses to secure Latvia's national interests and build a reputation for Latvia in developing countries. Relationships between domestic partners were also characterized by national level outcomes. Government institutions found that relationships with their domestic partners provided Latvia with additional opportunities to be represented abroad within the non-governmental sector, and facilitated the Latvian public's support for the government's development cooperation policies and initiatives.

On the *organizational* level relationships brought outcomes that were beneficial for individual institutions. Relationships between domestic partners allowed exchanges of resources, which increased the successes of each organization's development cooperation projects. A few participants from government institutions acknowledged that their relationships with aid recipients provided them with opportunities to motivate their employees and maintain their interest in the public administration sector. Relationships between Latvian government institutions and international partners resulted in funding for their institution development projects in exchange for Latvian development expertise.

Relationships formed for development cooperation purposes also provided *personal level* outcomes. Participants from the government and non-government sectors observed that their relationships with aid recipients allowed them to acquire new development expertise, knowledge about other countries, and connections with other international development actors. Representatives from NGOs and businesses said that relationships with aid recipients gave them opportunities to share their development knowledge with those who needed it, thus providing these individuals with a sense of personal satisfaction.

Table 44**Analysis: Different levels characterizing relationship outcomes**

A. International
B. National
C. Organizational
D. Personal

Relationship Maintenance Strategies

Relationship maintenance strategies included those activities that connected Latvian development actors with their domestic partners and international constituencies. The relationship maintenance strategies described by this dissertation's participants were similar to those identified by J. Grunig and Huang (2000), and Broom et al. (1997, 2000).

A strategy that was employed by organizations from all sectors involved *exchanges*. Examples of exchanges between domestic partners included funding provided by the government to Latvian NGOs and businesses in return for their development work abroad, and meetings and other opportunities for discussions that allowed development actors to share opinions and ideas about issues related to development cooperation. Exchanges were also used by Latvian organizations to maintain their relationships with international publics. Government institutions exchanged information related to development cooperation with their international partners. After a completed development project a participant from a private consultancy kept up her communication exchanges with aid recipients in order to “maintain relationships” for future project possibilities.

Another relationship strategy used by Latvian development actors was *disclosure*. The government informed its domestic partners about development cooperation opportunities. In return NGOs and businesses provided the government with information about their development projects and developing countries.

In addition to exchanges and disclosure, Latvian development actors maintained relationships with each other and international publics through *collaboration*. Government institutions and their domestic partners worked together on development projects. Collaboration was also present in relationships with international publics. Latvian organizations, along with aid recipients, implemented development projects in developing countries. Government institutions collaborated with their international partners on project implementation.

Another relationship strategy was the *assurance of the other party's legitimacy*. Latvian government institutions and NGOs met with aid recipients in order to learn about their development needs. Through these meetings Latvian organizations acknowledged the importance of the aid recipients' contributions to development in their own countries.

Government institutions also engaged in *task sharing* with their international partners. J. Grunig and Huang (2000) described this relationship maintenance strategy as "helping to solve problems of interest to the other party" (p. 34). A government ministry connected its international partner with Latvian NGOs that could help this international partner implement a development project abroad.

Each of the above described relationship strategies were symmetrical in nature. The only asymmetrical relationship strategy that was openly discussed by participants involved *persuasion*. NGOs lobbied the government in order to influence the development cooperation policymaking at home and abroad.

Participant responses to the question about relationship maintenance did not reveal any additional asymmetrical strategies. However, a detailed review of relationship limitations, especially in relationships between domestic partners, allows a conclusion that asymmetrical strategies were used more often than the participants liked to admit. For example, a participant

from an NGO described how representatives from the government failed to attend an event sponsored by this NGO in which development cooperation was discussed. Some other examples provided by participants from NGOs included the government's failure to arrange a sufficient number of opportunities to debate issues related to development cooperation, the government's lack of consultations with domestic partners before NGO grant programs were cut, the complicated grant application procedures that kept NGOs from participating in grant competitions offered by the government, and the government's failure to acknowledge the value of NGO development work. A participant from the business sector noticed that her organization's governmental partner had failed to coordinate development cooperation activities on the national level. This failure had negative impact on the quality of relationships that her consultancy developed with aid recipients.

Participants from government institutions believed that the domestic partners were not truly committed to collaboration. They suggested that domestic partners were unwilling to engage in long-term projects in countries with severe living conditions.

Table 45

Analysis: Relationship maintenance strategies

- | |
|--|
| A. Exchanges |
| B. Disclosure |
| C. Collaboration |
| D. Assurance of the other party's legitimacy |
| E. Task sharing |
| F. Persuasion |

Types of Relationships

Participants described several types of relationships. *Supportive* relationships were identified by participants from the government, NGO, and business sectors. In this type of

relationships one party provided the other with resources that the other party lacked. Although both parties worked toward a common goal, the giving party did not expect that the other party would reciprocate in kind. The description of supportive relationships is similar to Hung's (2005) covenantal in which parties try to achieve common good through "open exchanges." Although both supportive and covenantal relationships acknowledge working toward a common good, supportive relationships diverge from covenantal ones because they do not require exchanges. Supportive relationships also differ from one-sided communal relationships in which the primary focus is the other party's well-being. Supportive relationships focus on providing resources for the accomplishment of a common task rather than the well-being of the other party.

A participant from a government ministry described her institution's relationships with domestic partners as *supplemental*. Parties who maintained supplemental relationships exchanged resources in order to reach a common goal. These supplemental relationships are similar to Hon and J. Grunig's (1999), and Hung's (2005) exchange relationships in which parties give to each other in order to receive. However, it is important to point out that in supplemental relationships parties focus on a common goal rather than on the act of giving and receiving.

Participants from the government and NGO sectors also discussed *personal* and *informal* relationships that were formed between individuals of different organizations. These types of relationships were similar to what Bruning and Ledingham (1999) described as personal relationships, i.e., relationships that involved building trust between organizational representatives and members of the organization's publics. In personal relationships organizational representatives demonstrate that they are "willing to invest time, energy, thought and feelings into their interactions with members of key publics" (p. 165).

Personal relationships described by this dissertation study's participants were also based on "trust." For example, a participant from a government ministry invited development experts, whom she knew on personal basis, to help her ministry with development projects. NGO representatives felt that their personal relationship with representatives at government ministries allowed them to receive answers to questions related to development cooperation and to gain access to government institutions when aid recipients visited Latvia for educational purposes.

In addition to the three relationships types—supportive, supplemental, and personal/informal—identified by this study's participants, a review of findings about relationship management allowed drawing conclusions about additional types of relationships that existed between Latvian development cooperation actors and their publics at home and abroad. For example, government institutions and NGOs hoped that they would be able to improve human living conditions in developing countries through relationships with aid recipients. This altruistic goal can be likened to Hung's (2005) *one-sided communal* relationship which she characterized as one party's unselfish concern for the other without any expectation that this other party would respond in the same manner.

Latvian government institutions, NGOs, and businesses expected that their relationships with aid recipients would secure Latvia's national interests. This desired outcome may characterize several types of relationships. *Exchange* relationships may exist between aid recipients and Latvian organizations that hope to establish supportive environments abroad in return for their development assistance. However, relationships guided by national interests may also be *manipulative* or even *exploitive* if, as suggested by a participant from an NGO, the Latvians are driven by "mercantile interests to gain profit" rather than willingness to facilitate development.

Exchange relationships may also describe the interactions between Latvian development actors who provided each other with resources for development cooperation projects, and relationships between Latvian government institutions and international partners who sponsored Latvian government institution development projects in return for their expertise.

Hung suggested another type of relationships, *contractual*, which were based on formal agreements between parties about their expectations for each other. These contractual relationships were established between government institutions and their domestic partners who were required to submit formal reports about their development projects that were funded by the governmental partners.

Most of the relationships between Latvian development actors and their international publics were *behavioral* (J. Grunig, 1993a), i.e., based on action-oriented exchanges between relational partners. For example, relationships between domestic partners were focused on acquiring resources for successful development cooperation project implementation. Relationships that Latvian development cooperation actors formed with aid recipients resulted in secured national interests for Latvia and improved human living conditions in aid recipient countries.

Participants from government and non-government institutions also described *symbolic* or communication-centered relationships (J. Grunig, 1993a). These individuals established relationships with aid recipients and international partners to strengthen Latvia's reputation and improve its image in aid recipient countries and within the international development community.

Finally, relationships that participants established with various parties involved in development cooperation helped them reach constituencies with whom they did not have direct

ties. Government institutions expected that their domestic partners would connect them with third parties such as the Latvian public, Latvian development experts, and aid recipients. Government institutions and domestic partners hoped that direct aid recipients would link them with third parties in aid recipient countries. This bridge-building role of domestic partners and aid recipients may suggest that relationships also were *facilitative* (Reber, Pētersone, & Berger, 2008). This type of relationship describes links that are formed between two constituencies with the assistance of a third party. The goal of facilitative relationships is to encourage interactions among the first two constituencies.

Table 46

Analysis: Types of relationships

- | |
|-----------------------------------|
| A. Supportive |
| B. Supplemental/exchange |
| C. Personal/informal |
| D. One-sided communal |
| E. Manipulative or/and exploitive |
| F. Contractual |
| G. Behavioral |
| H. Symbolic |
| I. Facilitative |

Relationship Networks

This dissertation showed that relationship management did not take place only between two parties. Various actors were connected and impacted each other through relationship networks. For example, Latvian government institutions hoped to connect with the Latvian public, development experts, and non-governmental sectors abroad through their relationships with domestic partners. Latvian development actors from government institutions and NGOs

were able to reach different social groups in developing countries through relationships that they formed with aid recipients. The interconnectivity among various actors was also discussed by domestic partners who observed that the government's inconsistency and a lack of coordination in matters of development cooperation weakened the quality of and shortened the length of relationships that they built with aid recipients.

These findings show that various parties interacted in order to form relationship networks. More knowledge is needed to understand the internal dynamics of these relationship networks. The antecedent stage of J. Grunig and Huang's (2000) relationship model could serve as a potential starting point for explorations about the internal workings of these relationship networks. Although J. Grunig and Huang's (2000) model acknowledged that relationships can be established not only between an organization and its publics, but also between a coalition of organizations and its public, their model did not distinguish between relationships that involve only two parties and those that concern multiple actors. It is possible that this model needs to distinguish between relationships that are established between an organization and its public, and relationships that involve multiple actors (e.g., a coalition of organizations and a public).

The Role of the Public Relations Function in Relationship Management

Although certain aspects of relationship management involved the public relations function, this function was not in charge of the overall management of relationships. With the exception of relationships that organizations established with the Latvian public, the development cooperation function was responsible for relationship management both with domestic partners and international publics. The role of the public relations function was to provide support for these relationship management activities.

The public relations function's involvement in relationship management was much more predominant at home than abroad. Organizations, through public relations, build ties with the Latvian public, as well as public relations facilitated relationships between Latvian development partners.

Only a few organizations used the public relations function to strengthen their relationships with international publics. Participants believed that they lacked local awareness to successfully practice public relations abroad. Participants said that they “may not know what is acceptable [in other countries],” “do not know the specifics in [other] countries,” and “are not authoritative sources.” These statements from the participants may support Curtin and Gaither's (2007) observation that the public relations function is “culturally sensitive” (p. 3). Participants hoped to overcome cultural sensitivities by asking their direct relational partners—aid recipients—to reach their general public and inform them about Latvian contributions to development in their countries.

According to two participants from government institutions, public relations was perceived as a symbolic function that did not have a direct impact on development. One of these two individuals emphasized that “real work rather than communication matter[ed]” in relationships with aid recipients. These and similar excerpts from interviews with the participants may suggest that on several occasions public relations was perceived as a communication tool rather than a long-term, strategic relationship building function.

Furthermore, these findings may also signal that the understanding about the use of public relations at home and abroad differed among those interviewed. Participants saw public relations as a significant function that allowed them to form relationships with the Latvian public and domestic development partners. However, the public relations involvement in relationship

management with international publics was minimal and mostly focused on symbolic communication.

The Division of Public Relations Responsibilities in Organizations

The participants' organizations, with one exception, did not implement their public relations activities solely through their formal public relations unit. Some NGOs and businesses did not even have such a unit.

A formal public relations unit was present in all *government institutions* that participated in this study. However, the division of public relations work was different in each institution. The study revealed three variations: the formal public relations unit was in charge of the public relations aspects of development cooperation, the head of the development cooperation program dealt with the public relations aspects of development cooperation, and both the public relations unit and the head of the development program were responsible for the public relations activities. With the exception of one organization, public relations was involved in development cooperation at each government institution.

Two of the seven *NGOs* interviewed for this study had a formal public relations unit. But these units' involvement in development cooperation was minimal. In each NGO the head of the development program was responsible for the public relations function. This study revealed two reasons for the assignment of public relations to the head of the development cooperation program. First, a shortage of financial resources did not permit NGOs to maintain a full-time public relations unit. Second, the division of work in NGOs was structured according to specific program areas such as development cooperation. This responsibility structure placed the head of the development cooperation in charge of everything pertaining to the area, including public relations activities.

Three out of the four *businesses* did not have a formal public relations unit. Participants representing these organizations believed that they did not need such a unit because their organizations provided public relations services, and, therefore, everybody involved in development cooperation was knowledgeable about public relations. One consultancy had a formal public relations unit that was involved in development cooperation. However, in this organization the head of the development cooperation program supervised the public relations aspects of development cooperation. The role of the public relations unit was to provide public relations advice to the development cooperation director, and help the development cooperation director prepare informational materials and organize events.

These findings about the minimal involvement of public relations in development cooperation may suggest that the development cooperation function had encroached on its public relations counterpart. According to public relations scholar Lauzen (1991), encroachment occurs when "individuals . . . from some department and/or profession other than public relations [overtake] the public relations manager role" (p. 245). Another study would be needed to understand the factors that facilitated this encroachment. Besides obvious reasons such as insufficient funds to maintain a public relations unit, some other possible explanations, especially in those government organizations with formal public relations units, may include the real or perceived lack of knowledge about development cooperation on the part of the public relations practitioners.

Relationship Management between Parties Directly Involved in Development Cooperation

A review of public relations strategies used by this study's participants revealed that they often were similar to relationship maintenance strategies that were described in the previous section about relationship management (i.e., exchange, disclosure, collaboration, assurance of the

other party's legitimacy, task sharing, and persuasion). Like the earlier relationship management strategies, the strategies that were attributed to the public relations function corresponded to those proposed by J. Grunig & Huang (2000). This dissertation also identified a few additional strategies that were specific to the public relations function.

One of the relationship maintenance strategies that involved the public relations function was *disclosure*. Government institutions informed domestic partners about development cooperation opportunities through mediated channels such as press releases, information on organizational websites, and brochures, as well as interpersonal activities such as educational seminars. A participant from an NGO suggested that the role of public relations in relationship building with aid recipients was to disclose his organization's motivation for helping. During debates that NGOs organized for policymakers, the NGO representatives informed their government partners about development cooperation.

NGOs used the public relations function to influence their government partners. **Persuasion** was used to convince policymakers about the value of development cooperation. The public relations function arranged such interpersonal activities as meetings with policymakers in which NGOs tried to influence the policymaking process. In addition to these direct advocacy activities, NGOs also engaged in indirect lobbying by educating various social groups about ways that could bring pressure on the government and create publicity in the media.

Another relationship maintenance strategy in which the function of public relations was involved included *exchanges*. Government institutions held meetings with domestic partners in order to exchange opinions about issues related to development cooperation.

The government's domestic partners also engaged in *task sharing* which J. Grunig and Huang (2000) described as helping the other party solve problems that are important to this other

party. Business organizations consulted their partners in the government about ways that government institutions can increase the effectiveness of their external outreach initiatives in matters of development communication. Latvian businesses and NGOs provided aid recipient organizations with advice on how to improve their public relations capacities.

The public relations function at government institutions and NGOs met with aid recipients to learn about the recipients' countries and development needs in these countries. Through these learning-oriented activities Latvian development actors acknowledged the significance of aid recipient input into discussions about the best ways to facilitate development in aid recipient countries, therefore, *assuring the legitimacy of their relational partners*. A participant from a government ministry described how his organization's public relations function arranged meetings with local leaders in order to learn about developing country needs and to establish "interpersonal contacts." A group of participants from NGOs said that the public relations function was responsible for learning about the concerns of aid recipients through meetings with representatives from aid recipient countries who visited Latvia.

In order to research local environments, the public relations function in Latvian NGOs organized information gathering trips to developing countries and monitored the developing country media. These last two activities, as well as meetings with developing country leaders and other representatives, suggest that the public relations function was involved in *boundary spanning*, a public relations activity that is concerned with identifying and gathering information in the organization's strategic environments, and delivering it to the organization's decision makers (White & Dozier, 1992).

The public relations function in Latvian organizations also maintained relationships through *collaboration*. Government institutions and their domestic partners helped each other seek the Latvian public's support for development cooperation.

Facilitating networking was another way that the public relations function helped government institutions maintain relationships with their publics. A government ministry organized informational seminars for its domestic partners so that they could meet with the government's international partners to discover development cooperation opportunities offered by these international partners.

The public relations function in Latvian development cooperation organizations engaged in activities related to *publicity*. Several participants perceived publicity as a strategy that shaped relationships between their organizations and the publics of their organizations in other countries. These symbolic activities were employed to promote Latvia's contribution to international development. For example, government institutions, NGOs, and businesses publicized their development work by arranging formal opening conferences at the beginnings of new development projects, and sponsoring developing country journalist visits to Latvia. Government organizations also engaged in publicity to attract funding from international partners. The public relations function produced short films and brochures for, and exhibit booths at international development events that were attended by international donor organizations.

This publicity related work abroad may demonstrate why the public relations function was interpreted as a symbolic communication activity by some Latvian organizations. However, other strategies that were described above—disclosure, persuasion, exchange, task sharing, assuring of other party's legitimacy, boundary spanning, collaboration, and facilitation of

networking—suggest that the predominant use of the public relations function at home was on the behavioral level which emphasizes interaction between relational partners rather than symbolic communication (J. Grunig, 1993a).

Table 47

Analysis: Public relations involvement in relationship management between parties directly involved in development cooperation

- | |
|---|
| A. Disclosure |
| B. Persuasion |
| C. Exchanges |
| D. Task sharing |
| E. Assuring the legitimacy of relational partners |
| F. Boundary spanning |
| G. Collaboration |
| H. Facilitation of networking |
| I. Publicity |

Public Relations Involvement in Socialization of Development Cooperation Policies

This dissertation study revealed that the function of public relations mostly focused on domestic constituencies. A large part of public relations work was devoted to gaining the Latvian public's support for the government's involvement in international development. This goal of the public relations function may be similar to what Melissen (2005) called "socialization of diplomacy," i.e., the facilitation of domestic civil society's involvement in foreign policy decision-making. According to Melissen, the development of international communication technologies has erased the line between domestic and international affairs. Therefore, any foreign policy initiative must involve the domestic public. Vickers (2004) came to a similar conclusion by suggesting that foreign policy has become a "legitimate part of the public domain" (p. 186).

Conversations with this study's participants showed that Latvian development actors used public relations to socialize their development cooperation policies. Public relations was employed to garner the Latvian public's support for and involvement in development cooperation.

Seeking the Latvian public's support

Latvian development actors acknowledged the importance of the Latvian public's support for development cooperation. This support was important because funds allocated for development cooperation came from the state's budget. Two factors—domestic socioeconomic problems and the public's perception that development cooperation was a requirement imposed by the European Union—created challenges for the public relations function.

Government institutions used several public relations strategies to overcome these two challenges. The following examples provided by participants from government institutions illustrate the use of *disclosure*: “through public relations we demonstrate how much and in what ways we invest in development cooperation,” “[we] explain to the Latvian public why development cooperation is necessary,” and “we must explain the importance of development cooperation to the Latvia people.”

Participants from government institutions also believed that they had to *assure the legitimacy of the public's concerns* in order to gain its acceptance for development cooperation. For instance, a participant from a government ministry described how her organization learned about public opinion, “Through public relations we encourage the public to express their opinions. The public opinion then tells us if we may increase the funding [for development cooperation].”

In addition to these two symmetrical public relations strategies, the interviews also provided evidence about the use of asymmetrical public relations. The following excerpt from an interview with a participant from a government ministry indicated that *persuasion* may have been employed. This participant said, “We must find arguments that demonstrate the value of development cooperation.” Finally, the function of public relations might also have used the strategy of *manipulation* at a government ministry. A government representative, who described his ministry’s public relations activities noted, “We have avoided connecting these two things [Latvia’s membership in the EU and development cooperation]. We do not want the public to perceive development cooperation as an EU ultimatum.”

In order to reach the Latvian public, government institutions involved the mass media. Participants wrote press releases and organized press conferences, produced videos and photos for reporters, commissioned programs at public television channels, sponsored trips for Latvian reporters to developing countries, and wrote op-ed pieces in newspapers and magazines. The only public relations activity that did not involve the media was public opinion polls about development cooperation conducted by government ministries.

Government institutions also expected that their domestic partners would help them connect with the Latvian public. Interviews with participants from the NGO and business sectors confirmed that the government’s domestic partners were willing to fulfill the government’s expectations. The public relations function at domestic partners’ organizations combined two strategies—*disclosure* and *assurance of the legitimacy of the public’s concerns*—in order to reach the Latvian public. Some examples that illustrate the NGO bonding with the Latvian public include: “we must inform people about development cooperation,” “the only way we can solve this problem [the public’s lack of support for development cooperation] is through public

relations . . . by explaining why we must provide help to others,” and “[we] create understanding about everything that Latvia does. We always explain what development cooperation means . . . why we need it.”

Domestic partners, both from NGOs and businesses, tried to reach the public through traditional media channels. They sent out press releases and organized press conferences, wrote articles for newspapers and magazines, and paid for newspaper inserts about development cooperation. Non-traditional media activities involved posting information on organizational websites, writing blog entries, producing short films, and arranging photo exhibits. The public relations function at NGOs also engaged in interpersonal relationship management. NGOs organized educational seminars about development cooperation for other civil society organizations and college students, and arranged events in which strategic plans about ways to educate the public about development cooperation and attract the media to development cooperation issues were formulated.

Encouraging the public’s involvement in development cooperation

In addition to seeking the public’s support, the NGO sector went a step further by encouraging the members of the Latvian public to get involved in development cooperation. The function of public relations was used to ***disclose information*** about opportunities for participation. Quotes from interviews with participants from the NGO sector demonstrated their efforts to encourage the public’s involvement: “the Latvian public needs to be informed . . . especially those groups that have know-how. . . . This information can encourage them to think about ways that they can help other states,” “we must educate the public here at home. . . . It is important that they gain direct experience,” and “it is important that we explain to them [Latvian people] how . . . they can employ development cooperation mechanisms to help others.” The

public's involvement in development cooperation was stimulated through educational seminars for civil society organizations and college students, and information delivered to the Latvian public through traditional and non-traditional media channels.

Table 48

Analysis: Public relations involvement in the socialization of development cooperation policies

A. Seeking the Latvian public's support
a. Disclosure
b. Assurance of the legitimacy of the public's concerns
c. Persuasion
d. Manipulation
B. Encouraging the Latvian public's involvement in development cooperation
a. Disclosure

Characterizing Public Relations Activities

This section analyzes the nature of specific public relations activities that Latvian development cooperation actors implemented to manage relationships with their constituencies. These constituencies included the Latvian public, domestic partners, aid recipients, and international partners. The two main dimensions that underlined public relations activities were (1) mediated communication vs. interpersonal communication, and (2) one-directional versus two-directional communication (L. Grunig, J. Grunig, & Dozier, 2002). The dimension of mediated versus interpersonal public relations describes the form of communication that organizations use to reach their publics. The mediated form of communication includes the mass media and other communication channels that do not require direct interactions between an organization and its constituencies.

The second dimension—one-way versus two-way—describes the direction of an organization's communication programs. One-way communication occurs from an organization to its constituencies, whereas two-way communication includes mutual exchange of information between an organization and its constituencies.

The Latvian public

Many public relations activities that Latvian development actors employed to manage relationships with the Latvian public were ***mediated and one-directional communication tactics***. Government institutions heavily relied on the mass media to reach the Latvian public. For example, they send out press releases, organized press conferences, produced videos and photos, commissioned programs for public television channels, and wrote op-ed pieces for newspapers and magazines. In addition to the mass media, participants from government institutions described governmental websites on which they posted information about development cooperation policies and projects. Like participants from government institutions, their counterparts from the business sector also focused on mediated public relations tactics such as press releases, op-ed pieces in newspapers and magazines, websites with information about development cooperation, brochures, videos, and photo exhibits.

Although participants from NGOs engaged in mediated public relations tactics such as press releases and conferences, blogs, photo exhibits, films, websites, and paid newspaper supplements, they also used ***advanced public relations activities that involved interpersonal two-way exchanges*** with the members of the Latvian public. These activities were educational events and seminars about development cooperation for college students and other NGOs, as well as events during which development cooperation experts discussed ways to reach the Latvian public through the media and to educate the public about the importance of development cooperation. Furthermore, participants from NGOs identified specific groups—other NGOs and college students—as their constituencies, and therefore allowed the conclusion that their public relations functions were planned and managed strategically.

The only two-directional, interpersonal public relations activity implemented by participants from the government sector involved public opinion polls. Two individuals wished to learn about the Latvian public's attitudes toward development cooperation.

Domestic partners

The public relations activities used to support relationship management among domestic partners involved interpersonal exchanges, as well as mediated communication. Like in relationships with the Latvian public, government institutions maintained their ties with domestic partners from the non-state sector by employing ***one-directional and mediated public relations tactics***. Government institutions disseminated press releases to inform domestic partners about development cooperation processes and opportunities, posted similar information on their websites, and published brochures. Besides these mediated activities, government institutions also engaged in ***two-directional and interpersonal public relations exchanges*** such as seminars and workshops in which domestic partners could learn about development cooperation opportunities and debate development cooperation issues.

NGOs mostly focused on interpersonal exchanges with their governmental partners. Participants from NGOs described workshops that they organized for policymakers to educate these policymakers about the importance of development cooperation. Interpersonal meetings were also used to lobby the policymakers. NGO representatives met with individual and groups of policymakers to influence development cooperation policies. Interpersonal exchanges described indirect lobbying activities of NGOs such as meetings with various social groups in Latvia that could conceivably exert pressure on the government. The public relations function at businesses was engaged in the organization of discussions and seminars about the role of public relations in development cooperation for governmental partners.

Aid recipients

Although the function of public relations was little involved in relationship management with aid recipients, the limited experiences shared by this study's participants provided some insights into international public relations activities. The few activities described by participants from the three sectors revealed a balanced use of public relations tactics and two-directional, interpersonal exchanges. ***Public relations tactics*** named by participants from government institutions included the organization of symbolic opening conferences for each new development cooperation program in developing countries. NGOs sent out press releases to the media in developing countries, responded to the requests for information from developing country reporters, and produced DVDs and brochures about Latvian involvement in development cooperation. Business organizations also focused on the mass media in developing countries in order to gain publicity for their development cooperation work.

Besides these tactics, Latvian development cooperation actors also engaged in ***interpersonal exchanges*** with aid recipients. For example, participants from government institutions and NGOs met with local leaders in developing countries to learn about their development needs. Government institutions organized developing country journalist visits to Latvia. NGO representatives went on individual information gathering trips to developing countries. Both NGOs and businesses helped aid recipient organizations improve their public relations capacities by consulting them about the effective use of public relations.

International partners

Some government institutions involved the function of public relations in relationship management with international partners. These institutions tried to reach international partners with ***mediated public relations instruments*** such as short films and brochures about Latvian

development cooperation work, as well as through *interpersonal channels* such as seminars during which the government's domestic and international partners met.

Summarizing the employed public relations activities

An overview of public relations activities illustrated that both one-directional and/or mediated tactics, and more advanced two-directional exchanges were used. Most public relations contributions to relationships management between Latvian development actors and the *Latvian public* can be described as public relations tactics. Only NGOs engaged in a variety of mediated and interpersonal public relations activities.

More advanced, interpersonal exchanges described relationships among *domestic partners*. Although government institutions combined public relations tactics and interpersonal exchanges, NGOs and businesses mostly relied on interpersonal exchanges. Relationships that Latvian development actors from the three sectors established with constituencies from other countries—*aid recipients* and *international partners*—were described by a balanced use of mediated and interpersonal public relations activities.

Table 49

Analysis: Characterizing public relations activities

A.	The Latvian public
a.	Government institutions focused on one-directional, mediated public relations tactics
b.	NGOs balanced one-directional, mediated public relations tactics with two-directional, interpersonal exchanges
c.	Businesses focused on one-directional, mediated public relations tactics
B.	Domestic partners
a.	Government institutions balanced one-directional, mediated public relations tactics with two-directional, interpersonal exchanges
b.	NGOs focused on two-directional, interpersonal exchanges
c.	Businesses focused on two-directional, interpersonal exchanges
C.	Aid recipients
a.	Participants from all three sectors balanced one-directional, mediated public relations tactics with two-directional, interpersonal exchanges
D.	International partners
a.	Government institutions balanced one-directional, mediated public relations tactics with two-directional, interpersonal exchanges

Relationship Management Contributions to Soft Power

Relationships that participants established for development cooperation purposes had soft power implications for Latvia. This section analyzes ways that relationship management may have strengthened Latvia's international attractiveness.

Relationship Related Factors Creating Supportive Environments for Latvia in Developing Countries

Nye (2004), who proposed the concept of soft power, wrote that through “long-term term relationships [a country] . . . create[s] an enabling environment for [its] government policies” (p. 107). This dissertation's participants acknowledged that relationships that they established with aid recipients resulted in secured national interests for Latvia. Therefore, it may be concluded that relationships between Latvian development cooperation actors and aid recipients facilitated environments which Nye described as “enabling.”

Several factors could have encouraged such enabling environments. They include the Latvian concern for improved living conditions in developing countries, understanding about transformational contexts, the relationship history that Latvian development actors shared with aid recipients, and focus on work rather than communication-centered relationships.

Improving human living conditions

Nye (2004) suggested that demonstrating a concern for the public good increases a country's international attractiveness. According to this study's participants, relationships that they established with aid recipients resulted in something similar—improved human living conditions in aid recipient countries. It is possible that ties between Latvian development cooperation actors and aid recipients, which enhanced the quality of life for aid recipients, also led to contexts supportive of Latvia and its national interests.

Understanding transformational contexts

A discussion about the link between relationship management and transformation revealed that Latvian organizations were better equipped to understand transformational contexts than other Western development actors. For example, participants had ***direct experiences with similar political, economic, and social changes*** in Latvia. These experiences were applicable to other countries undergoing similar changes and directly addressed the needs of relational partners from developing countries. A set of participants believed that Latvian development successes at home served as ***real-life evidence for their transformational skills***. Development accomplishments at home increased the participants' credibility among aid recipients.

A set of factors that allowed the participants to relate to transformational contexts in aid recipient countries involved the common, for some countries, involuntary membership in the Soviet Union. Participants believed that this ***shared past*** assisted them in understanding cultures, values, thinking patterns, and attitudes of aid recipients from other former Soviet republics.

Latvian development actors observed that their common experience in the Soviet Union had created ***favorable attitudes toward Latvia*** among some aid recipients. A participant from an NGO concluded, "People cherish a positive nostalgia about the Baltic states. . . . They remember the life in the Baltic states that they perceived as Western . . . different and modern during the Soviet years. These feelings have still remained."

Finally, everyone in the Soviet Union was required to master the Russian language. Latvian development actors believed that these ***Russian language skills*** permitted them to connect with aid recipients and, as observed by a participant from an NGO, "creat[ed] credibility" and "eradicate[d] psychological barriers."

In sum, it is possible that the transformational sensitivity of the Latvian development actors increased their ability to relate to transformational contexts. And this heightened responsiveness to the aid recipients' environments had made these environments supportive of Latvia's national needs.

Relationship history

Topics such as transformation and relationship management uncovered the importance of relationship history. A group of NGO representatives believed that recent relationships that Latvian development actors established with aid recipients were just one part of Latvia's soft power capital. Attitudes toward Latvia had been shaped over long periods of time and involved ties that were not related to development cooperation. A participant from an NGO described the value of relationship history, "[T]he history of our development cooperation relationships is very short. I do not think it allows any [international] evaluations of Latvia. But we have always supported, for example, Georgia's democratization efforts." His colleague from another NGO agreed, "Their [aid recipients'] perceptions about us have accumulated over time . . . through every communication or project that we have had."

A history of strong relationships may have helped participants create environments supportive of Latvia. It is possible that any relationship that is formed in one soft power setting must be viewed within the larger context of long-term exchanges among groups of various nations.

Work rather than self-promotional communication based relationships

Participants from the government, NGO, and businesses sectors agreed that work rather than self-promotional communication created favorable attitudes toward Latvia. According to them, real development successes strengthened relationships with aid recipients and increased

Latvia's international attractiveness. Specific activities (e.g., mutual implementation of development projects, meetings during which the needs of aid recipients were identified, and so on) that participants engaged in to maintain relationships with aid recipients illustrated the task-oriented nature of their ties.

This focus on work, instead of self-promotional communication, may have further increased Latvia's soft power among aid recipients. As suggested by J. Grunig (1993a), relationships that are based on behavioral exchanges rather than symbolic interactions lead to mutual understanding between relational partners.

Table 50

Analysis: Relationship related factors creating supportive environments for Latvia in developing countries

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Willingness of Latvian development actors to improve human living conditions in developing countries B. Latvian development actors' understanding about transformational contexts C. Relationship history shared by the Latvians and the aid recipients D. Relationships based on work rather than self-promotional communication |
|---|

Secured National Interests as a Relationship Outcome

Participants cited secured national interests for Latvia as one of the main relationship outcomes that resulted from their ties with aid recipients. These relationships helped Latvian development cooperation actors reach *foreign policy goals* in areas of security, politics, and economy. In addition to foreign policy goals, relationships provided participants with opportunities for *international representation of Latvia*. Latvian development cooperation actors described how relationships with aid recipients “created,” “influenced,” “shaped,” and “improved” Latvia's international image and reputation. A participant from a government institution “facilitated international awareness about Latvia,” whereas another participant's institution helped Latvia “gain international recognition.”

Two participants from government institutions believed that the relationships that they had established through bilateral development cooperation singled out Latvia from other international development actors. According to one of them, bilateral relationships allowed Latvia to “become better known internationally” and “distinguish[ed it] from the European Union.”

Relationships between Latvian government institutions and international partners also facilitated outcomes that were supportive of Latvia’s national interests. These relationships strengthened *Latvia’s standing in the international development community*. Links with international partners created a “good or bad reputation” for Latvia and “signal[ed] that [Latvia’s] development level [wa]s sufficient.”

Table 51

Analysis: Secured national interests as a relationship outcome

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Foreign policy interests B. International representation of Latvia C. Latvia’s standing in the international donor community |
|---|

Enhancing Latvia’s Soft Power Capital through Relationship Management

This dissertation focuses on development cooperation initiatives that were proposed by Latvian government institutions. Therefore, the development cooperation capital build-up is analyzed from the perspective of the government. This section reviews how domestic and international partners strengthened the Latvian government’s development cooperation instruments through which Latvia’s soft power goals were reached.

Latvian government institutions acquired resources that they lacked for successful implementation of development cooperation policies and programs through relationships with *domestic partners*. These resources included knowledge, expertise, and ideas about development

cooperation, as well as connections in developing countries. Domestic partners also represented Latvia within the non-governmental sector in aid recipient countries, and assisted government institutions in gaining the Latvian public's support for their development cooperation initiatives. The function of public relations was particularly involved in relationship building with the Latvian public.

Relationships with experienced *international partners* provided Latvian government institutions with opportunities to learn about development cooperation. International partners also sponsored the Latvian government's international projects in exchange for Latvian development expertise. These projects, funded by international partners, created additional soft power wielding opportunities for Latvian government institutions in aid recipient countries, as well as within the broader international development community.

Relationships with *direct aid recipients* allowed Latvian government institutions to broaden Latvia's soft power reach in recipient countries. Participants acknowledged that they hoped their ties with direct aid recipients would encouraged these recipients to communicate further to other groups in their countries about Latvia's contributions to development. Participants from the government's domestic partner organizations had the same expectations for recipients of their development aid.

Table 52

Analysis: Build-up of soft power capital

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Domestic partners provided government institutions with resources such as knowledge, expertise, ideas, and connections B. International partners provided government institutions with learning and funding opportunities C. Direct aid recipients allowed government institutions to connect with third parties in these aid recipient countries |
|--|

Encouraging Diverse Coverage of Latvia's Soft Power through Relationship Management

Latvia's soft power reach was expanded through relationships between Latvian development cooperation actors and their relational partners. Ties that Latvian government institutions formed with their counterparts in aid recipient countries strengthened Latvia's attractiveness in the *public sector* of the aid recipient countries. Government institutions were able to enhance Latvia's soft power within the *non-governmental sectors* in developing countries through their relationships with domestic partners—Latvian NGOs and businesses.

Latvian development actors were also trying to reach *groups beyond direct aid recipients* in developing countries. Latvian government institutions, NGOs, and businesses encouraged direct aid recipients to communicate about the Latvian contributions to their development. The Latvians hoped that this communication would extend to the general public in aid recipient countries.

Table 53

Analysis: Encouraging diverse coverage of Latvia's soft power through relationship management

- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Government institutions reached the governmental sector in aid recipient countries B. Non-governmental institutions reached the non-governmental sector in aid recipient countries C. Direct aid recipients assisted Latvian development actors in reaching third parties in the aid recipient countries |
|---|

Relationship Management Failures Affecting Soft Power

Relationships that Latvian development cooperation actors established with other parties were weakened by several relationship limitations. Two of them, discussed below, had the potential to diminish Latvia's soft power abroad.

The first limitation that placed constraints on various relationships was the *shortage of financial resources for development cooperation projects*. Government institutions often lacked

funding to support those domestic partners who could provide them with significant resources for successful implementation of development cooperation projects, represent Latvia abroad within the non-governmental sector, and mobilize the Latvian public at home. A shortage of funds also limited relationships between Latvian development actors and aid recipients. Latvian government institutions and NGOs lacked funds and personnel to implement diverse projects in developing countries. This shortcoming affected the quality and length of international ties with aid recipients, and, possibly, decreased the opportunities to wield soft power for Latvia.

The second relationship limitation, *one relational partner's distrust in the other*, may have also weakened relationships that were important for Latvia's soft power. Latvian development cooperation actors questioned each other's commitment to long-term development cooperation initiatives and their relational partners. At the same time, participants from government institutions, NGOs, and businesses acknowledged that they depended on each other's resources and abilities. Distrust between domestic partners also influenced relationships that Latvian organizations formed with aid recipients. Participants from NGOs and businesses observed that because of the insufficient support received from the Latvian government, the length and quality of their relationships with aid recipients were diminished. These negative effects on relationships with aid recipients resulting from distrust between domestic partners may have made developing country environments less supportive of Latvia and its national goals.

Table 54

Analysis: Relationship management failures affecting soft power

A. Shortage of financial resources for development cooperation projects
B. One relational partner's distrust in the other

Relationship Management and Transformation

This dissertation explored the link between relationship management and transformations that took place in aid recipient countries. Participants' experiences showed that such a link indeed existed.

Although this connection between relationship management and transformational contexts was proposed based on the concepts of “transition public relations” (Ławniczak, 2001) and “transformation public relations” (Pētersone, 2004), which both describe a form of public relations that helps societies undergo major political, economic, and social changes, it is important to note that relationship management in transformational contexts did not pertain to the public relations function alone. As it was discussed earlier in this *Analysis* chapter, public relations was not the only function responsible for relationship building and maintenance. In most Latvian development cooperation organizations, public relations provided support to the development cooperation function which was in charge of relationship management between various parties involved in development cooperation. Furthermore, the public relations function was rarely directly involved in relationship management activities in aid recipient countries where transformations occurred.

This dissertation's findings showed that relationships between Latvian development actors and aid recipients were strengthened because the Latvians were sensitive to transformational contexts. This sensitivity allowed them to relate to their relational partners in aid recipient countries.

Recent transformations in Latvia made Latvian experience relevant to aid recipients. ***Real-life development successes in Latvia*** increased the credibility of Latvian development cooperation actors among aid recipients. ***Favorable attitudes toward Latvia*** that aid recipients

had formed during the Soviet years strengthened the current relationships that were established for development cooperation purposes. Latvian development actors also observed that the *common past that they shared with aid recipients* from other former Soviet republics allowed them to understand the culture, values, thinking patterns, and attitudes of aid recipients. Finally, the *Russian language skills* that most Latvian development actors had acquired during the Soviet years permitted them to avoid communication barriers that might have diminished the quality of relationships with Russian-speaking aid recipients.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

This final chapter reviews conclusions derived from this dissertation study. The first four subsections focus on the following topics: the role of public relations in relationship management, the applicability of relationship management theory to this dissertation's research setting, wielding soft power through relationships management, and relationship management's relevance to transformational contexts. This chapter concludes with three sections that discuss this dissertation study's implications for public relations theory, the limitations of this dissertation study, and provide suggestions for future research about relationship management in soft power contexts.

Conclusion Set One:

The Role of Public Relations in Relationship Management

Public relations is not the only function responsible for relationship management. The findings of this study allow a conclusion that the relationship management literature can be applied to settings that involve relationship building for soft power purposes. However, the significance of the public relations function must be re-considered. The study revealed that the public relations function is not the only organizational function that is responsible for relationship management. In the context of this research study, development cooperation units were in charge of relationship management both with domestic partners and international publics. The role of the public relations function was to support development cooperation activities. Although this study involved a specific context in only one country, it suggests that the

public relations literature should both acknowledge other organizational functions that are involved in relationship management and explore the possible intersections between these other functions and public relations. Such acknowledgement and exploration may enhance the quality of the organization-public relationship management and increase the organization's overall effectiveness.

Encroachment of public relations activities by development cooperation units. A number of participants from those organizations with a formal public relations unit acknowledged that what they considered to be public relations activities were performed by development cooperation officers. These participants believed that the development cooperation unit had the necessary expertise to accomplish every task related to development cooperation, including public relations. Another study would be needed to better understand the marginal involvement of the formal public relations unit in development cooperation activities. It is possible that, first, the development cooperation unit did not trust its public relations counterpart, and/or, second, the public relations unit indeed lacked development cooperation expertise.

Lack of funds and its effects on public relations. Some organizations, especially from the NGO sector, could not afford to maintain a separate public relations unit. Therefore, the development cooperation unit assumed the responsibilities of the public relations unit.

Domestic focus of the public relations activities. Most public relations activities were centered on domestic constituencies: the Latvian public and development cooperation partners at home. The predominant goal of public relations was to seek the Latvian public's support for development cooperation policies and programs and to encourage the public to take part in development cooperation. Public relations was also employed to manage relationships with domestic partners.

The function of public relations was little involved in relationship management with international publics: aid recipients and international partners. The interviews revealed two reasons for such a lack of international involvement. First, participants acknowledged that they lacked awareness about how to practice public relations in other cultures. Second, they suggested that their organizations did not involve the public relations function in their exchanges with aid recipients because pure public relations that did not result in actual development, as suggested by a participant from a government institution, was “useless.”

Conclusion Set Two: Relationship Management Theory and the Research Setting

As it was described earlier, the public relations function was not the only function involved in relationship management. Although the participants acknowledged that the public relations function contributed to relationships between their organizations and the publics of their organizations, public relations supported, but was not in charge of, relationship management.

Further discussion about the applicability of relationship management theory to this study’s research setting will focus on the overall relationship management process because relationship management exceeded the public relations function and, the public relations aspects of the relationship management frequently were the responsibility of development cooperation officers. Where possible, I will point out specific public relations contributions to relationship management. However, the public relations investments in relationships will often merge within the larger relationship-building and maintenance framework.

First, I will identify those aspects which allow a conclusion that the relationship management literature does describe relationship building and maintenance in development cooperation settings with soft power implications. The second half of this section will discuss those findings that may add new aspects to the knowledge about relationship management.

The Applicability of Relationship Management Knowledge to this Dissertation's Research Setting

Relationship outcomes. Outcomes that resulted from relationships between Latvian development cooperation actors and their constituencies were very specific, task-oriented goals. These outcomes were similar to what Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, 2000) called “goal achievement,” and J. Grunig and Huang (2000) described as “goal attainment.” A conversation with a participant from an NGO seemed to suggest that relationships between Latvian government institutions and aid recipients resulted in another outcome described by J. Grunig and Huang—unbalanced “control mutuality.”

Relationship maintenance strategies. This dissertation study showed that the relationship maintenance strategies identified by such public relations scholars as Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (1997, 2000), and J. Grunig and Huang (2000) apply to this dissertation's research setting. The strategies employed by the Latvian development cooperation actors involved exchanges, disclosure, collaboration, assurance of other party's legitimacy, and task sharing. These symmetrical strategies were supplemented by asymmetrical strategies. Participants from NGOs engaged in persuasion to influence development cooperation policy making at the national and international levels.

A discussion about the role of public relations revealed that the participants attributed similar relationship maintenance strategies to this function. Examples include disclosure, exchanges, task sharing, assuring of the relational partner's legitimacy, collaboration, and persuasion. This overlap in relationship maintenance strategies between the public relations and development cooperation functions may once again serve as a reminder that relationship management is not the sole responsibility of the public relations function. Different

organizational functions engage in the management of organization-public relationships. It is possible that in order to gain a comprehensive understanding about ways that relationship management can ensure overall organizational effectiveness, the focus of analysis needs to be on this interaction between all organizational functions that are involved in organization-public relationship management.

Types of relationships. Both domestic and international relationship can be described using relationship typologies from the public relations literature (e.g., Bruning & Ledingham, 1999; J. Grunig, 1993a; Hon & J. Grunig, 1999; Hung, 2005; Reber, Pētersone, & Berger, 2008). The participants' characterization of relationships corresponded to such relationship types as exchange, one-sided communal, contractual, personal, facilitative, behavioral, symbolic, and, possibly, manipulative or exploitive.

Possible Additions to the Relationship Management Body of Knowledge

Different levels characterizing relationship outcomes. This dissertation study's findings showed that relationship outcomes can be characterized on four different levels: international, national, organizational, and personal. The identification of these four levels distinguishes this study from previous scholarly work which has emphasized just the organizational level. For example, relationships between Latvian development actors and aid recipients can, on the international level, lead to improved human living conditions in aid recipient countries. On the national level, relationships between Latvian development actors and aid recipients can result in secured national interests for the donor nation. On the next—organizational—level, relationships between Latvian government institutions and aid recipients can provide these government institutions with opportunities to encourage the professional development of their employees which may increase the overall effectiveness of these institutions. Finally, on the personal level,

relationships with aid recipients allow individual development cooperation actors to acquire a sense of personal fulfillment by helping someone in need.

Dialectic nature of relationships. The findings of this study may demonstrate the dialectic nature of relationships. Although symmetrical relationship maintenance strategies were used to manage relationships and participants were able to name symmetrical factors that enhanced the quality of relationships, the interviews also uncovered tensions that existed in these relationships (e.g., one party's lack of trust in the other party's commitment to development cooperation). These finding may suggest that conflict and disagreements are an inherent part of each relationship. Nevertheless, the relationships continue despite these tensions. Relational partners, who are task-oriented, are capable of distinguishing relationships factors that facilitate and strengthen their ties from those that hinder them without letting these negative factors undermine the entire relationship.

Relationship networks. This study revealed the importance of relationship networks, an under-explored area in relationship management literature. For example, relationships that Latvian government institutions established with domestic partners allowed these institutions to connect with third parties such as the Latvian public, development experts, and the non-governmental sector abroad. The interconnections of various actors within a larger network were also noticeable in situations when the Latvian non-government development cooperation actors admitted that the length and quality of their relationships with aid recipients were affected by the lack of their government partners' planning, coordination, and funding activities. These findings may illustrate that relationship management theory should pay attention to these networks and explore their effects on individual relationships within these networks.

One such possible investigation of these relationship networks could be done in the context of J. Grunig and Huang's (2000) relationship model. The initial, antecedent stage of this model suggests that relationships can be formed between a coalition of organizations and another public or coalition. The model continues by focusing on the relationship that is established between this coalition and its public or another coalition. The model does not discuss the relational dynamics within the coalition. As this study revealed, the interaction between a coalition of Latvian government institutions and their domestic partners had an effect on this coalition's relationships with aid recipients. The internal dynamics within this coalition influenced the length and quality of ties that the coalition formed with aid recipients.

Types of relationships. It is possible that this study has identified a new type of relationship that the participants have described as "supportive." In this type of relationship one party provides the other with resources that the other party lacks for a successful implementation of development cooperation programs. Both parties have a common goal, but there is no expectation that the giving party would reciprocate in kind. This relationship is similar to Hung's (2005) covenantal, in which parties work toward a common goal through "open exchanges." However, supportive relationships depart from covenantal ones because they do not require exchanges. Supportive relationships also diverge from Hung's one-sided communal relationships in which the primary focus is the other party's well-being. Supportive relationships focus on providing resources for the accomplishment of a common task rather than the well-being of the other party.

Conclusion Set Three: Wielding Soft Power through Relationship Management

Securing Latvia's national interests through relationship management with international publics. Nye (2004) wrote that strong long-term relationships between one country

and its various constituencies abroad create “enabling environments” for the country’s foreign policies. This dissertation study allows a conclusion that relationships indeed could have led to contexts that are supportive of Latvian interests. The participants observed that relationships with aid recipients allowed them to reach Latvia’s security, political and economic goals, and enhance Latvia’s international representation among aid recipients, as well as among international partners.

Creating “enabling” environments. This dissertation uncovered several factors related to relationship management that could have led to the creation of enabling environments for Latvia abroad. First, according to Nye (2004), concern for a public good enhances a country’s international attractiveness. Participants of this study acknowledged that relationships with aid recipients provided them with opportunities to improve human living conditions in aid recipient countries. It is possible that this Latvian concern for the well-being of the aid recipients made Latvia attractive to their countries.

Second, the participants found that their understanding about transformational contexts, acquired during Latvia’s recent political, economic, and social changes, helped them establish good relationships with aid recipients. The participants observed that these common experiences increased their credibility in the former Soviet region.

Third, a relationship history could have also contributed to supportive environments for Latvia in developing countries. Participants believed that relationships established through development cooperation work were part of a broader relationship framework that included ties formed among various social groups during the Soviet years and later when Latvia supported, for instance, Georgia’s and Ukraine’s independence and democratization movements.

Fourth, another factor contributing to the creation of enabling environments could have been the task-oriented nature of relationships between Latvian development cooperation actors and aid recipients. Several participants believed that relationships that brought real development results rather than engaged aid recipients in symbolic communication activities had a potential to make a donor nation attractive.

Strengthening each other's soft power capital. Participants acknowledged that they could strengthen their soft power instruments through relationships with their development partners. For example, government institutions increased their development cooperation effectiveness through relationships with domestic partners who allowed them to acquire new resources such as knowledge, expertise, ideas, and connections in developing countries. Relationships with domestic partners also increased representation opportunities for Latvia within the non-governmental sector in aid recipient countries. Government institutions improved their development expertise and acquired additional funds for development cooperation projects through relationships with international partners.

Expanding soft power reach through relationships. Relationships permitted Latvian development cooperation actors to expand their soft power reach. Parties in relationships did not simply connect with each other; they also helped their relational partners connect with third parties. For example, domestic partners provided their government counterparts with access to the non-governmental sector abroad. These government counterparts, in turn, connected these domestic partners with their international partners and aid recipients. Relationships between Latvian development actors and direct aid recipients allowed the Latvians to reach other groups in aid recipient countries.

It is important to note that, although relational partners could enhance each others' relationships with third parties, they could also hinder these relationships, thus limiting a nation's soft power reach. Examples of such negative effects include the observations made by participants from NGOs that revealed how the government's lack of planning and coordination of development cooperation work impaired the quality and length of relationships that these NGOs formed with their aid recipients. Some participants from the government sector believed that their domestic partners' lack of commitment to long-term projects in developing countries also diminished Latvia's attractiveness in these countries.

Conclusion Set Four: Relationship Management and Transformation

Participants believed that they could build strong relationships with aid recipients because of their knowledge about the transformational contexts in which aid recipients lived. Latvia itself had undergone similar transformations at home and therefore could serve as a real-life example for development successes. Latvia and other former Soviet republics shared a past in the Soviet Union which allowed the Latvian development cooperation actors to understand their aid recipients. During the Soviet years people in the neighboring regions had formed favorable attitudes toward Latvia that now provide a supportive context for current relationships. Furthermore, the relationship quality was enhanced by the Latvian experts' Russian language skills which they had acquired during the Soviet years.

Implications for Public Relations Theory

This dissertation study revealed, first, that *public relations is not the only organizational function that is involved in relationship management*. The development cooperation function managed relationships with domestic and international publics. The public relations function

supported the ties that the development cooperation function established and maintained with domestic and international partners, and aid recipients.

Although this research study explored only one research setting, it is possible that different research settings would reveal other organizational functions that manage and/or support relationship management between an organization and its strategic constituencies. The public relations theory should acknowledge these other functions and identify the role of public relations in the overall management of organizational relationships.

The second implication for the public relations theory is the role of *relationship networks*. This dissertation study revealed that ties that each of the two relational partner developed with third parties also affected the direct relationship between these two relational partners. For example, the lack of governmental planning in matters of development cooperation did not just influence the quality of relationships between government institutions and their domestic partners. This governmental failure also had effects on relationships that their domestic partners formed with aid recipients.

Furthermore, the importance of relationships networks was also present in situations when an organization had to connect with a group or individuals with whom they did not have a direct relationship. For instance, participants from government institutions found that their domestic partners would assist them in reaching such constituencies as the Latvian public, development experts, and non-governmental sectors abroad. For these government institutions, relational partners served as social extensions.

This mutual interconnectivity among various relational partners suggests that it may be important for the public relations scholarship to further explore the phenomenon of relationship

networks. It is possible that each organization that strives to be effective must research and understand relationships that their strategic publics form with other constituencies.

A third implication for public relations theory is closely related to relationship networks. This dissertation study found that *relationships allowed Latvian development actors to expand their soft power reach*. Latvian government institutions mostly built relationships with their counterparts in developing countries. Therefore, Latvia's soft power abroad remained within the public sector. However, relationships between Latvian government organizations and their domestic partners allowed the Latvian government to enhance Latvia's reputation within the non-state sector in developing countries.

Latvian development actors from both state and non-state sectors hoped to reach other groups beyond direct aid recipients in developing countries. In order to do so, they encouraged their relational partners—direct aid recipients—to communicate to other social groups in aid recipient countries information about Latvia's contributions to their development.

Fourth, this research study found that *relationship outcomes can be measured on four different levels*. Relationships between Latvian organizations involved in development cooperation and their various constituencies resulted in outcomes on the international, national, organizational, and personal levels. For example, a relationship between a government institution and its aid recipients brought (1) an international level outcome such as an improved human living condition for aid recipients, (2) a national level outcome such as secured interests for Latvia in the neighboring region, (3) an organizational level outcome such as enhanced institutional development cooperation capacities, and (4) a personal level outcome such as an individual development cooperation practitioner's personal fulfillment for helping those in need.

The above described findings about relationship outcome levels may identify another area of exploration, i.e., whether such different levels describe other international relationship management settings. It is possible that even in settings that do not involve international constituencies, different levels such as national, organizational, and personal characterize relationships.

Another, fifth, implication of this dissertation study concerns its revelations about the *direction of relationship outcomes*. One direction described those relationships that were established to *gain something from the relational partner*, e.g., resources for development cooperation work, international representation of Latvia, the Latvian public's support for development cooperation, and so forth. The other direction of relationship outcomes focuses on *providing gains for the relational partner*. The most descriptive example of this relationship outcome characterized ties between aid recipients and Latvian development actors who strived to improve human living conditions in aid recipient countries through their development cooperation programs.

Finally, *Latvian development cooperation actors employed the function of public relations to socialize development cooperation policies*. Although public relations was little involved in relationships management with international constituencies, this function's importance was revealed through its essential role in laying a foundation for Latvia's international development cooperation work at home. This finding about the domestic significance of the public relations function may reveal that the public relations scholarship should not just investigate public relations contributions to soft power abroad, but it also should acknowledge ways that public relations can help a nation prepare its soft power capital at home.

Limitations of the Study

This dissertation study, as any other qualitative work, does not allow statistical generalizations about the phenomenon researched. The findings describe only the experiences of this study's participants. It is possible that different development cooperation professionals would have perceived relationship management for soft power purposes differently. The next section on future research suggests the possible avenues of exploration, e.g., different international settings, and development donors and recipients. Despite the above described limitation, which characterizes any qualitative study, I tried to mitigate its impact by reaching the "saturation point." The findings derived from this research study revealed relationship management patterns that were shared by participants from the three sectors—government, NGO, and business. Although these individuals had diverse experiences and professional affiliations, they shared similar observations about relationship management for development cooperation purposes with soft power implications.

Because of the lack of financial resources and time, only the Latvian side of the international relationships was studied. A similar research that investigates the experiences of international partners may have revealed additional aspects of relationships management and ways that these aspects could influence Latvia's soft power.

The research setting that this dissertation explored involved a single context: Latvia's development cooperation initiatives. Some other soft power research settings, for example, cultural and educational exchanges, may have produced different findings about relationship management and the role of public relations in this relationship management.

Finally, Latvia's development cooperation programs and policies are relatively new. Just four years have elapsed between the beginning of Latvia's initiatives in 2004 and the completion

of the research for this dissertation in 2008. In the future other factors could appear that may shape relationships between Latvian development actors and their domestic and international publics.

Future Research

This dissertation provides a few suggestions for possible research directions in the future. First, this research study explored only the Latvian side of the relationships. Another study that investigates the aid recipient and international partner organization perceptions of the same relationships would provide a much more comprehensive understanding about ways that relationship management can help a nation accomplish its soft power goals.

Second, as the writing of this dissertation study is being completed, Latvia is experiencing the influence of a dramatic, global, financial crisis. The Latvian government has suspended many national level programs, including development cooperation, for an undetermined length of time. Another study will be necessary to investigate the impact of this suspension on domestic and international relationships, as well as on Latvia's soft power abroad after the development cooperation programs are renewed.

The third suggested research direction involves a study of different international settings and publics. As this study showed, international publics in the neighboring regions of Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine had positive attitudes toward Latvia because of their common history and transformational experiences. A study that explores relationship building and maintenance for soft power purposes between nations that are more culturally diverse and/or less favorably exposed toward each other may reveal additional relationship building and maintenance challenges.

Fourth, the focus of this study was government-funded international development cooperation initiatives. Another study that explores relationship management in the context of development cooperation programs funded by the non-government sector may reveal additional soft power potential for a nation abroad.

Fifth, the findings of this dissertation study uncovered that the public relations function was not the only function involved in relationship management. Relationships were the primary responsibility of the development cooperation function. In the future, researchers should investigate whether similar conclusions can be drawn from other research settings and, if so, what other functions are involved in relationship management and how relationship management activities should be coordinated among these functions in order to enhance organizational effectiveness.

The sixth research suggestion centers on relationship networks. This dissertation showed that each relationship can be a part of a larger relationship framework within which each party's relational partner has formed a relationship with some other party. One relationship can affect the length and quality of some other relationship. Another study would be needed to explore the internal dynamics of these networks and ways that these networks could expand a nation's soft power reach.

Seventh, another possible research avenue may include an exploration of various levels on which relationship outcomes can be analyzed. This research study demonstrated that the same relationships can achieve outcomes on several levels: international, national, organizational, and personal. Additional research might allow the drawing of conclusions about whether such multi-level outcomes are characteristic to other soft power settings.

The eighth research suggestion is related to the Latvian context. The dissertation study revealed that the Latvian development actors were little engaged in international public relations activities. They believed that they lacked the necessary knowledge to practice public relations internationally. In the future, a research study should be conducted to understand causes for such a lack of knowledge, as well as to identify opportunities that could enhance the international awareness and effectiveness of Latvian public relations professionals.

Finally, some other soft power settings in Latvia need to be investigated in order to learn about the public relations function's involvement in this nation's international efforts. It is possible that minimal involvement of the public relations function is a characteristic of development cooperation, but that the role of this function increases in other soft power settings such as cultural and educational exchanges.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Guide for the Government Sector

The Importance of Development Cooperation Programs

1. Why is it important for your ministry/agency to engage in development cooperation?

Relationships with Domestic Partners

2. Please describe those domestic parties that are involved in the planning and implementation of your ministry's/agency's development cooperation programs.
3. How does your ministry/agency establish relationships with these parties?
4. How does your ministry/agency maintain relationships with these parties?
5. Please describe the relationships that your ministry/agency has established with each domestic partner.

Relationships with International Publics

6. Please describe those international publics who benefit from your ministry's/agency's development cooperation programs.
7. How do these publics benefit from these programs?
8. Why are these publics important to your ministry/agency?
9. How does your ministry/agency establish relationships with these international publics?
10. How does your ministry/agency maintain relationships with these international publics?
11. Please describe the relationships that your ministry/agency has established with each of its international publics.

The Role of the Public Relations Unit

12. Please describe how, if at all, your ministry's/agency's public relations unit is involved in international development programs.

13. How adequate is the involvement of your ministry's/agency's public relations unit in these development programs? Please explain.

Transformation and Public Relations

14. Please describe how your ministry's/agency's development cooperation programs respond to political, economic, and social transformations in developing countries.
15. How, if at all, is your ministry's/agency's public relations function involved in these transformations?

Appendix B: Interview Guide for the Non-Government Sector

In the beginning of the interview, each participant was informed that the focus of the interview was those development cooperation programs that were established in partnership with the Latvian government.

Relationships with the Latvian Government

1. Please tell me how your organization is involved with the Latvian government's development cooperation programs.
2. Why is your organization involved with the Latvian government's development cooperation programs?
3. How does your organization establish relationships with the Latvian government?
4. How does your organization maintain relationships with the Latvian government?
5. Please describe your organization's relationships with the Latvian government.

Relationships with International Publics

6. Please describe those international publics who benefit from your organization's partnerships with the government.
7. How do they benefit from these partnerships?
8. Why are these international publics important to your organization?
9. How does your organization build relationships with these international publics?
10. How does your organization maintain relationship with these international publics?
11. Please describe the relationships that your organization has developed with each of the international publics.

The Role of the Public Relations Unit

12. Please describe how, if at all, your organization's public relations unit is involved in your organization's international development programs.
13. How adequate is the involvement of your organization's public relations unit in these development programs? Please explain.

Transformation and Public Relations

14. Please describe how your organization's development cooperation programs respond to political, economic, and social transformations in developing countries.
15. How, if at all, is your organization's public relations function involved in these transformations?